THE
GOSPEL AND HUMAN NEEDS

THE GOSPEL AND HUMAN NEEDS

BEING THE HULSEAN LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, 1908–9

WITH ADDITIONS

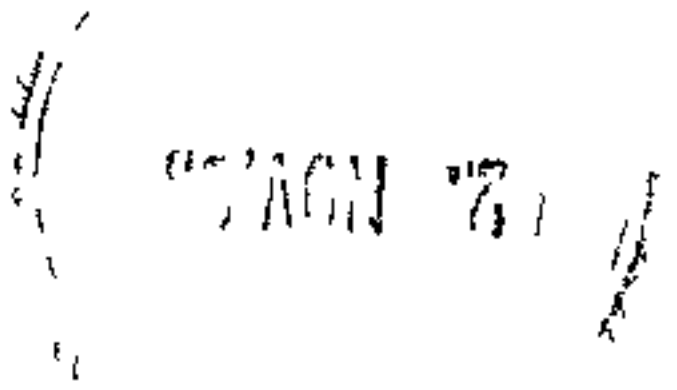
BY

JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS, LITT.D.
OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE RESURRECTION

NEW IMPRESSION

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA
1909

All rights reserved



FRATRIBVS

IN · DOMO · RESVRRECTIONIS · DOMINI

DEGENTIBVS

HAS · PRIMITIAS · VOCATIONIS · SVAE

HVMILLIME

DEDICAT

SOCIVS · NVPER · RECEPTVS

PREFACE

Not long since a friend said to me that miracles which had once been a support to faith were now a stumbling-block. I made the reply that that stage was at an end, and that once more they were becoming a help, were indeed of the essence of revelation. The following lectures are an attempt to explicate that dictum. For I began to see that it is precisely that characteristic of miracles which makes them so sore a difficulty to minds with the bias of "naturalism," which endears them to men and women who are concerned rather with life than theories about life. Moreover, it became clear to me that what is true of the miraculous is no less true of other elements in the faith, of its mysteries to the intellect, of its sacraments, material yet supraratational, of its emphasis on concrete facts, of its good tidings to the sinner. And so in these four lectures I have tried to set forth a little of that distinction and romance, that extra ordinari-

ness of this "given" revelation, which at this moment men need especially to recognise.

To some this *intransigeance* of tone will be repellent. Nor do I deny the uses of more conciliatory methods any more than I would question the worth of the doctrines of Divine Immanence and Reason, of which lately we have heard not a little. Only at this moment it seems to me that we do not need any more to emphasise these things.

The accent ought to be not on the likeness, but on the difference of Christianity from its rivals, whether philosophic or ethical or religious. After all, we are Christians not because our faith resembles that of other men, but because it does not. We shall but confuse our minds if we harp on the superficial resemblances, real though they may be. If the differences were not important it were wiser to combine with the great mass of the religious-minded, and sink or minimise all the strangeness, the unique charm of the Gospel, the things that are at once its appeal and its shame.

For it is just that strangeness, that conquering charm, which men are feeling just now, and for whose lack they are crying out from other refuges —culture, philosophy, fancy-religions, or what not.

As I conceive it, the human spirit, in its eternal Grail-quest, has entered on a new path. It has turned from the middle-aged prose of the nineteenth century once more to the poetry of the child.

From the *selva oscura* of mechanical systems, materialist or intellectual, it is willing to be led once more as a Pilgrim even from the tortures of the Inferno up the mountain of purification till it sees once more the rose of glory and the dance of saints. On all sides comes forth the cry for life, newness, joy, romance; on all hands we have the evidence that men are bored with the loud-voiced assurances of scientific iconoclasm, and find it very fatiguing to breathe the rarified air of idealist philosophers with their merely provisional use for religion. That siren-song which charmed men a generation back, as it allured them to peace and rest of spirit in scientific inquiry or idealist systems of benevolence, has changed for us its note; and it sounds to our ears only as the dirge of the nineteenth century, with its prosaic and complacent heterodoxy, or its thin and weary intellectualism.

Alike in our ears and in that of our adversaries there rings the call of a new world, the thrill of a real joy and pain. It is because the newness is most

new, the joy and the pain most real and actual in the light that shone once over Bethlehem and yet shines in men's hearts, that I have written as I have. Mr. Bernard Shaw, in one of the most impressive of his many helpful and impressive utterances, made Undershaft declare that we have had enough of shams, and must at last demand a religion *that fits the facts*. I agree. It is because Christianity fits the facts, and helps us to live as real beings in a real world, and not as the puppets of fate or even as the dreamers of an earthly Paradise, that it will outlast all the systems of criticism, philosophy, or morals, which arise one after another, plausible and dazzling in one decade, and disappear in the next, futile as "snows of yesteryear."

I do not write this for want of feeling the force of opposite views. There is hardly a difficulty here touched which has not at times threatened to overwhelm the writer; indeed they do still. Any lack of sympathy which the hostile may discern is to be attributed to the enemy being felt within no less than without. In respect of one point, much discussed of late, a personal experience is better than a volume of argument. Difficult as may be the belief in the miraculous birth of our Lord, and

plausible as are the attacks upon it, I have found as a fact, that if we attempt to live with that doctrine cut off from the faith, it is all up with Christianity. For the birth does not fall alone; it carries with it the whole supernatural structure, and in the long run, if one allows the tendencies their full force, will leave one face to face with an evolutionary pantheism, which, as Disraeli once discerned, is but atheism in domino. It takes a long time to see what is the effect of certain principles when logically carried out; and many of us never do see it. When one does see it, one learns the danger of dealing piecemeal with the great fact of Christianity, and perhaps in time we may learn how this very miracle, so "otiose" as some think it, bears with it some assurance of the breadth and mystery of being.

In reference to certain criticisms of the second lecture, I would say that we shall use our minds to most purpose when we realise our limits, and that I nowhere even hinted that we ought not to use them. To those who wish to trust the intellect, I would say by all means trust it absolutely; on no account confuse yourself with any assumptions drawn from act or emotion; be as

honestly ascetic in your intellectualism as you claim to be; don't be afraid, as most men are, of being too severe. And then its impotence will soon reveal itself, and you will be driven, if not to Christianity, at least to some form of that pure agnosticism which Romanes found the best preparation therefor; or else its final result will be manifest in some sceptical pessimism, from which, not the intellect revolving on its own axis, but life with its realities of choice and love, will alone recall you.

I am grateful to the Rev. E. K. Talbot for his kind help in revising the proof sheets.

Also, I cannot close this preface without thanking all those known and unknown to me, whether in Cambridge or here or in many other places, who prayed about these lectures and for the man who spoke them.

The additional sermons and appendix may serve to illustrate points in the lectures. They are reprinted, by kind permission of the proprietors, from "The Guardian" and "The Church Times."

HOUSE OF THE RESURRECTION,
MIRFIELD.

CONTENTS

HULSEAN LECTURES

THE GOSPEL AND HUMAN NEEDS

I.—REVELATION

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people."—ST. LUKE i. 68.

HAS He? That is the question we are all asking. The trouble in men's minds assumes protean forms, and is concerned about different points of detail. It may spend itself on speculative problems, such as those raised by conceiving the final reality as Personal, and that Person as a loving Father in a world so fraught with evil, or that Divine Nature as a threefold union. It may be occupied in sifting the grain from the chaff in the canonical Scriptures, or in trying to reach certainty in regard to the story of Jesus of Nazareth. It may be disturbed by the problem of adjusting theories of orderly development with any doctrine of the Fall or indeed of Sin—the supreme discontinuity. But at bottom of it all is the same question, "Hath God spoken to us by His Son? Were the heavens ever opened and a

glimpse of the world beyond vouchsafed to men's wondering eyes? Is it or is it not the case that

> 'A voice which man can trust
> Has murmured from the narrow house'?"

That is what we seek to know. That, no more and no less. And the answer is everything—in our lives.

I apprehend it would be true to say, that Harnack's small book on the essence of Christianity was epoch-making. Ever since it appeared men have been asking with fresh urgency, "What think ye of Christ?" They have realised more than ever the choice that lay before them, between the natural and the supernatural theory of the most potent personality in history. It may well be, as many tell us, that they are but lightly touched by the small points of dogma, and have grown a little tired of theologians contending. But about that which underlies these debates they are by no means apathetic. With more passion than ever they ask for guidance. With eager insistence, before unknown, the reflecting mind is putting the question, "Was Jesus of Nazareth different from other men in kind? Are we right to worship the Virgin-born as God?" Scorn as they may the distinctions of the schools and academic Christology, they cannot, even if they would, forbear the query, "Was the life of Jesus in any unique-

sense an outbreak from the other world, and an evidence of its reality? Or was it but a phase in that which I have heard called in the pulpit 'the harmonious religious development of mankind'?" In brief, is Christianity merely an episode, gracious indeed and noble, yet only an episode in the world's history, to be transcended inevitably with the progress of culture? Or is it the revelation of God, not one cult merely among others, but veritably supernatural religion?

The question comes with renewed poignancy to our generation. We live in a new age, to whose eyes "the Victorian era" has become an historical expression. Proud and conscious of its youth, the twentieth century refuses to echo the catchwords of its elders and flames into buoyant life. As one writer says, "a kind of Dionysiac rage of life" [1] has hold of men. Imperious and resistless they seek for that sense of freedom and power, of victory and joy, which Christians find only in One who said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," and, "these things have I said unto you, that your joy may be full." With postulates such as this, the instinct, that—

"The world means intensely and means good,"

the age is naturally one of faith, of positive affirmations, as the age just past was one of doubt and

hesitancy. This is indeed, *par excellence*, the age of faith, or rather faiths. Men have come at length to see that their directing ideals, alike in thought and action, are based upon certain presuppositions which themselves are beyond proof, and involve therefore an act of faith for those who live by them.[3] Now, Christianity offers itself as a working hypothesis for life—one among many—and as such it must be appraised by men and women who have to live. As a working hypothesis we claim that it embraces all the facts, as no other does, and that alone it gives enduring meaning to ideals and values which are ineradicable in our souls. In this view the struggle for the Christian faith has a little changed its character. In the last generation it was primarily a conflict between faith and unbelief or between a materialist and a spiritual theory or between idealists and agnostics. Now it has become a struggle for one form of *religion* against others. In the nineteenth century men accepted the dilemma propounded by Butler, and acted on the belief that there is no halfway house between Christianity and a negative or at best a suspensory position. The object of the struggle all that time was to secure some spiritual interpretation of the universe. Quite commonly it was assumed that Christianity of one sort or another was the obvious expression of that view. If a man gave up agnostic or materialist

opinions, he would most likely proclaim himself a Christian. This might take place in more than one way. If his difficulties had been purely speculative, a man who had surmounted the obstacles to belief in God would take the further leap into orthodoxy without more ado, finding the Church in possession and deeming it the most natural as well as the noblest expression of the religious instinct. Or he might treat the dogmas of the faith and even its historical facts as mainly symbolic, useful for the vulgar. He would thus label himself as Christian, and accommodate by methods "made in Germany" its special doctrines with the demands of true philosophy.

On the other hand, finding Christianity full of difficulties, both historical and speculative, he might at once range himself on the opposite side, and surrender all hope of a theistic or indeed of any solution of the puzzle of life.

Now, however, all this is changed; and it is gradually coming to be recognised that man is a religious animal; and the contest is no longer one for any creed against no creed, but of one creed against many rivals. All our most influential adversaries are now *religions*—very queer religions sometimes. Even among non-Christians the purely negative standpoint is far less common than it was. In a famous lecture at the end of the last century

Huxley argued that all the higher life of men rested upon postulates which were not the result of natural evolution and were avowedly directed to counteract it.[3] Even Herbert Spencer's agnosticism—or semi-theism, as it has been called—proposed to keep alive that consciousness of mystery which he regards as the essence of religion, and is the opposite of mere naturalism, and his personal attitude became more sympathetic in his later years.[4] Then and now Positivists, like Mr. Frederic Harrison, were as emphatic as any Christian in condemning the blankness of mere materialism.[5]

At this moment the most influential of professing non-Christian writers are trying to give to man the positive values of faith, without its theistic implications. Even when they deny the fact, they are posing as makers of religion. This is the case with the socialism of men so different as Mr. Wells and Mr. Blatchford; and still more with those disciples of Nietzsche, daily more articulate and contemptuous, who make a god out of the will to live. Mr. Bernard Shaw, with his doctrine of life-force—more emphatically Mr. John Davidson, the poet, with his deification of power and gospel of the ether—make at least an endeavour to give to men what they call a "satisfied imagination";[6] and, like Nietzsche, the latter stands in spite of himself for the spiritual freedom of man. Stronger evidence comes from Cambridge.

A writer well known to many here has tried to show that even agnostics ought not to be content with mere negation; and should in some way strive to preserve the springs of consolation and joy, even if needful by elaborating a new mythology.[7]

Nothing would be less akin to the militant rationalism of aggressive unbelief than a passage like the following: "Faith in some form or other seems to be almost a necessary condition, if not of life, yet of the most fruitful and noble life. . . . Most men, I think, are significant, and find and make life significant, in proportion to their faith."[8]

In one way or another the age is an age of religion, and the question for men to-day is not whether they will have any religion or none, but whether they will have the Christian religion or something else. This adds at once to the bitterness of the conflict and to its importance. It seems like to lose the genial courtesy, the gentlemanly languor which characterised the disputants in the days of "the New Republic." There is more fire and more contempt in those who reject our standards, now that they can envisage their own as in some sort a matter of faith. The struggle between natural and supernatural religion will be more protean and unceasing and less sympathetic and chivalric than was that between agnostics and Christians. It is not worth much trouble to fight hard for a man who really is

in doubt; it is worth a great deal if he is certain that he is right and his adversaries are either knaves or fools—unless they are both. No longer do we listen to the wistful regret of "Dover Beach":—

"The Sea of Faith
Was once too at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled;
Now I only hear
Its melancholy long withdrawing roar
Retreating to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world."

Instead of this one of the most brilliant of modern poets writes:—

"To purge the world of Christianity,
The sacrifice of every human life
That now enjoys or nauseates the sun
Would not be too exorbitant a price!"

and again:—

"We mean by war all that war ever meant.
Destruction's ministers, Death's freemen, Lust's
Exponents, daily like a blood red dawn
In flames and crimson seas we shall advance
Against the ancient immaterial reign
Of Spirit, and our watchword shall be still,
Get thee behind me, God—I follow Mammon."

In the last generation men were unable to take "Jesus as Lord," and they were sad. Now they are choosing other masters, and are glad. There is a world of difference.

Moreover, shining examples afford evidence that idealism, so far from inevitably leading on to Christ, does not always lead men even to theistic belief.[10] And facts are against the soundness of Butler's dilemma. Life in the Christian Church implies certain truths and raises certain problems with which theism as such is not troubled. The charm of Christianity is in proportion to those additional difficulties; and those who will not pay the price, but are yet incurably religious, are turning with renewed attraction to forms of what may be called natural religion. Pantheism, more or less thinly veiled, is not open to the attacks on Supernaturalism; and to souls lacking in any feeling of sin, it offers a certain satisfaction, appealing to that sense of awe and wonder and desire of mystical union with the Eternal, which is always a large element of religious feeling.[11]

But this is not all. The great common ground of ethical values has vanished. In the last age, attacks might be made on the Creed, or the lives of Christians, or on the influence of the Church, but one figure maintained its solitary and appealing supremacy. John Stuart Mill expressed feelings all but universal when he said that we could hardly have a higher aim than that Christ should approve our lives; and indeed the attraction of the character of Jesus seemed almost to increase with men's disbelief in all

its non-human elements. So thinking, unbelievers felt like the poet who watched the dawn of faith:—

"Oh! had I lived in that great day,
How had its glory new
Filled earth and heaven and caught away
My ravished spirit too

No thoughts that to the world belong
Had stood against the wave
Of love, that flowed so deep and strong
From Christ's then open grave

No cloister floor of humid stone
Had been too cold for me,
For me no eastern desert lone
Had been too far to flee.

No lonely life had passed too slow,
Whilst I could hourly scan
Upon his Cross with head sunk low,
That nailed, thorn-crownèd Man"

To men so feeling, it could only be with a passion of regret that they came to believe it was but a dream long ago and far away, and settled down in stern denial to a Christless world.

"While we believed on earth he went,
And open stood his grave,
Men called from chamber, church, and tent,
And Christ was by to save.

Now he is dead; far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town,
And on his head with shining eyes
The Syrian stars look down.

Ah! o'er that silent sacred land
Of sun and arid stone,
And crumbling wall and sultry sand
Sounds now one word alone;

'Unduped of fancy, henceforth Man
Must labour!—must resign
His all too human creeds, and soan
Simply the way divine!'"[12]

That condition no longer endures. Differences of creed have at length revealed a yawning chasm between our moral ideals. Apologists of those days were scorned as narrow-minded for venturing the view that Christian ethics were bound up with Christian dogma, and that with the decay of the one the other could not long maintain its hold. What they said, however, has come true; and can be proved in the triumphant jeers of our adversaries. The irruption of Nietzsche, that strange comet in the serene heaven of philosophy, has meant a revolution. The new ethics discards the notion of love, ridicules sacrifice and pity, and pours a virulence of scornful hatred upon Christ Himself. Christian purity, Christian sympathy and humility, Christian gentleness and even courtesy are set at naught by the new apostles of the will to power, and a saturnalia of selfish pride is set up as our ideal in such a passage as that I quoted; and many who would be shocked at the words are no less scornful of our moral aims.[13]

The question, "Do you admire Christ?" comes before "Do you believe Him?" One erudite and not unsympathetic investigator gravely shatters the

claims of orthodoxy because the system could not find room for such men as Goethe and Bismarck.[14] So that the claim to judge a religion by its ideal of character, not merely its doctrine, is by no means a dodge of apologists at bay. Personally, I find my belief in the Christian faith immensely strengthened by its incompatibility with the ideals of Bismarck; and do not see even in Goethe an inspiring substitute for Christ.

Comparative mythology has widened and intensified the problem. Now that religion is recognised as a universal function of the race, it is being scientifically observed and analysed all the world over, while the religious aspects of ancient cultures are studied with growing sympathy. We cannot now echo the vaunt of St. Augustine about the virtues of the pagan world being *splendida vitia*; or treat Mahomet as merely a false prophet. Nor can we deny the immense amount of interaction between the religion of Israel and other earlier systems. Above all, the knowledge of Mithraic worship in the Roman Empire has revealed the striking interdependence of the Christian Church and other cults. So in ever-widening circles, away from the debates of the scholars, the question comes with increasing force:[15] Is there anything unique in the Christian faith? Is it more than a phase of culture, perhaps the best hitherto, but now ripe to rottenness, and ready to

pass into something better? Must we take the line of a merely historical sympathy and regard the Church as but an item in an age-long process, still far from its goal—or is she "the heir of all the ages," having in her treasure-house things new and old, and worthy of all the deeper reverence because in her liturgies, her temples, and her creeds she does but express the garnered experience of all human life and every religious system?[16]

On all these grounds it behoves us to-day to ask ourselves once more the question, What do we mean by speaking of the Gospel as a revelation? We are compelled to try to realise afresh the distinctive nature of the Christian life in presence of forms of worship that are either non-Christian or only partly so, as upholding a very definite ideal of character which is its own and will not flourish in any other soil, and as a society, a peculiar people—making part of human progress and yet having God's especial life—a religion at once historical and absolute.

To this place and this office the topic is fit though hard. *The unique satisfaction of the needs of man afforded by life in the Christian Church* at once appals and commands one who stands where so many noble and gracious spirits have given in days gone by their witness, and testified the truth that here at least (as I heard in this pulpit) "*Faith is not afraid to reason, and reason is not ashamed to adore.*"[17] It

is laid down as the duty of the Hulsean preacher to "defend revealed religion"; and it is of Christian faith as revealed that we are now to think—that faith by which we see the world as a society of free, created, and immortal spirits, a world of real chances and incalculable catastrophes, a world of broken harmonies, of pain and sin; withal its Maker known to us as Father and Friend, His love flashing out in the most astounding marvels, the Incarnation and Death of the One-begotten—Whose rising is less a wonder than His dying, if He be Who He is—Who by His Cross redeems us now, and in His body the Church gives us in Baptism and the Eucharist the very spirit and essence of eternal life. This world with God its blazing fact, and prayer and faith real forces stronger than the armies of evil, though quite congruous to common sense and our inner life, is incongruous with any *mechanical* system, whether of forces or ideas, or with an Absolute which is unrevealable even in symbol. Above all, this world in which God cares for us, and we can be "in love with God," is not to be reconciled with any of the myriad forms of Pantheism. Pantheism and Christianity, it has been well said, are the two views of life which between them divide the allegiance of men; and that thought may help us in making the great choice.[18]

The choice, be it observed, is not speculative so much as practical. It is not whether I am to hold

in theory a set of propositions—but whether I may go on kneeling in prayer and confession, reciting the Creed in worship, and receiving God in His own sacrament. We might put it in one phrase, Is the Eucharist a sham or a reality? for that service includes every element and unites them in harmonious praise. Thus in "this great argument," which to-day reverberates through Europe, it is not an academic thesis, the amusement of intellectuals, but the faith of the millions that is at stake—the faith of the worker and the soldier, the redemption of the harlot and the rake, the hope of all who suffer, the joy of all who die: is He real or a phantom, this Lord of ours?

And if for this faith I stand to-day, I ask you to believe that it is not to make vain show, or to shatter in argument a disdained opponent. To others faith is the bright serenity of uncloudod vision; to me it is the angel of an agony, the boon of daily and hourly conflict. In these years as God's priest I have felt the pressure of crowding doubts, and learned in bitterness that to give up agnostic views may yet leave one far from the Kingdom of God—farther, save by His grace, than ever before. I would ask in humbleness your prayers, both young and old, that neither to me nor others these words be vain.

I would add that these lectures make no claim to specialist research. They do but express the way in

which to one man alive "to the currents of troubled thought" the truth of the Cross shines out and what seems a hindrance has been made a help.

In the first place, it is idle to deny the fact or the pressure of difficulties. The knowledge of them is more widely diffused, the burden more acutely felt, than it has probably ever been before. Yet the Church fighting with other religions is at least no worse off than it was in the first and second centuries when it was on the eve of its greatest triumphs, though opposed by all the powers of this world, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," organised and triumphant as they never were before or since, by hostile worships in possession, and by modes of thought untouched by Christian living. Nor again is the general atmosphere among cultivated men one whit more unfavourable than in the eighteenth century when Butler prefaced his "Analogy" with the well-known words: "It is come to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

Since those days, when men regarded the Church as the figment of priests, and looked for its disappearance as the great *Aufklärung* should spread, the faith has made conquests that even to believers would have seemed barely credible, and cast ten thousand times its strange spell over the heart of man. For although to us—"upon whom the ends of the world are come"—many things seem hard that were easy to our fathers, we have over them this great advantage. The Church goes on. Assailed it has been on all sides and on every ground, attacked by some because she is other-worldly, by others because she is not; accused in one breath of an insane altruism and in the next of unworthy egotism; its title-deeds torn up, its facts disputed, its influence denied! Its adversaries have demolished it a thousand times in argument and pronounced the Christian Church a dead thing, and cried to carry out the corpse, for all was over but the shouting. And they have betaken themselves to shouting, only to find when it was over that the slain hydra had raised a new head, and all was to do again. It is so easy, so very easy, to disprove the Christian religion—to one's own satisfaction; but it has not yet proved possible to destroy it. The volume of Christian experience goes on increasing—its call to the individual soul is never quite unregarded. In the darkest days there are thousands—some of them even

educated—to whom Christ is the one rock, the Cross the one hope, and the Church the abiding home for weak and sin-stained souls.

None the less the difficulties are there—or rather here. They attack those within no less than those without. Nor may we glibly attribute them to moral turpitude. All of us know, perhaps among our own friends, men better and more devoted than ourselves who yet in no wise worship "Jesus as Lord."

Nevertheless, it *is*, I believe, a spiritual rather than an intellectual force that is needed to overcome the obstacles, and that is the very meaning of the appeal to faith (without which Jesus could not do mighty works) as the basis of our life. Faith like all trust is an act of the will, which decides to take *risks*; and so whenever it is tried, it must involve *courage*. It is want of pluck, the desire of clinging to the bank, of moving no farther than we can see that makes our intellectual difficulties insuperable.

Consider what courage, ordinary courage, actually does. It does not do away with obstacles or remove pain or danger, indeed it often increases them; if there were no hunting, no football, there would be fewer broken collar-bones or injured knees. What a brave man does is to accept, even invite, pain of one sort or another, and turn it into joy and strength.

He acts on the principle of him whose advice to his son going to school was expressed in the lines:—

"God gave man pain for friend,
And death for surest hope of life."[19]

Seventy-five per cent. of education consists in learning, either in physical or mental life, that we are to face risks, not shun them, and that so *faced* they are the condition of a richer and happier life. Courage may not be the one virtue, as a recent writer proclaims, but it is a very real grace; it embraces a wider scope than is often supposed, and carries us on from the simplest acts to the heights of sacrifice and faith. It is nothing short of amazing how many have learned its lesson in outward life, yet fail to see how it is at the bottom of that "dying to live" which is the philosophy of the Cross. And the dying must be real; if there were no effort, no fatigue, no bruises, no accidents, there could be none of the joy of courage. So in regard to religion, if there were no difficulties or perplexities, if belief were a mathematical certitude, there could be none of that "personal trust in a person," none of that *élan* of victory and freedom which belongs to faith. It is not by ignoring our difficulties or treating them as unreal, that we can have the joy of faith; but by finding in them the secret of our power. Our apologetic grows out of the very heart of our trouble. The attraction of the Christian life

to living men and women with hopes and struggles and sins is just in those very points which it is hardest to justify in pure theory. It is not in spite of these difficulties, but because of them—or rather of the truth which arouses them—that faith has its value for men, who have to live. Because it claims to be not merely part of a historical process (though of course it *is* that), but

> "The finger of God, a flash of the will that can
> Existent behind all laws, that made them and lo! they are."

that revelation is so uplifting to man bowed down with the sense of his own impotence, with the awful vastness and rigidity of natural law, and longing above everything to be assured of his freedom; it is because it tells of mysteries, which no ingenuity of reasoning can grasp, that it enthralls a nature wondering in reverence at the strangeness of itself; because God lived on earth as a growing lad and a common man, the common man finds so close to him this tender and appealing love. Lastly, it is because Christ upon the Cross has won for us an *impossible* pardon, a deliverance unhoped from sin and the diseased will that the worst and weakest can hail him as Saviour and Friend.

Let us for a moment consider in the light of this principle the idea of the miraculous. It has been our tendency of late to put this in the background.[20]

Dominated by sonorous commonplaces about irrevocable law and iron uniformity, most of us find or did find grave difficulty to faith in the miraculous. All the alleged instances we strive to reduce into conformity with natural order. It is with reluctance that we admit any as actual, in spite of the fact that we know that the idea is bound up with a special revelation of what otherwise man could not know.

It is true that the difficulty lies deeper. Miracles are but the expression of God's freedom; the truth that He is above and not merely within the order of nature. Disbelief in them really leads on to pantheism. Displaying this truth of God's liberty and personality they arouse no deeper speculative difficulties than does the common daily fact of human free-will—perhaps even less. No reasoning has solved that problem or reconciled the deliverance of consciousness with a belief in the uniformity of nature, if that belief be extended into an entire philosophy of things. On the other hand, no determinism, "hard or soft," can be reconciled with the psychology of repentance, or with our sense of personal activity, for this view postulates the many, the other absorbs everything into the one. If we have once surmounted the cardinal *crux* of human freedom, there is no real ground for boggling over miracles.[21]

But with the increasing pressure of this notion of iron law, there is an increasing sense of the need

of a power above it. Instead of being a drag upon faith, the miraculous, or the idea of revelation, or whatever you choose to call it, is once more beginning to be a pillar of it. Without it we cannot consistently retain the notion of freedom, which is essential to our moral life. Miracles were easy of credit in days when personal agency was detected throughout nature, and the physical world was not conceived as an orderly whole. Belief was easy then, but it was also superfluous; for the miracle was simply a fact, like any other fact of daily life, and conveyed none but a particular lesson. Nowadays the belief is not easy, but it is essential; unless we are to be deprived of all faith in our own spiritual being, and driven to view the world as a vast system, which may perhaps be a living whole, but without any place for personalities, and with our own loves and fears, our sin or sanctity mere illusions, a sort of phosphorescent by-product of the outer world. The iron law of physical sequences is always with us; the pressure of the world, environment, heredity, is patent and appalling; what is a mere theory to the student is the most constant and oppressive of facts to the plain man. It is just this very thing he wants to escape from. It is only miracle, revelation, that can assure him that behind all this network of material forces there is a living will; while God manifest in Christ displays that will as

Love. That is all he wants. That gives him a refuge, a home for the soul, whose deepest emotion and noblest desires may now be satisfied. Just as a man of business or toil needs a home with all its pieties, if his higher nature is not to be starved, so man "who goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening" and is over confronted by natural law, demands the assurance of spiritual freedom, of the living reality of Love and Peace. Such an assurance is not now possible if there be no revelation which may prevent all his highest thought from "fading into the light of common day," and being withered by the chill of rigid natural forces. Miracles, in fact, give men just that thrill, that sense of exhilaration and freedom which all of us experience in any conspicuous act of heroism. Colonel Picquart apparently ruining his career to defend Dreyfus; a schoolboy saving another from drowning, have the same lesson. They show that man is *not* the slave of circumstance. Here, we say, is an act which breaks the chain of environment, which rises above the outward, and uplifts us with a sense of our own freedom—to go and do likewise. This is its appeal. So with revelation.

Vain, indeed, and a mockery it is to tell a man broken with trouble or a woman who has lost child or friend, that he should bow before the majesty of law, and worship the changeless harmonies of

nature. What to him is cosmic emotion? It is that very bitterness he seeks to throw off. It is the universe which crushes him. He wants to be free from it. Is there nothing behind the curtain? Have the gates for ever closed behind the dear one? Is there indeed no voice or any that answers, no feeling behind these cold resistless laws, beyond the stars in the courses that never alter? Is it really all? That is what he asks. Like the hero in "Maud," who has been

> "Brought to understand
> A sad astrology, the boundless plan
> That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
> Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
> Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
> His nothingness into man,"

he can only be helped in the same way—by love.

> "But now shine on, and what care I,
> Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
> The counter-charm of space and hollow sky,
> And do accept my madness, and would die
> To save from some slight shame one simple girl."

It is Love not Law that is the hope—half smothered and inarticulate—of all who live and suffer; and this we only know by the crash of Christ's coming to earth and showing once for all the real *splendeur de Dieu*—so often misconceived. For while miracles show that God has a freedom like to man, and can make nature an instrument of spirit,

Jesus Christ's birth and His death and rising again for us have shown the one immutably rigid law of things—to be the fact of God's love. That which in its idea is free and gracious, and exhaustless in its riches, is the one principle,

"The light whose smile kindles the universe,"

that and no other. And if that be, if God's love be the truth of all, bereavement and pain, disaster and gloom, though hard, may yet be borne; and hope is once more possible.

That truth can come only from a revealed faith; for it cannot by any reasoning be extracted from the natural order.

In an age like this, when the scientific knowledge of the natural world and our power to use it have increased so marvellously, we need some bulwark to guard us against being lost in the sea of naturalism: the danger is great lest we take the part for a whole, lest we extend into a general theory of things conceptions useful, as a partial description of the outward phenomena, conceived in abstraction, but not an account of life or ourselves.[22] Such a bulwark is afforded by the idea of the miraculous and its content in the revelation of Jesus Christ. This alone can save us from confusing God with the creation which is His will. This alone can point to a way of escape, to a sure refuge from the iron

chain of cause and effect. For this alone assures us that we are not items in a series, cogs in a great machine; but free spirits living in society, the children of one like unto us, in so far that we may love Him and speak to Him; and caring so much that God Himself died to save us. God revealed in Christ is the one truth, which gives to tired men and women the right—the right to be as little children, with the child's freshness of delight and trust.

"That is all we know on earth, and all we need to know."

II.—MYSTERY

"The Light shineth in the darkness."—St. John i. 5.

"Christianity not Mysterious" is the title of a book once famous. Descartes and his philosophy dominated men's minds—even to some extent Fénelon's—in the later seventeenth and the early eighteenth century. Clearness and logical consistency were idols. Men had a *naïf* faith in the individual reason, and were resolute to credit nothing that could not be demonstrated; nor had they any notion that words were inadequate to express reality.

These notions governed the minds of orthodox and deists alike. It was natural that men should seek to accommodate the Gospel to theory, and, under the guise of defence, should minimise the element of mystery in the life of the Church no less than in human society, and should repudiate all authority—even where they were orthodox treating the Christian faith as merely a code of morals with special sanctions.

Toland's able work is perhaps less unorthodox

than is commonly supposed, only because there are no wonders at all to him. He asserts distinctly that nature has no mysteries, that faith is based entirely upon ratiocination—for it never occurred to those men to criticise reason—and that Church authority is a figment.[1]

He goes on to adopt a line of argument at present very popular, that Christ's doctrine was corrupted from its primitive simplicity by the infusion of Greek metaphysics and pagan culture, and in this way produced the historic Church and Creeds.

Another book of the same epoch, Matthew Tindal's "Christianity as Old as the Creation," of which only the first volume was ever published, elaborated the thesis that the Christian faith was natural religion, differing merely in its mode of promulgation. If this be so, any deviation from natural religion in the existing presentment of Christianity must be at best superfluous, at worst a degradation due to the interest and cunning of priests.

These books are now buried in libraries; nor is it probable that they will ever be republished. Their hard, unimaginative philistinism, their lack of historical sympathy and religious awe, would render them repellent to many whose fundamental aims are not different.[2]

Not different! Are we not to-day in face of a movement in all essentials the same as that of the

sentimental rationalism of the eighteenth century? There is the same effort to strip the Catholic faith of everything that is perplexing to the understanding, to interpret the life of the historic Church with reference to categories fashionable at the moment.

The modes of thought of the eighteenth century were different from those now dominant. In those days came the deistic and latitudinarian divines or philosophers, Locke and Hoadly and their congeners, with a loud appeal to clear the mind of cant, to purify religion by divorcing it from ecclesiasticism (*i.e.* from its social and communal expression), to interpret Christianity apart from the inventions of a corrupt and self-seeking hierarchy, purging it of miracle and mystery, and turning the most gracious and beautiful, the most tender and appealing of all God's gifts to man into a rational morality, open to the comprehension of *L'homme moyen sensuel*. As for the "dim common populations," they might go on believing what suited them, until such time as enlightenment had spread to them also.

It is a similar phenomenon we witness to-day. All around us we see new theologies,[3] up-to-date catechisms,[4] common-sense religions,[5] re-births,[6] re-statements, some profound, some a little crude, all rather depressing. From London and New York and Birmingham, not to speak of the Continent,

books pour from the press, which are all directed by the same bias.

We are to learn the permanent value of Christian faith by stripping it of every wonder and every mystery. We are to reject the strange birth as materialistic, the physical resurrection as unscientific, sacramental grace as magical—above all, the deity of our Lord disappears in a cloud of phrases; and all the Churches are invited to join in a *caput mortuum* of pious sentiment and pantheistic emotion. In brief, we are to capitulate to the enemy on every controverted point except the general need of religion and prayer, and then to trust to the God of philosophy to come down "from the machine" and save from the wrecks of ecclesiasticism just enough to suit men of parts and of polish, while throwing to the wolves the poor man's God, who wrought wonders and rose from the tomb.

This tendency is to be observed from within no less than without the Church. One priest of the English Church, who wrote volumes to prove Newman dishonest (unlike Kingsley waiting till death made reply impossible), has proudly elaborated a Christianity relieved entirely of the supernatural; and other instances are obvious.[7]

Moreover the same bias is tempting all of us. Indeed, unless God's revelation be compulsory—and *ex hypothesi* it is not—it *must* be possible to

view it from a rationalistic standpoint. The temptation to a purely humanitarian view of Christ is constant and universal. It is very easy for any of us to fall into the snare, and seek to bring the Gospel down to the level of our transitory conceptions, instead of viewing them in the light of the Cross. The danger is there; we cannot avoid it; but we may protect ourselves against it by prayer and effort.

The Apostles themselves needed education before they learnt the folly of tying their Lord down to current political notions about the Messiah. So in all ages disciples will be liable to fall into a similar error, and to minimise the greatness and "peculiarity" of the Gospel, thus making it the reflection of our thinking, instead of the revelation of God's life.

In practice we accept the facts of life, however mysterious, and try to deal with them even where we cannot fit them into theory. In religion it seems often simpler to deny the mystery and to make the abstract understanding the measure of all things. That is what they did in the eighteenth century. That is what we are asked to do to-day. True, where our fathers thought of God as a far potentate, we prate of the divine immanence, as though the words were a sort of mystic incantation; and speak with bated breath of orderly and

continuous change, as though the intellectual difficulty sprang not from the idea of identity in change, but from the time it takes to accomplish itself.[8]

But now, as then, there is the same hostility to the notion of revelation, and even greater antagonism to miracles; which it is beginning to call wrong and not merely irrational to credit. These writers are indeed a little more humble as they appear far more earnest than those of the eighteenth century. They are less clear and hard in their outlines. In words they accept mystery and the suprarational; and rise into lyrical raptures over the universe. But this is only words. The moment mystery becomes concrete in Christ or His Cross or the Eucharist their injured intelligence revolts and they loudly protest in the name of rationality and common sense. All this too in the name of Christ. I am not now speaking of agnostics, but of men who believe themselves possessed with the sense of the religious needs of men and their intellectual propensities. Finding in orthodox Christianity great difficulties, they purpose, by what seem to them changes of detail, to make it once more acceptable to the cultivated intelligence. Thus they are in their own view apologists. They look for a great revival. Once more will the Church go forth conquering and to conquer, purged of its grosser elements, the relics

of pagan and oriental error, refined to the modern taste, relieved of its ignorant love of marvels, its feminine submission to priests, and its really rather vulgar preoccupation with sin and matters which decent people do not think about.

It is unfortunate that the Christian Church does not exist for the benefit of decent people; her primary concern is with those who are not. It was the poor who had the Gospel preached to them. We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness. This is as true to-day as when St. Paul wrote the words.

Moreover it is a test of truth.

You cannot search for religion merely from the side of intellectual inquiry and arrive at a Christian result. It is impossible. For the intellect demands necessity, and freedom is the postulate of the Gospel. If Christianity is the marvel it claims to be, to those who fail to recognise this Christians are bound to seem fools. If we do not, it is either because they are more Christian than they know, or because we are less Christian than we imagine; and it is far more probable that we have unconsciously surrendered to their assumptions than that they are coming nearer to us.

It is true that the Christian Church has done more to make life more beautiful and gracious, more to stimulate men's minds, more infinitely to

inspire artists and poets, than any other cause in history. For Christ alone gives enduring meaning to those values without which work is vain, and unlocks the treasure-house of love, that is joy, which is the soul of art. Yet it is not to culture, as such, that the Gospel ever can or ever does address itself; but to the common heart of common men and women, on fire with life and love, torn with struggle and loss and sin, and appalled by death. What is the use of judging Christ by standards He does not profess to satisfy? Quite plainly He declared that unless a man were willing to enter the Kingdom as a little child he could not belong to it. It will not be Christ's Kingdom, but something else which will result, if you transform the Church into an institution which might be agreeable for a university extension meeting, but has no fields where children may play, and is too respectable for the poor.

For these can readily embrace the love of a Father in heaven, of His Son who died to save them, and of a Spirit who helps and understands them. Would they feel at home in that adult religion now demanded, or find themselves at all in a sentimental altruism, spiced with pious phrases, decked out in a half-scientific, half-philosophic terminology, which may be a comfort to those who use it, but to us is colourless and dispiriting.[9] Others may exhibit a

real reverence for the human figure of Jesus, and admire—with a certain patronage—His selfless and gentle spirit. But they denude the story of all that makes it unique, and treat the Church, not as a society wherein His Spirit dwells, but as a human institution, mainly bad. Thus they eliminate Christ first from the other world and then from this; while bidding us admire a few isolated moments and phrases in the Gospels, they plume themselves on having secured a form of Christianity in which, if the intelligent can find few objections, the "plain man" discovers fewer charms.

The truth is that apologists are constantly tempted to concede the claims of their adversaries by arguing upon their assumptions, and these assumptions are inherently opposed to the Christian faith, as revealed and supernatural. If that faith be what it claims, its defenders have only one course open to them. They must help man's eyes to see the King in His beauty; must set forth the grace of Christian truth as the veritable splendour of God; and show that it is more congruous with life, as it is lived, than is any proffered substitute. I think that since the time of Descartes, the process I am condemning has been specially dominant.

For a long time men attempted to establish the being of God by irresistible arguments, the only deity thus attainable being a creation of the reason.

God, if He exists, is not the conclusion of an argument but the most stupendous of facts. This, however, has long been abandoned except among professed scholastics; Butler's maxim that "probability is the guide of life" made a revolution. Since then, however, there is a somewhat analogous danger in the attempt to secure irrefragable historical certitude. But the evidence for such facts as our Lord's birth and resurrection cannot be appraised apart from our pre-suppositions. There is therefore no prospect of any real agreement among scholars upon the root facts of which the creeds are the expression.

With some a different line is proposed. Idealism in various forms displays the inadequacy of mere rationalism, and develops what its adherents regard as unanswerable arguments for the spiritual nature of reality. A firm basis in reflection is thus believed to exist for theistic belief, and it is anticipated that these benefits will soon be universal when philosophic training is extended to all. This is a great act of faith, for neither the past nor the present position of philosophic controversies observed as facts afford much ground for any hope of general agreement. This temper often brings with it a refusal to consider as vital any belief not in this way acceptable to the philosopher, and develops the tendency to transmute religion into philosophy. It is often hostile or

apathetic to all the historical elements in Christianity, and though quite compatible with orthodox belief, tends to treat religion mainly as a system of ideas, a luxury for the study rather than the lord of life and death. All these methods spring from the same error—the desire to do away with the element of risk in faith, and a dislike of what is unfathomable to the intelligence. To all the forms of the new theology there is one common assumption —a *naïf* faith in the intellect of man.

This faith is not only improbable but is contradicted daily by the facts of life. If we *were* able by thinking to plumb the secrets of things, it is clear that no revelation is needed, nor could there be any place in religion for mystery, which in its very notion is something unfathomable. On this view it would be true, as Browning said in irony that there is now a higher tribunal than God, the educated man,[10] and the Christian religion must be made subject entirely to our intelligence, and shorn of all elements which transcend it.

But is this the case? Is the abstract understanding so completely master of life that we can afford to dismiss without further ado all those apparent facts which seek to elude or transcend its categories? Is it not rather the case that every single fact of real life lies beyond us, and the problem is solved only by living?

All nature may be movement, but does any one really understand motion or change? We are told that science has not yet explained one single fact, and in the simplest things in outward life we find a mystery unfathomable.[11] It is but the universal experience which is summed up by the poet:—

"Slight as thou art, thou art enough to hide,
Like all created things, secrets from me,
And stand a barrier to eternity.
And I, how can I praise thee well and wide
From where I dwell upon the hither side,
Thou little veil for so great mystery
When shall I penetrate all things and thee
And then look back? For this I must abide,
Till thou shalt grow and fold and be unfurled
Literally between me and the world.
Then I shall drink within beneath a spring
And from a poet's side shall read his book.
Oh! daisy mine, what will it be to look
From God's side even of such a simple thing?"[12]

But even though this were not the case, and the outer world were quite within our intelligence, it is the inward life that is the real, and that is always a mystery, and speaks of something beyond. Bergson, the supremely acute observer of this life declares, after minute and positive examination, *that the intellect is by its nature incapable of comprehending life* (and he gives the ground, as none else before him has done).[13] This is the instinctive deliverance of every man and every boy, of all who have loved, or suffered, or chosen, however it may be obscured by the obsession

of scientific uniformity or rational categories. The partial, relatively superficial, character of intellectual processes is revealed in a flash at the crises of life. To one who is straining eyes through the gates of death for his friend who has passed beyond them, how unreal seem all studious delights! What a futile mockery in the face of fact are all men's speculative projections of reality. We may dwell at other times in an abstract world and make ourselves happy with conceptions. But life crashes in with "its wonder, its beauty, and its terror"—our house of cards trembles; and we are kicked as it were from the rational to the real, from the surface to the depths.

Religion has been described as *living with the deepest depths of being*; its *raison d'être* is the sense of mystery.[14] All its rites do but give form and body to the instinct that things are greater than we know; that we cannot grasp in our minds the real things of life; that there is an everlasting beyond in ourselves, as in God. Mystery is, in fact, no less needful than miracle in our world of thought to-day. The one saves us from a world of cast iron; the other from that profounder slavery of the mind to its own creations, from that superstition of the logical process, which is willing in its blindness to treat the real life of struggle and hope and joy as mere illusion, if only at the cost it may preserve its self-consistency. This is to make an idol out of an

instrument. The perfection of theoretic harmony is dearly bought if life be the price we are to pay for it.

Mystery, which it is sought to eliminate from the creed, is of its very essence; for the creed is a "symbol" in its old name, the expression partial and inadequate of something greater—life. Man's sense of the greatness of things, of the profound wonder in his daily life, is too deep to be eradicated by any dialectic cleverness, and is proof against all the ridicule of philosophers.

It is this sense so deep and universal that makes the laity so conservative, for the theologian may be tempted to construe the creed mainly as speculation; to the layman it is life. It embodies to him his instinct of the greatness of things, and the profound wonder of his daily life. And thus he is cool and unregarding of all the merriment discovered by theorists in the speculative difficulties of his faith. Demonstrate to your heart's content the contradictions of the Divine Personality, of a Triune God, of the Incarnation, and he is undismayed. He is not concerned to explain his creed; his business is with living, and he discerns no real relation between your fine-drawn theories and life as he knows it. Confuse, if you like, the Christian God with the Absolute of philosophy, and then use this confusion to argue that God is either not good or not almighty, and he is no more perplexed than

by so many conundrums, quite unanswerable and equally childish.[15] He knows that the threads of life pass out beyond him; that "talking's puzzling work"; and he resents your efforts "to pluck the heart out of his mystery." His mystery; that is the very root of the religious sense, and those who attempt to tamper with creeds on that ground, and on that ground alone, are doomed to failure. For Christ appeals to men who have this sense; and *He takes it for granted.*

No reasoning can affect those who have it not. We cannot by modifying the faith make it one whit more acceptable to the thorough-going unbeliever. Despise us he does and will; all the more if he sees that we are afraid of him. I think that one ground of the respect which infidels have for the Roman Church is that they feel that here is a set of men who brave all their taunts and do not budge an inch; for whom the tyrannous rhetoric of naturalism or rationalism is scatholess as the idle air. Fools of course they are, but so are all Christians; they are neither the better nor the worse for that; but at least they have the courage of their stupidity, and do not attempt to whittle away their faith and "meditate emasculate Immanence." Now we are tempted to do this; for we do not like it being said that no candid and intelligent man can be a Christian.[16] We ought to like it, or at least to bear it.

To be scorned as fools is the one way in which those who work with their minds can say with truth that "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake." It is the offence of the Cross, and we may not shrink from it. You cannot serve God and Mammon with the mind any more than with the heart. Somewhere there comes the choice between worshipping God and idolising your own mind. You cannot escape the choice; and you must stake your all upon the leap.

> "He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his desorts are small,
> Who dares not put it to the touch,
> To gain or lose it all."

Idle it is and waste of breath to argue with men like the author of "The Churches and Modern Thought," or Mr. J. M. Robertson.[17] Their outlook is anti-Christian to start with. The rose of Dante with the Saints of Christ is to them as ugly and unmeaning as the harmonies of Whistler to a jury of bagmen, or the *Fioretti* to the late Mr. Samuel Smiles. There is no common ground between us and a man who could read the New Testament and then pronounce that "some of the sayings of Jesus display a relatively high moral standard."[18] He is indeed a strength to one's own faith, for in his extreme cleverness and logical consistency he shows us the true meaning of ideas, which others

deck in more favourable colours. There can be no question of satisfying such men, or inducing them to think better of us, or say that we are less ignorant than other Christians. Their contempt is the only boon we can ask of them.

Far in truth from these vulgarities are the men who in the name of Christ demand a revolution in the Church; but are they not, and we also, in danger of being hypnotised by notions, which such writers carry to their conclusion? Is not this the case alike with that obsession of natural uniformity of which we spoke last week, and with that dream of rationalistic certitude which we are considering to-day? and does not each of them do violence to the religious consciousness?

Taking the religious sense as a given fact, are we right in supposing that a religion without mystery would satisfy its needs? Are not those very mysteries, which are most repugnant to the rationalist, the very elements which make the faith so great? I take one instance—the cardinal one—the Eucharist. Believe it or not, you cannot deny that no other rite has gathered round it such tenderness of devotion, or stimulated so deeply man's sense of God's nearness and love; nor will it be disputed that here is mystery enshrined in the actual and the concrete—not far off, but in the daily life. For this reason the Eucharist is inevitably the first object of dislike

to the rationalistic temper, and offends men who will accept other and less immediate mysteries. Yet Europe, since Wyclif, affords ample evidence that where this mystery is ignored or denied, religious life—except for spurts of individual piety and mysticism—becomes chill and commonplace, and in time the other supernatural aspects are also seen to vanish, as in Germany and Geneva.[10]

Does it not then appear a rash undertaking to reconstitute the Christian Church by excising all its most wonderful elements? Are not the accomplished and respectable persons who preach the crusade a little muddle-headed, if we may be pardoned the word? Is not even an eminent man like Sir Oliver Lodge making a blunder, and mistaking futile concessions to an implacable foe for defence of that religion which he loves so dearly? The aim is to strengthen the ark of the Church; the danger is (as Carlyle once said of a similar effort) that we are boring holes in the bottom. Truly it would be pitiful, if while we are overthrowing the cargo to lighten the ship, we should lose the rudder too, and drive it on the rocks. Before we turn the house of our God into a glorified Polytechnic Institute, it were well to pause and ask ourselves whether the age-long instincts of humanity are to go for nothing; whether the love and devotion which gather round the Cross have not some deeper root than stupidity or fear.

I think there is such a root; it lies far down, and ineradicable within us. It is man's own consciousness that is the abiding home of mystery, and offers resistless front to all the thrust of dialectical attack. Dominated by the daily pressure of the outward, or by the intellectualist fantasy, we forget to ask ourselves what is most vital. Is not the reality of life to us all, neither sense nor intellectual process, but that dark inner world—that twilight of reflection—in which we grope and wonder from day to day, fighting with devils whose name is legion, whose bewildered gloom is lit by strange lights of love and pain, and transforms itself a hundred times an hour? Love and pain and death, but above all things chance and choice are present for us all; they are the most real things in life; "divine anarchists," they baffle all efforts to sum the series of being, and defy prediction. These are the things we really know, and all else is secondary and subordinate, or partial and abstract. It is in the "abysmal depths of personality" that we find the final and fatal foe of mere intellectualism.

But this sense is not developed in isolation. It is home and school, social and communal life, which reveal man to himself, and show him at once his littleness and greatness, his powers of sacrifice and joy, his need of sympathy and love. The idol of self-sufficient individualism is the danger of all

rationalism, and it is destroyed only by life in society and by the need of love. Love is the mystery of man's nature no less than of God's; nothing else inspires the whole being, just because we cannot reach its end. The man who loves will never weep that he has no more worlds to conquer, for love knows neither end to its sacrifice nor bounds to its desire. In the words of a great living writer: "Mysteries which have no direct ethical value bear most directly on Love, which ever seeks a certain infinity and hiddenness in the object of its life. A thoroughly comprehensible personality would have no attraction for us; it would afford no scope for the unitive effort in which Love consists. There must always be a beyond, a new territory to conquer, a new difference to overcome. . . . It is neither what we seem to understand about God, that feeds our Love; nor the fact that He is definitely beyond our understanding, but the fact that man can ever progress in knowledge and love, and always with a sense of an infinite 'beyond.' It is at the margin where the conquering light meets the receding darkness that love finds its inspiration. To the savage He is but the biggest and strongest of men; to the rationalist He is but the most intelligent and moral; to Faith He is the hidden Infinite of which these are but the finite symbols." [20]

Now rationalism in all its forms is directly con-

trary to the instinct expressed in these words. It tends to destroy the spirit of awe which is of the essence of religion, and it is assisted by certain other characteristics of our time, its want of quiet and control, its habit of mistaking mere instruction for education, and information for culture. These tendencies, though powerful just now, are at bottom alien from the English mind, whose rooted dislike of theory is based on the sense that "reality is richer than thought"; and that action is the true life. Doubtless our sense "that we can muddle through" has its dangers, and indifference and folly are partly responsible for the Englishman's refusal to think things out. But when this is not exaggerated, and the due rights of the intellect are recognised, this very genius for action gives to the English mind the best opportunity of making progress; it is not speculation that is the danger, but speculation merely for its own sake and apart from action. The English vagueness which some condemn springs largely from this sense, that the springs of life are deeper than all reasoning, and are to be found in the power to act and love, in those primal instincts and unconquerable emotions which cannot be reduced to formula. And this, *when coupled with real intellectual activity*, produces the noblest results; for it combines the respect for tradition and authority with the ardour of inquiry, which preserves it alike against rashness

and stagnation. In the present problem the office of mediating between new and old may not unfitly repose upon that Church whose genius is displayed in the serene and gracious intelligence of Hooker, in the glowing thought of Westcott, in the wise refusal of Butler to require demonstration in the matters of life where "probability is the guide." It is the temper fostered by our school and college systems, whatever their defects. Perhaps we do not always apply their results to the sphere of religion; although the deep reverence for the mysteries of the faith which can be found still among many of our educated classes in a higher degree than on the Continent is at least a partial consequence. I imagine that, however little devout he may be, the attitude of the English officer or professional man would be much less hostile to the Faith than it is in France.

It is partly due to this cause. We learn, whatever else we do not learn, at school and college, the incalculable worth of traditions, of reverence, of obedience; and the way in which the spirit of corporate life alone develops our manhood. We learn, or may learn, the futility of mere individualism, and the abstract and partial character of purely intellectual processes; we can see their value, but we do not as a rule tend to overrate them—although other causes may make us do so.

There are many faults in our education, but it has lessons for higher and more important matters, both social and religious, than we are always ready to discern; above all things it is congruous with that sense of the mystery of things, and the value of action, and the need of authority—that is, the social development of personality—which are the real foes to the aridity of pure rationalism.

I think we can find in this temper part at least of the hostility to scholasticism and certain other aspects of Roman belief. We resent its hard outlines, its clear distinctions, its arrogance of certitude; while its attempt to secure an intellectually coercive proof of God's being strikes us as both ineffectual and unattractive. It is not valid; and if it were valid, it would destroy the very belief it proves, and it would make God inferior to our intelligence.

So with the doctrine of Transubstantiation. It is not to the truth therein enshrined that the English mind objects, but to the attempt to rationalise a mystery. The same feature was prominent in the revolt of the last century against the cruder forms of "the scheme of salvation," as it used to be called. Men did not so much object to the doctrine of the Atonement, but they shrank from the familiar and almost vulgar way in which coarse analogies were pressed, and attempts were made to measure a profound and glorious mystery by line and rule.

Now indeed the reaction has gone too far; and, while making due reserves against any belief in the absolute value of formulae, or words, we need to emphasise those vital truths of which all these doctrines are the inadequate symbols.

It all comes to this. The plain man's readiness to accept the mysteries of God's grace rests at once on his ignorance and his knowledge. He feels that in all things there is mystery, and that what is the constant factor of his inner being is somehow part of the stuff of the universe. He places no reliance at all upon the optimistic faith of men who, like Du Bois Reymond, look forward to the day when the world can be reduced to a mathematical formula; or in the more common assertion that the whole of being is penetrable to thought; for even the delight in a poem or a piece of music can prove the contrary.[21] He knows that, though you may explain the world, he remains inexplicable to himself. On the other hand, he feels that there must be reality in that love and joy and willing resolve which are the deepest and most real things in his life. The Christian faith asserts this truth at once of the mystery of things, of the eternity of love, of the infinite worth of choice, as does no other creed. And this is its warrant.

To such an one belief in God is not dependent upon formal proof; like his own existence, it is a

postulate, not a conclusion. Indeed, if God be, as we say, a loving Father, it is clear that our knowledge of Him cannot rest on a basis of reasoning; or it would be unlike our perception of any other personal relation.

We cannot, indeed, too deeply take to heart the lesson impressed from without by Kant and even Herbert Spencer, and from within by Pascal and Newman—that we cannot find God merely by the understanding, that there is no coercive proof of His being, and that all our terms to express Him are but symbols and figures. No longer do men attach absolute value to what are merely inadequate formulae, or waste energy over rational proofs. These things are regulative, the best possible; they do but suggest, they cannot comprehend, that awful splendour of holiness which is far beyond word and thought, and like all personal differences can only be bridged by love and faithful souls. We might, indeed, grant nearly all that a reverent agnostic could demand—if only he would let us go on to say that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." What more He is we know not; it is enough that He is "our Father" and sent His Son to live and die for us.

It is obvious—and our adversaries admit it—that the sense of mystery, of the limits of the individual reason, of Church authority, all alike reveal the need

of resting in the community, and finding in the traditions, the rites, and the regulative powers of the Church a value which would not be warranted if we could make our faith by ourselves, or if the Church were a merely voluntary association which Christians were free to join or not as they pleased.

It will be said that this or any notion of authority may give the rein to credulity, and is the mother of all the tyrannies. But the abuse of a principle does not destroy its use. Authority alike in Church and State has real rights, which misuse does not abrogate; and the ground of it all rests on the fact that it is "not good for man to be alone." We are bidden to beware of superstition, and Newman's example is quoted as a warning. This example has no terrors. Apart from his perversion (which is not here relevant), since Pascal and perhaps Butler no single man has done such service to true religion; and that by his life-long hostility to "liberalism" in religion, by his sense of the mystery of things, of the limits of logical method, and of the primary facts of God and the individual.[22]

Is it seriously a blind credulity that you can call the danger of to-day, whatever class or circle you consider? Is it not rather a wilful superstition of unbelief? Doubtless credulity is a bad thing no less than unbelief. But why are we to suppose that there is more risk in believing too much than too little?

Which is the more compatible with humble penitence, and what is any religion without it? Is there any one here to-day who would not choose to be an ignorant peasant kneeling at the foot of the crucifix and crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," rather than the accomplished dilettante, who thanks God that he is critical and cultivated, not as other Christians are, or even as the parish clergy? At least we know enough to condemn the second; do we know enough to blame the first?

For, indeed, man is all mystery to himself, and in his heart are the undying springs of romance, of that strangeness and joy in the heroic which strives ever to reach beyond. "To find God," as has been said, "is the true romance of every soul." Our adversaries tell us in scorn that Christianity is incurably romantic—thank God it is; the great, the supreme adventure, and beside it all others seem dull and mean.

The Christian's sense of mystery encompassing, his faith in the ever fresh love of God, of the reality (that is), the creative newness of our personal life, have made earth a place of vision and revealed the smile behind the tears of men. This spirit it is which fills the Church with grace no less than truth, which gives to Christian saintliness its rare aroma, which finds form in the arches of Rouen or the mosaics of St. Mark's, which flames into legends

like the Quest of the Sangréal or paintings like the Adoration of the Lamb. This above all in its mingling of tenderness and awe invests with such winning appeal that worship, the true Divine Liturgy, wherein earth and heaven are united, and the Lord of all things once more veils His glory to dwell with sinful men.

We have seen that resolute and widespread attempts are being made now, as at other times in the history of the Church, to reduce Christianity to a religion purely rational and non-mysterious. The attempts differ in form with the fashionable tendencies of the moment; but whether they be made by Gnostics or Arians, by Abélard or Socinus, or by adherents of the New Theology, their aim is unchanged. The argument is always an appeal to the rational understanding to set aside those elements in the faith which run counter to current prejudices. The hope is to satisfy the non-religious mind; and in this aim its assumptions are borrowed —assumptions antagonistic to mystery.

This argument, however, has no weight for the religious sense. For the sense of mystery lies at the root of that consciousness; and, although individual difficulties remain for discussion, the system as a whole gains incomparably by those very elements which invite attack.

Let us then not be afraid of assaults, which from the nature of the case the Christian Church must endure. Prayer alone is a supreme mystery; so long as that be retained it is vain to quarrel with the faith because it tells of regions beyond thought. A Christianity not mysterious would not, indeed, be so open to attack as the Catholic Church, but neither would it be worth defence.

Faith without risk, without uncertainty, without difficulty, would not be faith but sight. Religion does not end in wonder—but it begins there. A religion without wonder would be no religion at all.

Take from the Christian faith its mystery and strangeness, and see what is left. Is the creed when "trimmed and stripped of all that touches the skies" a beautiful or even a helpful thing? Is not the life and faith of the Church a living whole which we cannot mutilate any more than you could preserve the charms of the *Primavera* or the Venus de Milo, after you had torn the canvas or broken the statue.[23] Leave out, if you must, the mysterious birth, the availing death, the empty tomb, and the sacramental presence, and what would you have left? Would it be very much to live by? Would it be anything at all to die for?[21]

III.—THE HISTORIC CHRIST

"The Word was made Flesh."—St. John i. 14.

In a moment of irony Huxley once prophesied that a time would come when apologists would be telling Christians to hold fast to their faith, quite apart from the irrelevant question whether or no there were any facts to confirm it![1] That prophecy has come true. On all sides we are being instructed that faith in the Gospel is at bottom adherence to certain general principles of conduct and belief in a spiritual universe; but that it is vulgar and superfluous to chain that belief to the historicity of any actual occurrences.

One defender of Modernism says: "If the faith of Christendom in an eternal, present, and living Christ could be overthrown by the historical proof that his body was never raised, its foundation would always contain an element of uncertainty."[3]

In *Il Programma dei Modernisti* there are one or two sentences of a similar kind. They declare that for faith it is of no importance whether or no historical investigation can justify the salient facts

alleged of our Lord.[3] M. Loisy says much the same in his distinction between truth of faith and truth of fact, especially as that has been glossed by his subsequent utterances.[4] Even in England divines of the Church are found asserting that the evidence for the miraculous is of so indeterminate a nature that we cannot use it as a foundation of any doctrine;[5] while others seem to assert that the religious value of the resurrection is independent of belief in its actual occurrence.[6]

In all this there is nothing strange. To minds of the purely reflective cast religion is always largely a matter of ideas; and the historical elements will detain their attention but little, even if they credit them. Such men inevitably tend to treat faith as a thing of subjective values and ideal dreams, removed so far as may be from the unromantic prose of common life. Men to whom "action is always a little vulgar" will place their religion, if they have one, in a region of imagination or speculative harmonies where the steel of fact cannot touch it.

These tendencies are reinforced from many sides to-day. Hegel set men disentangling the kernel of idea in Christianity from the external husk of historical facts and institutions. Ritschl had perhaps a yet more potent influence in the like direction. He did not, perhaps, himself deny or even depreciate the importance of the historical foundations

of the faith; but the stress he laid on the judgment of value, as opposed to the judgment of fact, on all the subjective elements in religion has led many of his disciples, and some who are not consciously his disciples, to emphasise the ideal and symbolic aspects of Christianity, and to ignore, or even to *disbelieve, its historical foundations.*[7]

A like result has come from the reaction against literalism. We have learnt how untenable is any theory of inspiration which asserts the factual accuracy of stories like that of Adam and the Serpent. allegorical poems like the book of Job, narratives like those of Balaam or Daniel. When every one was maintaining that whether or no these stories were true, the Christian faith was unaffected, it was not surprising that some should go on to declare that historical criticism is in its nature irrelevant, and that in all essentials Christianity would remain untouched even though the stories of the birth and the resurrection of Jesus were dismissed as symbolic rather than actual.

If religion were a thing of personal fancy, this might be the case. Some few might be so rarely gifted with imagination or mystical emotion that their sense of God's nearness would undergo no serious change, even though they believed M. Loisy when he says that our Lord was not born of the blessed Virgin; that he did not work miracles,

save a few cures; and that, so far from rising from the empty tomb, he was never buried by St. Joseph of Arimathea at all, but was thrown casually into a ditch.[8] But this attitude is out of the question for the great mass of men. Christian faith does not rest upon history by itself, for its most *compelling arguments are the lives of the saints* and our own experience. But it is so bound up with the events of at least one period of actual history that if you destroy men's belief in the substantial accuracy of the one, you will not long retain even the name of the other.[9]

Apart from the portrait of Jesus, it is idle to talk of the Christian religion; and whatever details in that *portrait may be irrelevant, the main impression of a* being at once natural and supernatural, unique in his origin, in his action, and in his rising from the tomb is inseparable from the portrait. And most men are like children asking of a story-teller "Is it true?" Convince them in regard to the story of Jesus that it is not true, but only a symbol of the religious aspirations of ages, and men will repudiate either *in scorn or sorrow the claims of the Church to be* the home of the soul, and seek for themselves some other refuge. The New Temple may be grander or nearer, more beautiful or uglier than the Christian Church, but it will not be the Christian Church; it will be something else.

The thesis of the creeds that God entered this world in the life of an actual person places the record of that life before us as a piece of history and subjects our belief to the laws of evidence. The attraction of the view which we have been considering lies in its removal of the whole question out of this sphere, and in making historical criticism irrelevant. But from the very nature of the case this is impossible, unless we divorce the Christ-notion from that of Jesus, making Christ but a name for religious experience. We cannot, however tempted, separate a rational belief in Christianity from the careful investigation of its early records. The century now past has been greatly busied in this matter, and I need not here do more than refer to the work of the scholars who made Cambridge famous in European learning, and the more recent Hulsean lecturers who have defended the historical worth of *the Gospels* and *the Acts*. From the crucible of severe investigation to which the New Testament has been subjected two facts appear to issue with some certainty. Nothing in that investigation has resulted which hinders the sound scholar from Nicene Christianity apart *from other hostile presuppositions*. Details may here and there be modified, but the decision of men like Westcott and Hort in the past; of men like Dr. Sanday and the Dean of Westminster or our own

Regius Professor in the present, is in this respect quite unequivocal.

On the other hand, it is abundantly clear from the mere observation of facts that historical criticism of itself and alone is not sufficient to induce certainty in the minds of those who, on other grounds, assume the impossibility of the miraculous.[10]

From the very nature of historical evidence this must be the case. Evidence of alleged facts is never demonstrative; that is, the contrary is always thinkable, and we are at liberty to explain the evidence on that view without contradicting any of the laws of thought. From this it follows that it is only for men of very open minds, or in matters of everyday reference, that evidence of facts will seem to be conclusive: and this condition *ex hypothesi* does not hold in the case of the cardinal facts about Christ's life. The reception given in modern times by minds biassed in the mechanical direction to the evidence of hypnotism and thought transference is a cardinal instance of this.

All belief in *alleged historical facts depends partly* on the actual evidence, partly on a presupposition that the facts are not in themselves and under certain conditions improbable—*i.e.* on a faith in a certain order of things, with which such facts are congruous. In the case of ordinary events we ignore these presuppositions *because* they are common to

every one outside a lunatic asylum; though even here we have exceptions which prove the rule. But in the case of miraculous or very abnormal occurrences the consensus *a priori* as to what is likely does not exist and never will exist, so far as I can see; and hence the evidence alone is not and never can be sufficient to convince every one that such events have occurred, and we do wrong in expecting a degree of certainty which, from the nature of the case, is unattainable. The more abnormal or unique any event is the larger part must be played in the belief by our sense of its being likely; and the greater divergences of opinion must therefore exist as to the value or origin of the evidence. I think, therefore, that they greatly err who hope to found the Christian religion on a certain basis by pure historical inquiry, isolated from other considerations: and such a conviction if carried out will infallibly lead to the circle of belief being confined to those events, which being of a normal though perhaps unusual type do not require to establish their credit by any further presuppositions about the world than those drawn from everyday experience by thinking men. Though even here, as all literary criticism, especially modern German scholarship, demonstrates, the merely academic and abstract conception of human nature is apt to narrow unduly men's notion of what is possible.[11]

I have heard that an eminent historian considers *that our Lord's resurrection is a fact of history as* certain as the death of Julius Cæsar. With all respect I submit that this view is untenable and is disproved by the very large number of instructed persons who disbelieve in the one, while of the other there is practically no doubt whatever. Belief in the resurrection of Christ cannot be possible, apart *from certain presuppositions as to what the world* means or may mean, which enable a man to view the evidence sympathetically. Otherwise some form of the vision-theory or self-hypnotism is an obvious way of overcoming the difficulty without impugning the veracity of the narrators. If you study history with the presupposition of M. Seignobos, that since *miracles do not happen the evidence for them must* be ruled out beforehand, it is a foregone conclusion that you will not find any convincing evidence of the miracles of our Lord, nor of those of the Church, and that you will set down all answers to prayer to coincidence or mere suggestion.[12] On the other hand, to a Christian believer who has both examined and approved the evidence and has appropriated to himself the presence of the living Christ in the Church and the Eucharist, the resurrection may seem a fact infinitely more certain than an event like the death of Julius Cæsar, which strikes him as merely external fact.

Indeed nothing is clearer than that all the results of historical investigation tend to confirm the view, that of all extraordinary facts the belief, and of all ordinary facts the interpretation and the causal connections, *i.e.* of all history as a fruitful study, depends on our presuppositions at least as much as on the documentary evidence. Even Lord Morley declares that the "historian can only approach the cupboard with his bunch of keys in his hand." [13]

Here, again, another consideration meets us. Part of the evidence for any fact is not the narrative of the witness, but the knowledge of its results. For the witness may be a bad narrator or self-deceived, even if he is not interested. And we cannot isolate the inquiry into our Lord's rising from the tomb, and discuss it apart from the actual alleged effects of that risen life. The Church is the supreme historical document; and it is mere folly to leave it out of account. We have to explain on the naturalistic hypothesis, not only the statement that the events occurred, but the actual observed results of belief in their occurrence. I do not say that they cannot be explained on that hypothesis; as a fact they are, and will continue to be so explained by men with a strongly naturalistic bias. But to me that explanation seems unnatural and forced, and if carried to its consequences absurd.

As Creighton said, "The presuppositions of the

critical mind need examination, no loss than those of the orthodox";[14] and in discussing any theory about the documents as narratives of the early Church, we need to ask ourselves what are the assumptions, often unconscious, in the writer's mind which have gone to the making of that theory? Above all things, there is the assumption, so common that it is often unexpressed, that Christianity is merely an episode, a phase of social progress, and that its so-called supernatural elements are merely the ideal dreams of an undeveloped culture. You can make this assumption, if you will; and if you have no religious experience of your own to contradict it, it is probable that it will seem to you well founded. Only be sure what it is you are doing; and let your method carry you to its due results. Do not take it by halves.

The New Testament and the Church are so deeply saturated with supernaturalism that the interpretation of the narratives on a purely naturalistic basis is not really possible, provided you admit the historicity of Jesus. It seems to me, as Dr. Foakes Jackson says, far more reasonable to carry your position to its consequences and declare with Mr. J. M. Robertson against this, than it is to cut and carve the portrait in the Gospels, and proclaim your belief in a purely human Christ.[15] At the same time this method, when thoroughgoing enough, is self-destructive.

Mr. Robertson's book, "Pagan Christs," in which this theory is developed, will seem eminently plausible to those who are unaware of the multiplicity of critical theories, and the ingenuity with which they are all defended; and have no deep inward experience to fall back upon.[16]

For that is the final point; criticism must always be in part devotional, if it is to lead to sound results for the religious mind (and here as elsewhere we take that for granted). We cannot divorce our inquiries either from what the Church has shown itself in the lives of the saints or from what Christ is to ourselves. "Interpret the Bible as you would interpret any other book," in so far as it is not a truism, is a maxim futile and impossible. Nobody does. Nobody can. The Bible has entered so much into the fibre of Christendom, it is so deeply inwoven with our thought and imagination, that we can no more treat it like any other book than we here can think or act as though our schools or colleges had not part in making us what we are. Civilisation, in its ideals, its hopes, its morals, is largely what the Bible has made it; and one cannot effectively stand apart from all those influences which have gone to produce the world in which we live.

Hegel used to say that a man could no more get out of his own age than he could jump out of his skin. If this be true of the fashions of thought and

feeling that change so quickly, still more is the maxim true of any attempt to take the Bible purely apart from the society of which it was the outcome; from that whole course of development in which it has been so potent a factor. The Bible will never look the same to a man within and a man without the Church, and neither can see it with quite the same merely critical interest that he would bring to bear on the *Nibelungenlied*. Our criticism can only be undenominational by becoming either non-Christian or nugatory. You can establish nothing that way except the matters which from the religious standpoint are least important. As Professor Burkitt said at the Pan-Anglican Congress, "It is vain to study the Bible apart from the living Church." [17]

Let our criticism be honest and sincere; but do not let us, whether Christians or non-Christians, imagine that we really approach the subject with minds unbiassed and empty, *i.e.* with no minds at all. Let us get clear our own assumptions, as to belief in God, the value of the Church, or personal experience of Christ: let us try to unmask the assumptions of our opponents, and above all beware of accepting on their assumptions results which are valid on no other condition.

But, if after all inquiry, we find ourselves unable to retain beliefs so dear, it would be wiser, though

less agreeable, to "face the music," and to give up the name of a faith which has no other basis than our own aspirations. "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be; why then should we wish to be deceived?" If we are convinced that Jesus was not unique in His birth, His acts, His words, in His death, and what followed death, but was born and lived and died merely a man of noble virtue and a holiness supremely gracious, then for heaven's sake let us say so. In the long run we shall conquer our doubts best if we follow without flinching where they lead. Our dangers to-day are a faith blind to its terrific meaning, and a doubt that dares not look itself in the face. Let us have done alike with faith disguised and an unbelief decorated. If we cannot believe our faith, let us at least believe our doubts and act on the belief.

What makes the supreme difficulty about the historic Christ is also the ground of His unique appeal—His implication with earthly life, God self-revealing under human conditions, in an actual historical person, subject to the limits and conditions of a particular race at a particular epoch. This to many is the crux—the projection of God into the outside world in history, in the life of Jesus, in His body the Church, and His approach to man in visible sacraments. It does seem hard,

Those for whom life means largely reflection are tempted to make their religion a matter of ideals and personal fancies; and they resent the harshness of external facts. Observe, it is not so much the miraculous, not perhaps at all the mysterious, but the actual that makes the trouble here. The religion is real enough; but as Newman said of his ideal gentleman, "his religion is one of imagination and sentiment; it is the embodiment of those ideas of the sublime, majestic, and beautiful, without which there can be no large philosophy." [18]

Now Jesus Christ, the Church, the sacraments, are hard facts, at first sight purely external; and fact seems prosaic to men who live in a realm of dream and speculation, untroubled by the more urgent temptations. Such is the happy and sheltered lot of many of us in an Arcadian peace of high pursuits and congenial society. Each of us here has more or less to encounter this temptation—living for the most part in a world of refined debate, saved by education and circumstance from the spectacle of the grosser sins, enjoying the varied conveniences of a high civilisation, seen on its least seamy side—we are all inclined to turn our faith into a private philosophy or a personal mysticism; to resent the stress laid by less fortunate Christians on mere fact, and to find almost insuperable the obstacles real and grave to belief in that concrete

and particular gift of God in Jesus and that unique worth of one moment which is to the plain man of the essence of his faith. For I take it that to the plain man the one sure basis is in fact; in the belief (to avoid theological terms) that something passing strange did as a fact take place in Syria when Tiberius was head of the Roman world and Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judæa.

But it is just this leap into the concrete that is so hard to many of us to-day, and no one has felt this more strongly than the speaker. God's revelation in Christ means this, if it means anything; and yet to all of us who live largely in the realm of thought and inner feeling, it seems almost vulgar; and to those with any strong mystical sense of union with a living power it seems quite needless even if true. In this state of mind it is just as hard to credit as of any real value the circumcision or the cleansing of the Temple, as the transfiguration or the feeding of the five thousand. They are facts outside of us; they may have happened, but as mysteries embodying truths of vital significance we cannot understand them; they are far off and finished. This tendency has, moreover, been increased by the habit of Protestants of ignoring or neglecting the continued presence of Christ's Spirit in the Church and the sacraments, which makes those past events a part of the living present, and

guards against that sense of remoteness which to the mind athirst for God here and now is so distressing. This doctrine has been indeed in some sort arrested by the Evangelical notion of mystical union; but that is apt to be individual, while the Church and the sacraments are social and communal. It may indeed be doubted whether even those who have held high sacramental doctrine do not in some cases rather over-emphasise its individual side, as a gift to each personally; and the discontinuance in so many churches of the Eucharist as the great corporate act of praise has rather tended to emphasise this view. It is only as we see this restored as a social, not merely individual act, the praise of God in all its splendour, that we are likely to correct an evil so widespread. Still it will always remain a difficulty to those who by circumstance and temperament find their religion adequately represented by their own inward sense of union with God or by a set of ideal principles. The concrete story of Jesus, the actual society of Christians, the immediate grace of the sacraments, as partly a gift from without, will seem to such, if not false, at least superfluous, not fuller and richer but emptier than our dreams of eternal righteousness. For the concrete must partake of the limitations of this actual world, and that is the meaning of the Incarnation. The teaching of

children is perhaps the best corrective of this state of mind. I have learnt more apologetic from catechising children than from many books. For that brings our religion at once from the speculative to the concrete, and shows us the danger of turning the faith into a philosophy, and placing abstractions instead of the richness and colour of real life.

It is indeed the absence of this sense that the child is a part of the Church that is the great strength of the undenominational principle, and makes men willing to treat a few ethical principles as a substitute for the wonder and beauty of the Christian Church; or at best to turn the faith into a set of propositions, which can be acquired in isolation and have no organic interconnection.

Ever since the sixteenth century this tendency has been at work, and we have seen many forms taken by the desire to make of religion something mainly experimental and inward, and to cut it off from the limitations of outer fact, or the vulgarity of institutional life. In the pietistic form, belief in Christ and the Atonement, and the sense of union with Him, is still strong, and exhibits itself in many saints, in the spiritual ardours and austere morality of Puritanism at its best. But it despises the Church as carnal and full of sinners, and dislikes the sacraments as gross and material, degrading to God's majesty and to man's freedom. This view

however, retains a strong sense of the authority of some religious community. A little further we find this denied, all forms of priestly authority are resented, as interfering with individual freedom, an attempt to come between God and the soul. Finally we reach the modern form, when an attempt is made to take the leading ideas of Christianity quite out of their historical setting, and Christ becomes a name for religious experience. We see on all sides the conception of religion, subjective and manufactured, differing greatly according to temperament, but uniform in scorn of the common faith and practice of Christendom.

Now it appears to me that the principle which we have seen exhibited in regard to the miraculous and mysterious elements in our faith is still more clearly true in this matter of its historical character. Dreams and golden fancies, individual and personal ideals, speculations and abstract principles, are the privilege of the few. To them religion may be made up largely of such elements. To the great majority, however, life is *above all things concrete*; they are not greatly interested in thought; but of their relations with other men, of their weakness and insecurity and of their own inner struggles they are acutely conscious. In a faith which is above all else "personal trust in a person" who once lived upon earth, in a society which co-ordinates their

highest aims and directs them by its authority in the outward *given* grace of sacramental life, they find that strength and support, that sense of anchorage, of being at home, of having something like themselves to cling to, which no philosophy and no religion merely individualist could give them. *The claim of the Gospel is not so much to solve problems as to come near to human lives.* It is to man, as he lives and works, as he fights and sins, as he loves and hopes, as he feels the need of outside support to sustain him in his weakness, of Love from Beyond to console him in his gloom, of social institutions and environments to prevent his spirit being crushed by the world or throttled by comfort, that the Christ appeals. To everyday men and women, with the pettiness and stains of sordid vulgar life, but also with the tenderness and heroism never far from any lover, never unknown to parent or child, to these it is that the Christian Church makes its appeal, resting on definite facts issuing in clear statements, and ministering gifts real but supernatural.

Making abstraction for the moment of its alleged miraculous character, let us take into account the ways in which faith in the historic Christ at once ministers to the needs of the common religious consciousness and awakens inevitable criticism.

(1) First of all, here is something "given."

Without question, if Jesus be the Word made flesh, and His Spirit be continued in the Church and communicated in the sacraments, we are participating in a benefit, in theological language, a grace, which comes to us from without, which is not due to our own moral effort or intellectual zeal, which could not have come without a special act of God's will intending to reveal Himself in a unique way, apart from His revelation in the world and our own consciousness. It is true that both sides are needed; God does not do all the work. The gifts of grace can never avail to our healing unless by our own act and deed we appropriate them. Nor can we worship that life which reveals Him, without the use of mind, no less than will. The simplest creed involves all sorts of implications, which it is for the intellect to develop. Nevertheless it remains true that if Jesus, His life and death, as interpreted and expressed by the society which He founded, are to us of any final worth, it is just because He is something given to us, something we could not have done or discovered for ourselves. With this notion of the given goes that of Church authority. We cannot accept Jesus as Lord without surrendering the claim to be our own masters or even to follow merely the inner light.

This will always constitute a difficulty for certain minds. Those for whom religion is largely a matter

of thought and inner aspiration find something repulsive in the notion of external authority, in the fixity of a faith bound to a definite person and forms. They object, too, to what seems distant, to the worship of one who lived so long ago. It is true, as we said, that this distance is done away in the Church and the sacraments, which embody Christ in a living society, and bring Him close to us in the Eucharist. But to such men this also seems distant, as being external, material, not spiritual; if they remain Christian they will incline to some form of mysticism or Quakerism, which assures the soul of immediate union with God, and does away with all instruments; grace without the means of grace.

But with the common man this is not the case. It is this sense of an outside power to relieve his weakness and to reassure his trembling faith which he needs above all else, and finds in the historic Church. By bitter experience he knows that without help given he is powerless to bring his life into harmony with his aims, and to introduce order into the chaos of his passions and desires. Besides he wants to feel at home, to have something to catch hold of; this want is to him supplied by the actual story of Jesus upon earth, and the visible institutions and ordinances which express His life. Above all things it is in God revealed as man that he finds a religion

to understand. Persons we are and in personal intercourse our life is passed; so far from Christian dogma being unintelligible to children or ignorant people, the Gospel is the simplest and easiest of all religious systems for the plain man, if we avoid technical terms. Everybody who has experience in teaching the young knows this as a fact, if he compares the simple facts and dogmas of the Church with any speculative ideas he might be inclined to make a substitute.

The Gospel with its story of Jesus, and the Church as the family of His love, do but carry to its highest all that world of uplifting joy revealed to us through human love and society. The sense of personal dependence it inculcates is entirely in accord with our life, in so far as it is not overlaid by the fallacious individualism which is the result of sophisticated culture and artificial economic privilege. It may be that the Gospel, with its claim to give us a home in the Church, a food in the sacraments, a friend and saviour in

> "Jesus who lived above the sky
> Came down to be a man and die,"

seems hard of credit to those who, neglecting the circumstances which have made them critical and independent, start arguing from their own minds in a high state of culture; but to the mass of

struggling men and women, in so far as they are religious, this is not the case. In the story of Jesus, in the life of His Church, in the power of sacraments, they find truths precisely germane to their own experience, and are helped to organise it more fruitfully. As Creighton put it in letters which will ever remain among the classics of apologetic:—

"Life can only be explained by a life; and I see in Jesus that life of which all other life is but a partial reflex."[19]

"Relationships founded on a sense of lasting affection are the sole realities of life. This is obvious. It is the burden of all literature; it leads straight on to Christ. Faith is personal trust in a person. Christianity does not call upon me to commit myself to something contrary to my experience. It asks me to discover its law already written in the world. In Christ all becomes plain. In my relationship towards Him all my other relationships find their meaning and reality."[20]

Two main objections there are which in the present age the historical revelation of God in Christ arouses in nearly all minds: (*a*) that it is historical, fixing our thoughts on one particular period long past; (*b*) that it is concrete, and professes to find the Eternal Spirit in a particular personage. Let us take them in order.

(2) Dominated by the notion of continuous upward growth, men find it increasingly difficult to attach absolute value to a series of events which took place nearly two thousand years ago. They are willing more than ever to see in Christianity a very fruitful phase of spiritual progress; they can discern in it some of the noblest purposes and finest characters in history. But intellectually, morally, and spiritually the world has greatly changed since the days of Herod the King, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa. Our whole world, inner more than outer, is larger and more complex than it was to them, or, so far as we can judge, to Him. Is it not a mockery to ask us in the twentieth century to bow in worship to this obscure teacher, who betrayed no knowledge of art, who was unconscious even of the thought of Plato and Aristotle, and showed no acquaintance with sociology and politics? The substance of a recent article in the *Hibbert Journal* puts nakedly and brutally a thought that in less repulsive form has probably occurred to most of us.[21] The world looks forward not backward. Is not to turn our eyes to the past in the way Christianity bids us to narrow our outlook? This feeling seems bound up with the historic sense, the faith in the world as developing. Yet here again the appeal is from theory to facts—facts personal, historical, artistic.

The sense of life as continuous change contains

truth, but it is not the whole truth. If it were, we should not be able to attach any worth or meaning to special moments in our lives, or indeed to ourselves at all, as persons. All would merge itself, decisive events, passions, personalities, into one endless stream of process and there would be no foothold. If you really carry this notion to its conclusion (allowing no contrary facts), you are left with the sense that nothing happens at all, that there are no classical moments in history or in art or in individual life.[23] We are lost in the ceaseless flux; we contemplate everything, including ourselves, as one whole, in such a way that no part has any significance for itself, but only as passing into something else. The individual pictures himself the passive resultant of outside forces, a wind-driven straw. It is only the reality of our inner life that prevents us seeing this to be the logical issue of all theories which make of life process and nothing else. In our own life we know, and act on the knowledge, that each of us is in some way an end in himself, not a mere cog of a machine. In words that have become classical Walter Pater expressed this feeling of the impotence and insignificance of experience seen under this category:—

"This at least of flamelike our life has; that it is but the concurrence for a moment of forces parting

sooner or later on their ways." . . . "To such a tremulous wisp *constantly reforming itself on the* stream to a single sharp impression with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fixes itself down. It is with this movement, with this passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off—that continual vanishing away, that strange perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves." [23]

To all this talk of ceaseless development there is only one answer, the appeal to fact. The most real and pertinent truth of our life is the actual worth of the present. Difficult though it be to conceive or to justify to the critical intelligence, it is the present reality of our existence expressed in our own sense of choice and freedom, of pleasure and pain, which is our guiding star. Without it our experience might be more logical, but it would cease to be experience. This alone makes virtue possible or even thought real, while in respect of pleasure the reality of the moment is proved by every postponement of all future goods, even self-interest, to some transient and guilty gratification. We may prate as we please of the present having no reality, being merely the product of the past and the parent of an inevitable future. If it were this, no more and no less, we must surrender as illusions all that consciousness, acute in times of crisis,

absolute worth of the here and now; the reality of what we experience at this definite moment. The shining evidence of this lies in the great moments of our own life, or in the supreme and classical examples of art.

To all of us there are times, days, of such transcendent, normative worth, that we fall prostrate, crying—

"Verweile doch, du bist so schön;"

or in the words of the English poet who has done most to express this truth, we cry—

"That eternity shall affirm the conception of an hour."[44]

This value of monumental moments, this feeling before some work of beauty that here at last is something finished, done for ever, that time and chance have no power upon the idea thus embodied, is inseparable from the sense of all greatness in art and life, and is clearly subversive of that notion of progress incessant and unretarded, of which we spoke. It is a thing in itself, a possession for ever that we value in the Hermes of Praxiteles, the tombs of the Medici or the Sainte-Chapelle, not a mere phase in illustration of culture-history. Our very notion of what is classical, raised by its own worth above debate, the thing of beauty which is in itself "the joy for ever," shows how the moment we take to comparing values we are driven to this feeling of there being

crises, moments whose significance is something quite different from that ascribed to them as mere items in the historical series.

Now all this is but carried to its highest power in the doctrine of the worth of Jesus to man, the unique value of His earthly life, for instance, the moment when hanging on the cross He used the words, "It is finished." [25]

By asserting the eternal value of that moment in the life of men it redeems us from the sense of nothingness and impotence which the spectacle of the changing world is bound to awaken. It does for us as persons in history what miracles do for us as bodies in nature. By asserting the reality of life in the present, the value of moments, it saves us from the terrible grip of fate which men are always in fear of. For it is no new thing, this sense of being caught in a machine, though recent tendencies perhaps enhance it. It needs no science to see the link between present and past; the Juggernaut of fate is oppressive to the primitive no less than to the modern mind.

What man needs, what as a religious and moral being he demands, is to be assured that there is something more than this linking of moment to moment, of act to act, in a chain whose ends he does not see. Is it, he cries, that his inner life is all an illusion? Is the agony of choice, the pain

of achieved resolve, the peace of love, the vivid hues of beauty, the loneliness of pain all a sham, "a tale of little meaning though the words are strong:" and himself the centre of it all but a stone in an eddy? Or are his moments gifts of God, real in their worth and meaning, transient in time, but eternal in mystery and value? This great spectacle of the Cross, this act done as theologians tell us, "alike in time and eternity," is the supreme assurance that the thoughts of our hearts are not all vain, it confirms the deliverance both of individual life, so sorely striving and deeply feeling, and of artistic beauty, so frail and yet so enduring. At this day, when external and mechanical theories seem to dominate our thought and life, and express themselves clearly even in economic relations, there is the danger that all the "living interests and hopes and achievements" of man will be seen but as items in a series, and denuded of their worth for personal beings. *Here as elsewhere life is too* strong for theory. Man knows that his agony and his joy are real and vital. This knowledge is deepened by belief in the value of the historic Christ, the doctrine that His life, though lived in Palestine, is of absolute value; that the moment of His death was decisive, classical, in heaven no less than on earth.

But this is not all. There is another and deeper

objection to belief in the eternal worth of Jesus as God's revealing Himself. It is, I suppose, the supreme and peremptory crux in the Incarnation. Though congruous with the last this difficulty is not quite the same. It is possible to overcome the difficulty of attaching such value to a special moment and yet remain staggered at the claim that Jesus was God. We are asked to believe that in one, who was for a time a helpless child and then lived as a small Jew tradesman, there dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Is it seriously to be thought of? Can we credit that the abiding Spirit which sustains the world, which directs the course of human and even celestial life, should express Himself in a fashion so riotously insignificant? Think what it means. That infant at Bethlehem, God, the centre of all our worship, the source of all our being, the meaning of all our thought. Is it not "a thing imagination boggles at"? It does. We shall do well to picture ourselves the claim of Christ in all its naked terror before we give ourselves to adore "the splendour of God," more dazzling in the manger, the shop, or the cross, than when shining amid the armies of heaven.

It is this central paradox of the Gospel which *gives it at once its charm for the common heart and* its perplexity to the speculative thinker. If we work it out, it will be found that the God of the

latter is never more than an abstraction. We have in fact to choose between an abstract God, a necessity of thought, and God concrete in Jesus. All the divisions come at last to that. We have to make up our mind, as between *some* form of "cosmic emotion" and the sublime madness of the faith, which bids us worship a babe, a carpenter, and a criminal.

And yet it is just this which wins us. For we need no Christ to assure of God's greatness. The universe may be a mistake, but if it is, it is a very great mistake. *Cosmic emotion* is obvious enough, and comes to all in certain moods. It may be, as Mr. Frederic Harrison says, but a poor religion; but it is a religion, and it is open to all.[20] It does not need knowledge or culture to discern how sublime is the order in which we are placed; or to find in the grandeur of things, despite if not because of its cruelty, an uplifting thought which may shame our pettiness and lead to a stoical patience. "God is great," the cry of the Moslems, is a truth which needed no supernatural being to teach men.

That *God is little*, that is the truth which Jesus taught man, and we find at once so tender and so perplexing. It is of the nature of love to be infinitely minute, as well as soaring in its imagination, and this nature is shown us by Christ. All His most appealing qualities reveal this aspect; the heart of Christendom

hns gone out to the story of Bethlehem and the manger, of the shepherds, and the wise men; to the blessing of the children, the words about the sparrows and the lilies. This is what gives to Christian devotion its distinctive, poignant note, so different in its simple gaiety from the honour paid to the First Cause, or the Absolute, or the Necessary Being, the *Summum Bonum*. The mother and the child, the helpless sufferer on the cross, the "gentle Jesus" of the hymn—those are images that come close to the toiling and wayworn, the disinherited and the ineffectual, sometimes perhaps to the neglect of austerer truths. It is not God in His power and majesty, the pride of Deity, which was revealed in Jesus, but in deed and truth God in His humiliation, *scorned, spat upon, dying*, that *has been* the force which changed the world more than all the armies of all the emperors. And even to this day and by the confession of our adversaries, "'tis Christendom's the matter with the world." And not Cæsar nor Napoleon, not Plato nor Bacon, counts as a fact in the life of to-day for a tithe or a thousandth part of that eighteen months' ministry of the provincial carpenter. Admit His claims or not as you please, but in His case it is a mere matter of observation that "God hath chosen the *foolish things* of the world to confound the things which are wise, the weak things of the world to confound the things—

which are mighty, and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are."

Like all the real things of life this truth is hard to fathom; yet it is the case that the revelation of the manger and the Cross has given to men that which elsewhere they seek in vain. It may be easier for the Church to believe in God as the moral governor of the universe, or the immanent Spirit, or the unchanging idea—but to the despairing conscience, to the worldling satiate with pleasure and seeking rest, all this is words and emptiness. But tell him of the tender love which gave its only begotten Son, speak to him of the child of Nazareth, and at once, if he can trust you, his heart leaps up.

"'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for,
My flesh that I seek in the Godhead."

The vision of God's greatness is ever with us to appal and oppress, and we withdraw trembling from His glory. Show us the vision of His littleness and weakness, love self-emptying and suffering, and we can cry in the old hymn—

"Jesu, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly."

One who contemplates the faith from a superior standpoint dismisses these words in the phrases:

"The Power which made the stars and the tiger to be addressed by a pet name! Need I say more? Can I say loss?"[27]

Certainly not. In these words and this rather *obvious* comment lies the whole distinction between the Christian attitude and its opposite. God does allow us to address him by a pet name, if you must have the phrase.[28] He is as in the old English mystical writer, "full-homely and full-courteous." That nearness and tenderness, that "embrace of a personal loving-kindness" it is which Jesus came to *reveal to man on God's side, and make possible on* his own. It is this intimacy with God for which the Gospel stands and will stand, without which it would lose its meaning and sink perhaps nearly to the level of the substitutes for it suggested by the same writer.

It is this tender and delicate love, which has *flamed into myriad forms of devotion*, some wise, some unwise, which has found the world's greatest gifts of art in painting that ever-new and ever-old theme of the Madonna and Child, the Wise Men and the Shepherds, the Agony, and the Crucifixion; this which breathes through the whole of Christian mystical writing, making "The Imitation" or "Grace Abounding" or "The Confessions" so different from the reflections of Marcus Antoninus or Epictetus; which invests with its childlike and incommunicable

grace the frescoes of Fra Angelico and Giotto, and gives their distinctive charm to men like St. Francis or Damien or Dolling, and adds depth to the force of natures like Hildebrand or Dominic, like Luther or Wesley.

This sense of greatness greater in the little than in the sublime, of the nearness of that which in other systems is far off, this presence here and now of the Eternal Spirit, embodied in Jesus or veiled in symbol in the Eucharist, gives its peculiar distinction to all Christian thought and emotion. It is because the historical Jesus can mean this, and came to say it and prove it in His life, that of His Incarnation we "need say no more, we can say no less," than that He is God, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God," one being with the Father; that we may ourselves share a little in that life, and follow with faltering steps the road to Gethsemane. This truth, if we combine it with that of the sacramental presence and the living Church, removes alike the danger of the far-off potentate of Deism and the merely immanent principle of Pantheism. For it reveals God as distinct from the world and yet mingling with it; "far off but ever nigh"; for whose dwelling the heaven and the heaven of heavens are not too great, and the heart of the child or the sinner is not too little or too mean.

It is because we have this value in the actual

historical person, Jesus of Nazareth the carpenter, that in spite of all the difficulties (and they are very real), we know that we are on the side of the victorious forces of the world; and in this sign, the sign of Bethlehem and the Star, we shall conquer. It is that little child that shall lead us; that poor tradesman is worth all other teachers; that dying criminal redeems. Provided only we trust Him, not our own fancies; prayer, not our own cleverness; and even in His defence rely on His grace, not our own skill; then we shall find this strength in ourselves enlightening, arresting, driving: and daily will love lead to union and union to more love, until the veil shall be rent and the spirit be at last at home in a rest which not the devil and all his angels may violate.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

IV.—FORGIVENESS

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—1 St. John i. 8, 9.

Sin is not merely a tragedy to the individual. It is a nuisance to the systematic thinker. It destroys the idea of a single self-consistent order harmoniously developing under unalterable laws, and displays an incoherent world.

Suffering creates a somewhat different problem. However many the difficulties it raises, we cannot but discern in practice the vast utility of pain. And this quite apart from its alleged refining influence, which is by no means necessary or universal. But many of the virtues are to us unthinkable apart from suffering. Without pain there can be no courage, and no sacrifice, nor any of the graces and delights bound up therewith. Through all life there runs the lesson of the Cross; I must lose my life to save it. In a world in which we are to be trained to virtue through freedom wherein love is the highest virtue, suffering, alike to resist temptation and to embody the giving-ness of love,

is inevitable.[1] With sin, however, the case seems different.

Repentance, or at least remorse, is an inerradicable instinct. And remorse involves the sense that what has happened ought not, and need not, to have happened.

If we transfer our gaze from our own inner life to that of the world at large, and contemplate the spectacle of a world of free spirits, chaotic and awry through this contradiction, we find it ugly and upsetting. Picture to yourself the thoughts and feelings of the millions alive at this moment; and *is it not disorder, misery, a feeling that* things are wrong, and they are wrong, that is most general? It is not the superficial harmony, but the profound inner contradiction of men's souls that is the reality of the living world; the whole "creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now." Taken from the psychological, not naturalistic, standpoint, it is not disorder, but even the modicum of order that is the miracle. Truth of actual present fact, of men's inner mind and feeling, is the truth of "a land without any order."

It is an act of faith, at bottom of faith in God, to see in all this chaos of conflicting wills, and the will itself divided and diseased, a process that makes in the long run for harmony. Yet this is the assumption of the rationalist and the Christian

alike; only the Christian religion asserts that the harmony is slowly being wrought out through the love of God, and requires the miracle of Christ's death on the Cross to effect it. The rationalist assumes that the order is here and now and always has been; and since facts without and within are so strongly against it, he is forced to adopt the policy of the ostrich and to say "so much the worse for the facts."

They tell us that evil is but the idea realising itself by opposition, positing its own negativity. Sin is a moment soon to be transcended in the progress to a higher unity. Or, adapting a different method, that it is a survival from the animal stage gradually and inevitably working itself out; or that it is a morbid illusion based on a fallacious belief in freedom and fostered by priests; or that it carries its own forgiveness provided we eschew a mawkish penitence and stand upright before God; or else that, though small in volume, sin is essentially unpardonable, and that to talk of atonement is moonshine.

Such views are commonplace nowadays. Nearly all those who propound some one of the newer forms of Christianity, in spite of all other divergences agree in this—they belittle the Christian doctrine of sin. Thus one of the latest, Mr. Algernon Sidney Crapsey, expresses himself: "The man of the new dogmatic

will not look upon himself as of necessity and essentially a sinner. He will not believe that he is impotent to keep the true law of his own being. . . . The man of the new dogmatic will not only observe all good laws; he will love them. He will not lie nor cheat nor steal, because he hates lying, cheating, and stealing. Such an one will not be guilty of fornication or adultery, because these sins are repugnant to his soul. Until they are hateful to him he is not a man of the new dogmatic. . . . The old dogmatic erred in laying the great stress of its preaching upon the fact of sin." [3]

Even Horace knew more of human nature than this complacent preacher of the facility of righteousness.

Another more eminent teacher, Sir Oliver Lodge, declares that: "As a matter of fact the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment; his mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing." [3]

In opposition to St. John, who declares sin to be lawlessness, the author of "The Creed of Christ" asserts that "sin so far as it is illegality and nothing more is not sin"; but, on the other hand, "moral iniquity is both too real to be cancelled and too serious to be ignored." [4] . . . "If we retain our power of loving, we shall be able to outgrow and live down our sins, we shall be able to prove that our sins were no sins,

that they did us no lasting moral harm." Mr. R. J. Campbell, who pursues to extremes the thought that sin is selfishness, refuses to see any "sin except in offences against the altruistic principle, *Sin against God is sin against the common life.*" This would deny the sinful character of much impurity in thought and act, and puts the welfare of the race in place of the Eternal God. It is in fact a purely socialistic ethic quite different from Christianity, which is in the true sense individualist. In this view, since all religion is altruism, the altruistic sentiment is the only atonement. "This love force, this intense loyalty to Jesus, was and still is the redeeming thing in the life of mankind. There is not and never has been any other Atonement. It is but a step from sinner to Saviour. To cease to be a sinner is perforce to be a Saviour. To escape from the dominion of selfishness is forthwith to become a power in the hand of God for the uplifting and ingathering of mankind in Himself; this is the Atonement." [5]

Finally, Mr. Lowes Dickenson declares: "The sense of sin is the centre of all Christian ethics. Now this, I believe, is an attitude becoming increasingly unreal to most serious men. Christianity insists upon the essential weakness of man. It allows him *no* strength, *save what is derived from* somewhere also, from Jesus Christ." [6]

Those illustrations occur in writings designed to advocate religion and (with one exception) the Christian religion. They are not the language of men professing a naturalistic or non-religious view of things.

If the views therein adumbrated be true, it is clear that Christianity as a religion of deliverance is a thing of the past. It becomes a sort of spiritualised method of social amelioration. Sin is indeed the centre of the controversy; Christianity appeals and professedly appeals to those only who are full of it. "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." The Gospel may make a few into saints; it is a gift to all because they are sinners. Now the sense of sin is so personal and inward a fact that it is idle to think of convincing by argument any one who is without it. Such an attempt is like trying to make a man in love by mathematics. It is only by ignoring the emphasis laid upon sin that we can for a moment deem it possible to convert our adversaries by controversy. This is a condition which is too often absent from the minds of apologists with the result that their work is ineffectual.

Controversy may sometimes reassure Christians assailed by many perplexities. It may help to determine men on the brink of faith to take the final plunge. It may now and then cause fair-minded unbelievers to look at facts they had left

out of account. Or it may insinuate here and there a seed which after experience may render fruitful. But it is vain and even silly to expect to convince men of the need of a Saviour who are as yet untroubled by conscience.

But since the Gospel addresses itself to the religious needs of men, it is worth while to interrogate the religious consciousness and to ask whether as a matter of fact the writers we are discussing are not mistaken as to its deliverance. Do the utterances of religious men in all ages give countenance to this claim, that religion does not imply a sense of sin or implies it in a very much slighter degree than we have been apt to think? No one indeed denies that many Christians do not feel it acutely at all times and that their contrition is very perfunctory; and the language too often used about the obvious way of Confession tends to confirm this laxity. Nothing is more cruel than the way in which, from a standpoint of cultured superiority, some divines despise and depreciate what is to many of us the only reasonable hope of overcoming temptation—sacramental confession.[7] But is this laxity the mark of good Christians or even of the most religious non-Christians? Do we, as a fact, find that the higher we go in the scale of religious insight the less and less place do we find for sin and the need of forgiveness?

To ask such a question is to answer it. The evidence of the saints in all ages is at one on this point. The words of St. Paul, "sinners of whom I am chief," are not the mock modesty of a popular preacher; they are the deep and poignant cry of the God-stricken soul in every age; so genuine that at times we deem them morbid. Morbid or not, they are the actual utterance of the inmost being of men so diverse as St. Augustine, Pascal, Bishop Andrewes, Pusey, Bunyan. Even in other and less perfect religions there is the same deliverance—the feeling that man is weak and by his own doing comes short; that there is something out of joint in the world; and that he cannot of himself heal the breach. In this respect the study not only of the Christian Church but of the whole religious history of the world, speaks with an accumulation of force. In all the elaborate ritual of early sacrifice and purgation, in Mithraic and Neo-Platonic mysteries, even in the pessimism of the East or of Schopenhauer,[8] there is a sense sometimes deep, sometimes superficial, of the unworthiness of man, of the "awryness" of the world and its need of redemption. This sense varies greatly in form and even in its relation to God or His existence, and in the practical conclusions which it inculcates, but in every case mingle notions fundamentally the same, that we have all sinned and come short of the glory

of God. And if indeed God be love, this must be the case; the first sense of the lover is his own unworthiness. Whether late or early in life, whether dim or dazzling, comes the vision of the "first and only Fair," there comes this other in its train, this sense of the gulf between what we are and what we might be.

Even apart from this inner torture of contradiction and weakness we see or know enough of the appalling ravages wrought in the world by drink and lust and avarice to realise that something is wrong; and no sober judgment can attribute them entirely to circumstance; and if it were there must be something very wrong in circumstance—some branch in the universe. It is the highly specialised departmental nature of modern life that—abstracting personal causes—makes so many blind to-day to the outer or inner meaning of sin. A high personal standard, a sheltered life spent in manifold activities, intellectual and beneficent, aloof from the mass of men, inevitably tends to diminish the emphasis of sin, and with it the need of religion.

If, however, we consider the world so far as it finds vent in the religious consciousness, then we cannot fail to conclude, in the words of an observer not of our faith, that: "There is a certain deliverance in which religions all appear to meet:—

"(1) An uneasiness.

"(2) A solution.

"(1) The uneasiness reduced to its simplest terms is a sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand.

"(2) The solution is that we are saved from the wrongness by making proper connection with the higher powers."[9]

This dictum is not the utterance of a fanatical friar. It breathes none of that atmosphere of abasement which inspires the *Miserere* or the *De Profundis*, and strikes so harshly on the cultivated ear in revivalists. It is the conclusion drawn from an array of observed facts by a student of psychology, with no other interest than stating what these facts imply. Yet it is to be noted that that conclusion is diametrically opposed to the case of the new theologians as we saw it; that it confirms that sense *of a world in need of redemption to which the* Gospel makes its appeal.

Moreover this sense has nothing to do with the *origin of this corruption, so poignant and tragic* in its consequences. It is not for our purpose material whether or no this sinful tendency be due to the fault and corruption of Adam, or the willing acceptance of certain animal passions that have come up through the course of evolution.

The question is, Is it *there*, this sense of sin? not, How did it get there? Do we as a fact

experience this sense of guilt, of weakness, of a diseased will; and are we most conscious of it when we are most conscious of the call to the higher life? And to answer this, each of us can only appeal to his own consciousness; he can go no further. St. Paul had to go to himself for his evidence: "We know that the Law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not; what I would, that do I not; but what I hate that do I. . . . To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not; for the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do. . . . Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" [10]

Either those words awaken an echo in our hearts, or they do not. They may seem to represent our own deep and constant experience; or we may feel ourselves members of that fortunate band who can say with a different teacher, "the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins; he wants to be up and doing."

It is only if St. Paul's words represent the facts that the Gospel has any foothold in my soul.

For myself I find them true, and the other not true to my inner life. It is that very "worrying" about sin which I cannot escape that obstructs all my desires to be up and doing and blights even my

highest and purest thoughts. Doubtless I might be happier, could I feel myself a man of the new dogmatic, not "essentially a sinner"! But I cannot. I cannot help it; I have this burden, like Christian in the story, and I cannot roll it off except at the foot of the Cross. Miserable and well-nigh hopeless in face of the future, I have to live. Taught by oft-recurring failures to distrust my best resolves, and finding sincerest love and all the hardest sacrifices vain, stained with the past, frightened in face of the tempter, aware how easy it is to yield and what little rest he gives, tortured with lustful passions, a prey to pride and malice, contemptible even more than odious in my weakness, divided in my inmost being, torn every hour between God and the devil, to whom shall I go? What must I do to be saved? Alas! I know that I can do nothing. I have no *quid pro quo* to offer God, and cannot win my pardon by any virtue or gift; I am naked, beaten, prostrate.

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling:
Naked come to Thee for dress;
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

What is true of myself may probably be true of many others—though I hope not of all even here. To all so feeling, the facile optimism of the new theology is sheer unreality. How are we to approach the

drunkard or the harlot, and many sinners neither drunkards nor harlots, yet deeply conscious of their "soul's tragedy"? Are we to tell them that "the deeper sins never are forgiven," or that they are to forget all about it, and be up and doing? How can they with this open wound? Until the sickness of the soul is healed, the call to be up and doing is futile and irrelevant. It may indeed be the truth that there is no forgiveness; that man is the sport of a mocking fairy who gives him a sinful nature and offers no help to overcome its irresistible allurements. But if this indeed be the case, if the story of redeeming love is a lie, then for many of us our whole life is in ruins. Even the highest and noblest of truths but add insult to injury and change torture into madness. Religion without deliverance, though it may appeal to a few favoured and noble spirits, is no hope, no treasure to me. I and such as I could in that case only say of the Incarnate Lord, "I shall see Him but not now; I shall behold Him but not nigh."

Preach to the stricken sinner every truth of which we have hitherto been speaking, and apart from redemption you will but deepen his gloom. Tell him that God has revealed the other world as by a flash, that He is a Spirit, not tied down to the sensible universe, that death does not close all. He will answer, "So much the worse for me unless you

can rid me of the barrier which divides me from God and leaves me lonely." Tell him again that in the mystery revealed he can find things analogous to the mysteries of our own life, so strange and real; that our vague dreams of a world vaster than our own petty interests have their roots in reality; and he will say, "Perhaps: it sounds beautiful, but that world so bright and gay of prayer and praise and work is not for me. Tell it to my friends, if you will be kind. Bid them keep the innocence I have lost. I am not one of those pure in heart who shall see God. The land that is very far off is eternally far from me; I am stuck in the mire, and every struggle I make to get free only plunges me deeper." Go further, and tell him how, not away and above, but here upon earth One came and lived the life of God, and showed as child, as youth, as man what true life is; how not as a poetic dream, or an idea of thought, but as life personal and human, God revealed Himself; you will but increase his despair, and deepen the sense of dividing guilt. "What is *your Christ-God to me, or Mary, the most blessed* among women? They are come with a curse. Take away this image of perfect love, of "a joy in which I may not rejoice, a glory I shall not find." I cannot share this holiness which makes my guilt blacker. Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Such and so despairing would be the thoughts of

any sinful man or woman, if the Gospel in all its beauty and wonder came before him, and no place for pardon and deliverance were seen.

And yet we are told that forgiveness is against the nature of things, and that it is immoral to expect it. It is true that we see it daily among lovers or in families, in all personal relations. But that mere human fact is ignored. And pardon, where it is not said to be a matter of course, costing nothing, is pronounced beyond even God's power to grant. The assumption on which this notion rests is that the world is made up of forces interacting with mechanical necessity, and not of free spirits. Forgiveness is impossible unless God be free, and not the *slave of His own laws.* The iron uniformity of nature, the unalterable bonds of cause and effect are insuperable difficulties to those who look only without. "The new dogmatic teaches that there can be no such thing as the forgiveness of sins; the law of consequences forbids such a thing."[11] A great novelist and thinker of the past generation, George Eliot, made this belief that forgiveness is unthinkable the centre of all her teaching.[12]

Cause is followed by consequence, character is built up slowly from irrevocable acts; and unless there is in personality some inner spring of freedom the hope of redemption seems an absurdity; while in some cases the almost mechanical operation of

the grosser sins, like intemperance, seems to confirm this view. It is only our inward consciousness of the power of love, and the actual fact of human forgiveness and its regenerating influence, that act as a bar to such an argument. But those who stifle this sense or ignore it urge that to preach this doctrine of *pardon and recovery is to mock men with an* illusion; further, that it is dangerous for the knowledge of a possible forgiveness leads to lax morality; although the Psalmist of old declared, "there is forgiveness with thee, therefore thou mayest be feared."

If this be true, then it is not over the gates of hell but the threshold of birth that the motto should be carved:—

"Abandon hope all ye who enter here,"

for earth is the place where repentance is impossible. Sinfulness is a universal fact, and if there be no pardon, we shall all, or most of us, sink lower in the scale of being, and morality and law will be saved at the expense of the damnation of the race.

For what they tell us is not so much that forgiveness is impossible as that it is immoral. It is indeed remarkable how all the principal objections are now urged from the ethical rather than the intellectual side. Non-intellectual presuppositions are

by no means the monopoly of the Christian. It is immoral and superstitious even to hope for miracles instead of resting in the natural order; immoral and obscurantist to desire mystery and withdraw from the cold abstractions of rationalism; immoral and childish to worship in the stable, and offer gifts to a babe; but above all things it is immoral, the proof of a mean and coward spirit, to seek for forgiveness, fit only for children. Precisely. We are children, and cannot and will not be satisfied without a child's pardon. Like children or beggars we refuse to take no for an answer. "Forgiveness is a beggar's refuge; we must pay our debts," says Mr. Bernard Shaw. Exactly. I am a beggar; I cannot pay my debts, and never shall be able; and I will knock at the doors of God's House until He grants me pardon. For "the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force."

It is because I know forgiveness is so hard, and is opposed to strict justice, that I need it so terribly. I do not need your talk of nature's inevitable sequences to show me that pardon is a difficult thing, or that any but God can make those whose sins are as scarlet as white as wool. That is clearer than the sun at noonday: it is precisely that which weighs upon me. It is the impossible in forgiveness that makes its beauty and gives wonder to the good tidings of the Cross. Like you, I can hardly

credit it, this strange gift of pardon and reunion. But I do credit it; it is my one hope. It is, as you tell me and we say in common speech, too good to be true that on me, me stained and broken, me weak and contemptible, not on my respectable neighbours this great gift has come, and I am allowed to feel I am forgiven, at one with my Father, that peace of God is "mine, mine, for ever and ever mine."

With this pardon in my heart, all penalty in this life I willingly and gladly undergo, indeed I would rather. Once assure me of forgiveness and that the past is no more, and that victory may one day be mine, and I care not what outward punishment there be. I can dance lighthearted through *the rough places, and like Paul and Silas sing* hymns in prison.

That is the answer in actual fact of the shriven penitent. Many are the forms it takes. Some to us seem vulgar. But whether the Hallelujah of the Salvationist, or the cry of the Methodist, or the voice of him who speaks to you now, all are one, all exultant and in tune with the angels, in whose presence "there is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

The joy of the redeemed is in proportion to that difficulty of redemption told us in pompous commonplaces by those who can see its hardness,

but forget that what is impossible to men is possible to God, and turn their eyes away from that figure on the Cross, which bids men learn the depth alike of the needed sacrifice and the love which undertook it. Christians assert no less strongly than their adversaries that "no man can deliver his brother or make agreement unto God for him; for it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever." They would not rate the Cross so high, and place what seems to many so excessive a value on the death of Christ, if they did not feel that the forgiveness thereby wrought is just the one boon on earth that God Himself could only offer at a sacrifice within His own Being.

So again with its alleged immorality. Whether or no pardon is against justice, or *vicarious* death an outrage, if only the fact is true we who have the gift will not trouble greatly over its so-called immorality. After all, this sacrifice of Christ does but carry to its highest power that law of unselfish service which illumines all our life, while forgiveness is a fact of daily life, potent in influence. Nor again are we at this place and time contending for any one theory of the Atonement, but for the fact and reality of forgiveness.

The forms in which past ages have expressed their sense of the gift are neither satisfactory nor

authoritative. Yet even the most grotesque testify to the extreme value of the truth such explanations were designed to guarantee, and to the real sense in which forgiveness is so hard that it needs the miracle of a dying God to accomplish. It were better to accept the crudest and most forensic doctrine of substitution rather than surrender the truth it is intended to set forth. Yet in the alleged immorality of pardon there lurks a profound truth, the truth that love is above all codes, and God's mercy goes beyond man's deserts. What Christians mean when they use the words—

> "Just as I am—without one plea,
> But that Thy blood was shed for me,
> And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
> O Lamb of God, I come,"

is but the counterpart of what our adversaries mean when they tell us the Atonement is immoral. *It would be immoral if it were not true.* That is, it affords the same revelation of love as above all law as that we find in a child's or friend's or lover's pardon, and indeed in all self-sacrifice. It springs from no merit, nothing done. Like all the beauties and graces of life it is based, not on necessity or justice, but is an unbought gift of that heart of the Eternal that is "most wonderfully kind." For the world of spirits lives on the rich *generosity* of God. And of all its instances none is comparable

to that of pardon; none so dear and wonderful as that grace of forgiveness for which His Son once died upon the Cross, that men, the worst and the weakest, might live unto Him for ever.

"Eternal Light! Eternal Light!
How pure the soul must be,
When placed within Thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight
Can live, and look on Thee!

The spirits that surround Thy throne
May bear the burning bliss;
But that is surely theirs alone,
Since they have never, never known
A fallen world like this.

Oh! how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear
That uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God.

These, these prepare us for the sight
Of Holiness above;
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the Eternal Light!
Through the Eternal Love."[13]

In those four instances—and doubtless they might be multiplied—we have seen how the Gospel rests

for its attractiveness on those very characteristics which, as compared with other religious systems, are most potent in arousing hostility, and involve us in genuine difficulties, perhaps insuperable, so long as we approach the problem from a merely critical standpoint. The notion of revelation and miracle is of necessity repugnant to those who make of the uniformity of nature an idol instead of an instrument, a law to govern God instead of His creation. But it is precisely because the miraculous exhibits the truth of God, as not Himself entangled in the endless chain of natural causes, that it has so uplifting and exhilarating a force.

Further, the notion of mystery in religion, the claim to be beyond reason, the speculative difficulties inherent in the Personal and Trinitarian doctrine of God, or in the Sacramental Presence, are repugnant to the rationalist temper, with its hatred of the incomprehensible, its worship of clearness and logical consistency. Yet they come home to the religious sense, conscious of the vastness of the order of the world, and feeling instinctively that the threads even of this life pass far out beyond our understanding. Thus what is given as difficulty is proved to be a help.

The idealist temper again finds infinite difficulties with little corresponding advantage in the notion of a particular historical manifestation of God, and in the fixing as of a special and unique importance on

one moment in the shifting kaleidoscope of human life. But to the plain man more ideal principles or a system made by the mind, however well grounded in reason or noble in aim, will always appear a little fanciful, divorced from reality. It is the concrete, the particular, the personal, that alone appeals to him, and he feels safe, anchored, at home with God, Who can manifest Himself in the flesh, and can cling with hope and love to the gracious figure of the Carpenter, Who went about doing good and spake as never man spake.

Lastly, we have seen to-day how the very difficulties in the way of forgiveness, its seeming reversion of the law of cause and effect, its hyper-moral removal from a man's shoulders of a burden he has himself placed there, must always arouse doubt in the minds of those to whom a uniform scheme is the *sine qua non* of thought, who clamour for a world in which there shall be no discontinuity, that is, a mechanism. Yet those very difficulties, the hardness of pardon, the knowledge that it is undeserved, are what endear the Cross to the mind of the sinner, whose sense of the might of his past sins and their binding nature is deeper in its misery than that of any theorist; and on that very ground he is more passionately concerned in their removal.

Moreover, we have seen in practical life very similar incongruities to those offered by the Gospel;

and we found that they are resolved not by thinking but by action. The difficulty of miracles is only one aspect of the difficulty of freedom. Formidable from the speculative standpoint, in the practical world it is not found at all. Nobody refrains from judging or stimulating others for all the determinists that ever proved the self a nullity. Mystery and contradiction can be discerned in our simplest and most ordinary notions. We are not merely unable to explain life or personality, but change and motion are beyond all grasp. Yet we cannot eradicate those expressions of the fact that we are alive in a living world. So they are quite congruous with a religion which is no less difficult theoretically to comprehend, and equally possible to make use of in practice. Further, the objection found to the unique value of our Lord's life on earth is of a similar order with the difficulty on purely evolutionary doctrine of reconciling our instinctive sense of the value and meaning of decisive moments in our own life with the conception of that life as consolessly developing. The objection to a historical religion, as concerned with the particular, will be found to lie with equal force against any system which gives reality to the individual life. Those who find the one insuperable ought in consistency to take the oriental view of human life as but a bubble in the air, a mirage in the ever-changing *maya*, soon to disappear into the

maw of the Absolute. The difficulties incident to the notion of sin and forgiveness are incident no less to the life of man in society and are resolved in the same way. Nothing is easier than to prove it impossible to pardon an injury. Yet nothing is easier, if the will be once turned, than to do it. The difficulty is only theoretic, and rests on the assumption that love is not above law. With that assumption removed, the problem disappears, and Christianity asks no other condition.

Doubtless it may be said that these considerations are not decisive. They render it easier to understand how Christianity arose and still maintains its power, still they leave the difficulties of the mind unsolved. We are being invited to accept the Gospel upon faith. We are, therefore, free to reject it as uncertain, and have no more warrant than before for believing in Christianity merely because it can be shown to be attractive to persons in particular circumstances, mostly without developed culture. I do not deny it. But so far as the Gospel appeals to men at all, it appeals to them as religious; it makes no attempt to appeal to the non-religious, if there be such. Although the considerations we have discussed do not perhaps tend to make Christian faith any more acceptable or perhaps probable to those who are without religious feeling, they ought surely to be of weight with the numerous persons

who are devoutly religious, yet non-Christian; or Christian and genuinely perplexed; or Christian in sentiment but anxious, as they say, to lighten the ship of dogmas which are at once superfluous and self-contradictory. For they seem to show that as against other systems the Christian faith meets the common religious needs of man, and includes more facts; and that its difficulties spring from this very cause, that it is first of all a revelation of life and joy, and not like some mere abstract system of thought, which is only unanswerable in that it starts from assumptions artificially limited. "Scepticism," it has been well said, "narrows the real problem."[14] But the Gospel takes facts as they are and includes them all. No explanation of life that has yet been offered but is fruitful of difficulties and inconsistencies. What the final explanation in its fulness may be we know not, nor are like to know. But it is reasonable to accept that system which comes closest to the facts and refuses to burke them. Scientific method and theories are admittedly abstract and partial, and can never give more than a skeleton of reality, the Gospel with its revelation of God in human life and a living society is above all things concrete; and in its doctrine of freedom, of sin and forgiveness it includes what no other system has yet adequately done, that mixture of strangeness and chaos, which is before our eyes in

actual human life as it is and is only to be fitted in to the doctrines of a uniform world by stripping facts of all their meaning. As Sidgwick used to say, "We are forced to admit that the world is an odd place." It is because we are so impossible to ourselves that we need an impossible God; because we are so full at once of doubt and belief, of courage and timidity, that faith with its venture has so golden a guerdon; because we are to ourselves and in our dealings with men so strange and mysterious, that a mystery at the heart of things can alone satisfy us; because we are living spirits we need a living God, and find our needs met in Christ and His Church; because we are always children, that we need one who can show the great in the little, and meet with wonder and delight the Christmas gift of the Manger-Child; finally, because we are so profoundly tortured with sin and temptation, so miserable in our guilt and impotence, that we need a pardon which it required God's dying to accomplish, and can rest secure in the victory of the Cross.

The presence of these theoretical difficulties and apparent inconsistencies, so far from being an argument *against* the truth of the Gospel, is to some of us a help to its acceptance. Uncertain and perplexed as we are about many things, and divided between countless opposing views, of one thing we feel convinced, that our life is infinitely wonderful;

that the world in which we are placed is strange and weird beyond all romancers' dreams; and that in all we do and think, all we admire and love, there is an element beyond comprehension; that the realities of life, of joy and suffering, of courage and sacrifice, even of sin and penitence, are mysteries of so profound and awful a nature, that they are thrown into relief, rather than interpreted by that small element that is clearly articulate and consistent. To us the facts, the daily and hourly facts are the supreme, the unfathomable problem. These facts we find included and transfigured in the Gospel, and we welcome it with responding joy. *Credo quia impossibile.*

A PLEA FOR OTHER-WORLDLINESS[1]

"My Kingdom is not of this world."—St. John xviii. 36.

It is time that defenders of the Christian faith gave up *apologising for it. If Christians are to conquer* it will be in the sign of the Cross; not by adopting the principles of their adversaries, but by the compelling audacity with which they display their own. I desire to-day to examine the charge often brought against the Church of being other-worldly. That charge is true. But it is our glory, not our shame. There is a sense, of course, in which the Church ought to be this-worldly. This sense, however, is so obvious, and is emphasised so much just now, that it is perhaps more profitable to dwell for a little upon the other aspect of the truth—provided we bear in mind that it is only an aspect.

The reproach of other-worldliness is inevitable. It is natural for writers like George Eliot or Cotter Morison, whose horizon is limited by death, to be distressed, when they see some of the best men

[1] Preached before the University of Cambridge, Nov. 10, 1907.

occupied in matters which appear, and must appear, to them as futile, in prayer which they must deem elaborate triviality, or in preaching a repentance which is only by fits and starts socially beneficent. It is not, of course, the worse but the better Christians whom altruists grudge to the service of God. They are glad enough for the Church to occupy ecclesiastics like Antonelli or Manning; or persecutors like Laud or Calvin, like Knox or Torquemada; statesmen like Innocent III., or Wolsey, or Julius II.; or self-seekers like Warburton or Hoadly, whose heroic attempt to serve God and Mammon is imitated in everything but success by two-thirds of the Christian world in every age. It is not for their sakes that this cry is raised. But it is saints like St. Francis, thinkers like St. Thomas, prophets like St. Catharine, mystics like St. Teresa, teachers like Fénelon or Newman, whose life offers so lamentable a spectacle. For taken at their highest they left a root of harm, and shifted on to a side track the thoughts and the hopes and the activities of men. Instead of preaching practical benevolence, glorifying work for its own sake, they ministered to idle dreams; instead of denouncing social injustice and denouncing nothing else; instead, that is, of treating suffering as the one supreme evil, they have wasted their own powers and those of others in gazing at a mirage; in striving for peace of mind, they have

often been indifferent to comfort of the body, have at times actually befriended pain as a means of improvement, and in the very abnegation which they taught, have sought a vision of a Kingdom of the other world rather than effective reality in the amelioration of this. To make up for the lack of good prose in the world they have given it indifferent poetry; and added to human misery by so doing.

The fact is true. For the Cross rather consecrates suffering than diminishes it. Our Lord came "not *to send peace on earth but a sword.*" Christians will always be "dreamers." If the Church should become really efficient, its days as a spiritual power would be at an end. Those who desire the Church to be "forceful" in the American sense, ought to imitate the methods of that *Company of Jesus*, in which practical efficiency has been carried to a point without parallel in history, and of whose success we have recent illustration.

On the other hand, "other-worldliness" may mean this-worldliness of the worst kind. You may talk of the value of treasure in heaven when you merely mean that you do not desire to be disturbed in the enjoyment of your treasure on earth. It is mere hypocrisy to say that suffering is a means of grace, and that comfort does not matter, when you mean that it does matter to you, and does NOT to those

who have to endure the results of your selfishness. If our critics force us to the question, how far the Cross is anything real to us, or how we fulfil the duty of brotherhood, we ought only to thank them in deep penitence.

Still, though the reproach may be true in detail, taken as a whole it has no grounds. Christianity *is* other-worldly. It is not merely a system of thought, or a moral code, or a philanthropy, or a romance, or all of these added together, that render it a mystery so "rich and strange." It is something unique. It attracts alike and repels men because it is itself, and *not* anything else. Alike in basis and nature, in motive and method, in ideal and result, the Christian faith differs from all its rivals far more than it resembles them. This is the very reason why it always eludes and yet evokes their criticism. From the non-Christian standpoint we are bound to appear irrational, quixotic, futile, silly. If we do not appear so, it is because we have lowered the flag and are striving to fight the world with its own weapons—a course which nothing could redeem from insincerity save its inherent stupidity. For the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser—very much wiser—than the children of light.

Christianity is not, in its basis, of this world. It is no more system of thought based upon reflection. It is a life rooted in faith. Thus a supernatural

grace, a gift from beyond, is its foundation; for faith is more than an intellectual conviction. It is, of course, arguable that we are under a delusion in claiming this high prerogative; it is not arguable that having made the claim, we are free to discuss the creed, as though it rested on some foundation other than faith, such as reasoning or historical criticism, although it may gain support from both. The creed may well find illumination in many different philosophies, which will vary with the temper of the time and with the temperament of the individual. But it can never be identified with any one of them without ceasing to be itself.

An illustration of this is an obvious topic to-day. The recent Papal Encyclical is far more obscurantist in what it affirms than in what it denies. If Modernism means all that that amazing document declares it to mean, it is as a system non-Christian. Complete severance between the Christ of fact and the Christ of faith would, in the long run, be destructive of belief in either. But when the Pope goes on to identify the Christian faith with a particular philosophy, he is giving the case into the hands of those whom he attacks. Were it true that Christian faith is an intellectual system reached by investigation, men can hardly be blamed if they select their system from the twentieth rather than the thirteenth century, especially when they have the

terrific triumphs of modern science for compurgators. In fact, if the Pope were right in his underlying theory, the Modernists could hardly be wrong in their philosophic system. The value of this instance to us lies in its reminder that Christianity does not profess to make appeal except to faith, and that we shall only cover ourselves with ridicule if we ignore the other-worldly basis of the creed.

What is true of the basis is also true of the nature of the faith. As a recent writer of great power, Dr. Bussell, in his Bampton Lectures, has pointed out, the appeal of the miracle of redemption is so enthralling, just because it comes from the other world. Men are crying for a way of escape, for freedom, for something beyond the iron law of natural uniformity. It is the very quality which wins the attack of those who do not make this cry which wins disciples. Were it, as some ask, to be bereft of this "unworldly," irrational character, then it would no longer be worth either attack or adhesion. It would be like Cleopatra, "withered by age and staled by custom." Men neither love nor hate what has become a centre of indifference. To-day, at least, there are abundant signs that Christianity may be mocked and assailed, but remains the most interesting and vivid of human facts. Surely it would be a pity if, while we endeavoured to make the mystery intelligible, we should only succeed in rendering the wonder—dull.

But this is not all. The motive of practical activity lies for the Christian in the other world. I think we have lost something by our disuse of the terms dear to our forefathers, pilgrimage and probation. Doubtless, we can overdo this and treat the truth that we are pilgrims in this life on the way to another in such a one-sided way as to neglect the real joy of life here and now. And instead of the old words we ought surely to sing:—

"I'm *not* a stranger here,
Heaven is my home,"

for both are true. We should learn to see in the beauty and gladness of earth, not enemies to be shunned, but evidence and hope of "the glory that shall be revealed in us."

The true proportions can be seen by an instance. Youth is a time of preparing. But it would be a *very poor boyhood that was spent in thinking only* of the future. Perhaps, indeed, the reason why the intellectual results of public school education are so inferior to the bodily is just this fact. In regard to bodily training the youth soon learns its value, not merely for the future, but for the moment. In regard to mental training, too often the only thought *for a future profession is made a stimulus.* We might, perhaps, get more results if we could make him see that intellectual activity makes everything else (games included) more interesting and joyful

here and now. At the same time, nobody treats youth as though it were anything but a part of an episode in life. So with the Christian. This life is only an episode in a career whose grandeur we can but dimly imagine. All our values must be different from those of men who treat it as a whole.

Still more is this the case with social ideals. The Christian, like the non-Christian philanthropist, is appalled at the vast spectacle of ugliness and tyranny which is the modern notion of civilisation. But such changes he demands, he demands because man is primarily an other-worldly being, and existing arrangements tend to turn him from his true end, not because suffering is for him the supreme evil or social amelioration the one ideal aim. As an acute modern critic hinted when he called himself a voluptuary, the doctrine of the Cross is the very antipodes of the non-Christian view of physical suffering. Very often, too, the Christian pays less attention to such matters than reformers approve. This is inevitable. It is not his first business, which is to seek "the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." The duty, however arduous, of making earth a fairer place to dwell in, yields in stringency to that of helping men to see what is harder still, that they have not long to dwell here, that how they live is more important than what they live on.

The truth is that the social millennium, if it were

once attained, would merely afford a more salient proof of the gulf that divides the Christian from his non-Christian fellow-worker. Juster distribution of wealth, more widely diffused culture, and lasting international peace, might diminish external evils, but apart from faith could effect no redemption of human nature. The true function of the Church will be discerned, and its supreme task will begin, when men are tempted by contentment to apathy and by universal education to unbelief. Every improvement in the means of life, whether intellectual or physical, brings with it a development of the substitutes for religion, and the acquiescence in these substitutes by numbers of men who, less educated or less comfortable, would have been submissive, exemplary Christians. This is, indeed, no reason why Christians should not forward such improvement by every means in their power. But it is a reason to prevent them imagining that their task will be done when its difficulties are only beginning, or that the reality of the other world, the sense of sin, and the romance of sacrifice will more readily appeal to the majority when there is less on earth of which they can complain, or because the grosser tyrannies and more palpable vices are no longer obvious. A world wherein everybody is respectable might very well be a world wherein no one is religious.

The real task of the Church in the future will

neither be the preaching of the Gospel to the ill-equipped nor the redemption of the ultra-luxurious, but the awakening of the vision of God in a world rationally cultivated and enjoying moderate though not excessive comfort.

The means, moreover, even to this end are different for the Christian from what they are to the world without. As a citizen the Christian has his own views, and seeks to promote them in the ordinary way by legislation in a society which is not, and in one sense ought not to be anything but, heterogeneous in religion. But as Churchmen, Christians are bound by other sanctions. And I doubt whether any external force could produce any effect at all comparable to that of the private lives of Christians, if they really believed what they say they believe; and felt as their Master in His amazed inquiry, that it was simply not worth while scrambling for the means of ostentation when they already possess the food and raiment with which they are bidden to be content. For it is, surely, not the struggle for *existence, but the making haste to be rich and the* practice of idleness, as a profession, that is the cause of the specifically modern social evils. And, if the Christian were as other-worldly and careless as his Master, and would learn to stop when he had enough, and not make the world's opinion the standard of comfort, the diminution in the causes of economic

wrong would be far greater than would be effected by more legislation. The gaiety of the nations owed *more to the mediæval habit of keeping saints' days*, than it is ever likely to do to legislative bank holidays. We are scarcely in danger to-day of the undue reverence for the character of Mary. If we were, even Martha might find her task greatly simplified.

This leads us on. Whatever Christianity means or does not mean, it means prayer. Prayer is as necessary to the spiritual as breathing to the natural life. And yet to the non-Christian it is bound to seem unwarrantable trifling, waste of energy, to be tolerated, if *at all, as a form of re-*creation, an added spaciousness to life. There is no gulf comparable to that which divides the man who prays from the man who does not pray. Yet *many Christians have so far yielded to the pressure* of their adversaries that they seem to regard prayer as little more than a necessary evil, the *sine qua non* indeed of Christianity, but no real part of it, the dull though inevitable prelude to genuine activity. And yet "prayer is work" is a truer maxim than its customary converse. In the end the most important part of our lives will prove to have been neither our thoughts, nor our deeds, but our prayers. In the long run, says Bishop Creighton, one learns that the only thing we can do for others is to pray

for them. And may God forgive those of us who have neglected this duty.

Prayer is perhaps the most shining instance of the truth that other-worldliness is the very essence of the Christian life. I am not here asserting that Christians are better or wiser than other men—very often they are neither the one nor the other—but they are different. This is even truer of the ideal and the resulting character. Above all this, the Christian is gay. Was there ever a more unconventionally joyful spirit than St. Paul, or any schoolboy so playful as St. Francis? Not peace nor unison, not joy, not strength nor earnestness is the *cachet* of the Christian, but gaiety. He is ever shocking worldly men, strenuous moralists, by some play of the spirit which seems sacrilegious. This gaiety is other-worldly in origin—it comes from the love of One unseen; it is grounded on the belief that nothing really matters if all things work together for good to them that love God, and it is nurtured by the daily denial and sacrifice which is the inevitable and invariable consequence of love. There is no true love, earthly or heavenly, which does not issue in sacrifice and giving. And the suffering inherent is its glory and its crown, and the Cross its symbol. It is this eternal romanticism, this paradox of the Crucifix, that makes Christians incomprehensible to every one else—now as ever, to the Jews

a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness. Like the poet whose heart dances with the daffodils, the Christian delights in the world of things and events with a sense of their inner glory that seems all but blasphemous to the serious moralist and the educated worldling, who associate gaiety with the frivolous, and are staggered by a religion so light-hearted and full of colour, so passionate and reckless.

Yes. In all these things, in its ground which is faith, its motive which is eternity, its method which is prayer, its ideal which is gladness, does the other-worldliness of the Christian life display itself as a "gazing-stock." And we have to choose. Either our ideals are to be of this world or not. No passing resemblance and no ingenuity of reasoning can avail to save us. The choice is forced upon us by the very fact of our being. Hard though it be to take whichever side we do take, let us not delude ourselves with the pleasant fiction that we can take both sides or take neither.

My brothers, for some of you at this time the choice is beginning to be realised as it had not before. Upon you especially, who have but entered upon the glories of this place with its rich traditions and the splendour of its hopes, there has just dawned "the vision of the world, and all the wonder that may be." What form shall that vision take? To some it will come as the harmony of bodily powers,

the progress in health and joy of the outward life, and the gifts of character it brings in its train. To some will dawn the vision of the human spirit, as disciplined by a hundred generations of culture, the ministry of beauty with the rest it tells of in the glories of earth and the imagination of man. Some will be held by the austere but enthralling charm of knowledge, with the hope of correcting the shallow frivolity of current opinions, and adding something real to the heritage of thought. To some will come the dream of duty done for country or profession, in careers truly liberal. Others will be caught by the heroism of service, the selfless aim of brightening the lives of the disinherited, and of giving to "the dim common populations" a little —it can be but a little—of those myriad boons alike of gladness and opportunity showered upon us here.

All these aims are worthy; and in their due degree appealing. But in themselves they are not enough, and must, if taken alone, ere long reveal their hollowness. Even the life of this world cannot wisely be spent without thought of the other. Outward exercise, clean and courageous living, are good; but soon, too soon, men learn that they are but a part, and that a small one, of human life. Culture in every form is high and noble, but only if it points beyond. For it turns either to a selfish and fastidious cynicism, or to a despairing emptiness, unless earthly

beauty and poetic passion are seen as the symbols of the "altogether lovely." Erudition for its own sake arouses ere long the cry, To what purpose was this waste? Even discovery and the certainties of science, the sequences of unalterable law, only generate their own extinction, the desire for escape, the cry for deliverance, which finds no answer but in Christ. Social and philanthropic ideals seem for a time to drag out of a man more than was in him, and endow the self with a life beyond life; but so long as he looks no farther he finds them pall, and the question is forced upon him, Are men any better or happier for all my striving? And if they are, what does it matter? Where does it lead? The aims of this world, taken at their highest and purged of all that is base, or ugly, or selfish, leave us at the last unsatisfied, and crying, "Is this the end, is this the end?" For in these things alone there is—

> "Neither joy nor love nor light,
> Nor certainty nor peace nor hope for pain,
> And we are here as on a darkling plain,
> Swept with confused alarm of struggle and flight,
> Where ignorant armies clash by night."

It is God we are seeking for; the other world, which alone can give reality to this, alone can invest duty with enduring meaning, can find for beneficence a certain value—for knowledge an ordered place, and

flash upon the shows of earthly beauty some hint at least of the eternal lovelinoss. Men bid us limit our aims and hopes to this life, and turn from the dazzling mirage of the other. Our answer is that we cannot. We may try, try hard, try—as a race—for generations, for centuries; but we cannot do it. God is calling us.

In all ages He calls men to their home. More than ever are the signs of His call apparent in the restless, childish, pathetically eager world in which we live. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." It is not so much impious or sinful to seek to chain to earth beings born to give gladness to angels, or to treat as things of this world only spirits who may be the friends of God, as it is futile. It is impossible. It may not be. "For God created man to be immortal, and made him an image of His own eternity."

THE NEED OF AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH[1]

"Feed My sheep."—ST. JOHN xxi.

WE enter this evening upon the Festival of St. Peter, the apostle to whom this cathedral church is dedicated. It is not unfitting that the place which has been so intimately associated with the fortunes of the English Church, which breathes in the dignity of its venerable aisles the very spirit of our national Christianity, should own as patron that chosen and pre-eminent apostle to whom was first given the great commission to teach and to rule. At such a moment and in such a year as this—with the echoes of the great congress still in our ears—it seems a duty, and indeed almost a necessity, that we should strive to gather up and crystallise our notions of authority, and to express that mingling of liberty with order which a great prelate once declared to be the distinctive note of our branch of the Church Catholic.

For the words of my text have proved the centre

[1] Preached in Exeter Cathedral, June 28, 1908.

of many conflicts, and they are still employed to justify the claims of the Roman Patriarch to be absolute monarch of all Christians. At this stage, however, and in this place, it can hardly be needful to repudiate afresh those notions of illimitable, inalienable dominion in the Church, of political supremacy over the State, or of doctrinal infallibility, of which the world has heard already too much. At least I shall not to-night re-argue that old cause. It is enough that we are here. We stand as a Church to witness that Romanism is not Catholicity, that the absorption of all power by one person is the worst form of individualism, that national and particular Churches are no more accidents, but have as Churches a place in the whole body; that they have a distinct and real life, or as we say now, a mind and a will of their own, though always as sharing with others the order, the creed, and the sacraments common to all. We stand, in brief, for the social and federal idea in the Church against a doctrine which is as autocratic as a Caliphate, and (in the long run) as subjective as that of Luther or Calvin. That is the issue between England and Rome, between the Catholic view and the Ultramontane. Attempts are many to explain away this conception, and in some form or other to deny the reality and meaning of our English heritage. But they will not endure. For the forces of life are against them, the traditions and

history of the English nation as well as the Church will interpose an impassable barrier; Englishmen may conceivably recognise too little, they will never recognise too much, of the claims and powers of other branches of the Church. The individuality of our Church is a real thing, and we are not likely to lose it so long as the Church exists.

But it is the individuality of a Church or community that is ours, not the unregulated freedom of mere personal caprice. We stand, as I said, against the tyranny, theoretic even more than practical, of Rome, but we stand no less strongly, no less distinctly, against the anarchy and indiscipline of a merely subjective religion. It has been said that an Englishman always realises himself as a member of a group, school, or college, a regiment or a union, a sect or a party, while the Frenchman (except his membership of the State) is rather seen as a separate isolated individual. This is true. But it is a truth which needs emphasising a great deal more than is always the case in regard to our Churchmanship. No more in our religion than in any other part of life (indeed a great deal less) can we live to ourselves alone. We are members of a society, a fellowship; to that society we owe allegiance, and it has over us—so long as we remain its members—authority, power. We can leave it if we please; but if we do not, we are not

at our own pleasure as to obeying its rules or sharing its faith.

Because we deny the authority of the Pope in its developed form, we are not therefore to deny all authority in the Church, or to suppose that to the enlightened modern man the claims of his Church shall mean little in doctrine and nothing in discipline, save and in so far as he finds it more convenient to worship in company with his fellows. Yet this is the clamour of the hour. "To us ecclesiastical discipline has ceased to be even an impertinence," says one writer with a sneer. "The religions of authority are decaying, to be supplanted inevitably by the religion of the spirit," says another. Books pour from the presses of England and America which reiterate this notion. Differing in many things they commonly agree in this, that the writers repudiate the Church and the creeds, and tell us *each his own view*—*not of what the* Christian faith is, but of what he would like it to be.

They would be right if all they meant were that faith is given for life rather than theorising, that God's revelation touches us of ourselves no less than of Him, that, so far from being alien and external, or merely imposed, it finds its verification in our most inward experience; for "in Him we live and move and have our being." Religion is essentially personal. The appeal of the Crucified comes with

fresh poignancy to every sinner. The hope of the Resurrection uplifts with new joy every sufferer.

But far more than this is claimed by writers of the school or schools I am discussing. They would treat creeds and Churches as at best utilities, at worst encumbrances, *Man's intercourse with God*, it is said, is direct. All the elaborate system of doctrine and ritual and sacraments, all the paraphernalia of ecclesiasticism, are indeed paraphernalia; they are nothing compared with the immediate vision of God or with the knowledge given us by reason and conscience. So far as the vision is immediate and the knowledge direct this may be true. But reasoning is not an immediate process; and for most of us knowledge of God does, as a fact (not as theory), come mediated by friend and teacher, through family and Church, through human love and earthly agonies, we "mount, and that hardly, to eternal life." As somebody said, it would be truer to assert that all things and persons are mediators —*schoolmasters—to lead men to God, than that* none are. Otherwise it could make little difference whether we had heard of the name of Jesus or no.

The claim of the Church to authority rests upon two principles — the social nature of man and the lordship of Christ. As Christians we are disciples, pupils, learners, and we owe loyalty to our teacher; and we are also Churchmen, members of a followship,

inheritors of a kingdom, and owe allegiance to the great community whose life we share. Through the Church we become "heirs of all the ages," and enter into the whole religious experience of the race. To attempt to do without it, to throw it off as useless, is as idle and as wrong as it is to hide our talent in a napkin, and leave men unenriched by the special gifts of our day and generation. It would be analogous in politics for an Englishman to strive to forget the story of his race and start as though he were a Kamschatkan. We cannot, if we would, repudiate the past; we ought not, though we might, leave our heritage untransformed—rather, like a wise household, we shall bring forth from our treasure-house things new and old.

Christianity is in its essence social. Whatever else the doctrine of the Trinity means, it means this—that God is Himself a fellowship; and we, His Church on earth, are to express, as best we may, that divine harmony. If God is love and we ought also to love one another, society—*i.e.* a Church—is of the very foundation of our religion, and society implies authority, submitting ourselves one to another with mutual forbearance, distinctions between "some prophets, some apostles, some pastors and teachers." Read the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul and St. Peter, the Apocalypse of St. John, our Lord's own words about the kingdom,

and you will see how impossible is the notion of religion as a purely personal and private thing, how it is intertwined with notions of common life, common faith, common worship—ay, with government and subjection. If then Christianity be a society, if its end is to endure, and its meaning not to be obliterated, it must have within it organs and officers, must issue rule and discipline, must formulate its basis of union in belief. The claim to dispense with authority in religion is at bottom the self-assertion of personal pride, of the self-centred and self-sufficient individual, too often the ideal of modern culture, whose gift seems rather to make a critic than a man.

But this is not all. Those who repudiate all Church authority cannot in the long run maintain that of Christ. It is futile to declare that by our own unaided reflection on life or by a sort of intuition —this is apparently the means—we can arrive at the wonder of the Incarnation or at the tenderness of the Atonement. We cannot. But we can, if we will, eviscerate the miracle of its wonder; we can attenuate the Atonement into some merely natural process if we apply our ingenuity to such an end; though the ideas have to be "given" before we can reduce even the value of the gift. More than this; contemptuous of all Church authority—*i.e.* of the accumulated wisdom of the saints and sages of God —we are certain to be critical of Christ; we shall

agree with Him when we like, and disagree when He is difficult. We shall degrade Him from our Master into a servant; we shall sit in judgment on His teaching, sift His acts and words, and ignore His claims—for they are claims—to rule.

There is no way out of the dilemma. You cannot accept Christ as Master and be as though you had not accepted Him. You must think differently, will differently, act (or at least try to act) differently—because He is your Lord. How often we use those words as though they meant a title and not a claim. In brief, you surrender to the principle of authority the moment you say "Jesus is Lord," and nothing can make you your own master after that.

True, this lordship brings the truest freedom, and in the long run is expressive of your inner self. But it does not seem so at the time any more than the first term at school reveals the freedom which will be yours when you have learnt the fruits of its discipline, or than the first trial to take an oar in a boat seems natural or easy. It is only by trusting the "coach," whether in boats or learning, that you learn in time what freedom of muscle or brain can mean; only by submitting yourself to the common life, which is your inheritance, to family or school training, can you become in time "free of the followship." Even so it is only by humility, by submitting, by hailing Christ as Master, by accept-

ing our own limitations and weakness and recognising the wisdom and grace committed to the great society we call the Church—so, and only so, after struggle and agony, can we enter at last into the "glorious liberty of the children of God."

NOT PEACE BUT A SWORD[1]

"I came not to send peace, but a sword."—ST. MATT. x. 34.

NOT peace but a sword. What words from Him, the meek and gentle! How shocked His hearers must have been—Jesus was always shocking people. They had witnessed His daily kindness, His rare and beautiful courtesy. They had seen Him bless little children, taking them into His arms. They had seen His wonderful cures, had nearly all of them, doubtless, had some kindred or friend helped by Him; tenderness and sympathy and quiet love they could all discern. But where was the sword in the gracious words and acts? Where was there a word of severity or strife—unless quite occasionally when the Pharisees provoked Him, or some hardness of the selfish rich stung Him into denunciation? He was not even as John the Baptist, an ascetic, severe and aloof. He did not disdain the common haunts of men; He could take part in their social pleasures, eating and drinking like any one else. As they saw Him going about

[1] Preached at Cambridge before the University Church Society, May 15, 1908.

doing good, and felt how sweetly attuned His nature was to God, they must have expected great miracles of concord to be wrought by His help. That influence, they thought, would bring peace where there had been strife, joy for pain, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

So they hoped. And then how all this is dashed by these words—*not peace but a sword.* I am not set to unite but to divide; to emphasise the difference between those who follow my call and those who do not. And so it proved. The faith of Christ, if it has added immeasurably to our stores of love and devotion, has also deepened the fires of hatred, and made selfishness more deliberate. Even inside His own fold, what bitter and piercing hatred has come from mere differences of view—far deeper and sharper cutting than any before. We witness in history, not only the patience of martyrs, but the strength of persecutors; greater saints and lives of wonder and love, but also worse sins and far uglier. It is a common taunt against Christians that their belief in the Prince of Peace has manifested itself in immemorable and bloody wars, that more divisions have been aroused concerning the "name of our salvation" than for any other watchword. Christ came to preach forgiveness and peace, and His saints have led men to battle. This taunt is true. Nor can we answer

it entirely in the commonplace retort. Men say that it is because Christ's teaching has been so strangely misconceived, because under His name men have often disguised their own worst passions, hatred, and cruelty, and pride of race. All this may be and has been; but it gives but a partial answer.

The truth is that Christ's call, being more absolute, more enthralling than any other worship or service, makes more difference than any other, digs deeper lines of division. Inevitably and naturally it means a greater effort to acknowledge the call; a more vivid and piercing discipline to pursue it; a standard of belief and action, distinct and separating.

If Jesus be what He is said to be; if the Carpenter of Nazareth is not merely the teacher and friend of man, but the Only-begotten Son of God; if by a sacrifice unique and inexplicable He has cleansed us from the guilt and power of sin; if that Cross is to be our ideal and our glory, not our burden and our shame, then we as Christians are moving in a different world from our fellowmen. We have before us a faith and an aim like others, in that they, too, have faiths and aims, but far more unlike than like them. And we must be as strangers and sojourners among those who do not bow their knee to that lone Figure with

its strange piercing crown. Nor shall we hear that compelling call, and not be as though we heard not, without cost and sacrifice, without bitterness and agony. Our own hearts, too, will be pierced by a sword.

I want for a little to draw your thoughts to one or two ways in which this truth exhibits itself. First of all, the truth holds for the intellectual sphere. Christ's claims are tremendous and startling. They cannot be reconciled with any ordinary standards or methods. Many elements doubtless combine to make a Christian; but faith—burning, living faith—is the one indispensable basis. When He was upon earth, He always demanded faith before He could effect anything. We are told that in one place "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." As our adversaries never tire of telling us, His Risen Body appeared to none but believers. Christ comes to us demanding that we shall believe, I don't say without evidence or against it, but upon evidence that is not conclusive apart from faith; that He, the Babe of Bethlehem, is very God; so that, as one adversary puts it, people make a pet name of Him who made the stars and the tiger; that He was born in a strange way; and after living for a time, as any ordinary boy or young man, startled his countrymen with a series of unheard-

of wonders; was executed by an ecclesiastical cabal; rose again by a process of which we know nothing; that He still lives as man, no less than as God, and in the sacrament of His ordaining gives us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink in a mystery, wonderful and unspeakable.

Now, whether this be true or false, no ingenuity can make it merely one religion a little better than many others, but essentially the same. Still less can it be sophisticated into a mere system of philosophy. The faith of Christ is a thing unique and strange. At all times—and at no time more than the present—we are being tempted to do this, tempted to try and treat Christianity as fundamentally the same as other systems, worked out by other methods, resting on other foundations. In truth, it is the resemblances that are superficial; the differences are vital. Somebody has said, Any one can believe that Jesus was *a* god—what is so hard to credit is that He who hung upon the cross was *the God*. That is what you are asked as Christians to believe.

And it is the sword, glittering but fearful. It must cut your life away from the standards of this world, away from its thought and its measures, no less than its aims and hopes. Hard and bitter is the separation; and you will be parted from many great and noble men, some perhaps your own

teachers, who can accept about Jesus everything but the one thing needful. The Christian faith, if accepted, drives a wedge between its own adherents and the disciples of every other philosophy or religion, however lofty or soaring. And they will not see this; they will tell you that really your views and theirs are the same thing, and only differ in words, which, if only you were a little more highly trained, you would understand. Even among Christ's nominal servants, there are many who think a little goodwill is all that is needed to bridge the gulf—a little amiability and mutual explanation, a more careful use of phrases, would soon accommodate Christianity to fashionable modes of speaking and thinking, and destroy all causes of provocation. So they would. But they would destroy also its one inalienable attraction; that of being the romance among religions—a wonder, and a beauty, and a terror—no dull and drab system of thought, no more symbolic idealism.

The same thing is true in practice. Jesus came, as has been said, to effect a "transvaluation of all values"; to make all things new—a new heaven and a new earth. The pupils of Jesus have learnt to put a different price upon all the wares this world can offer. Above all, He teaches us to put a different value on ourselves and our own lives. He teaches us to value as little or nothing the

goods of this world; what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? He tells us that if we will not take up the Cross we cannot be His disciples. Self-denial is not an accident, unfashionable, but inevitable, it is the very essence of His service. It is a mockery to say we can live as though this were true and be as other men are, save for a few unimportant differences Even the most earnest of our adversaries are beginning to deride Christian chastity—a hard thing enough—a veritable sword (as you well know), even to those who know it is God's will—impossible to those who do not.

More than this, Christ demands a humility which is foolishness to the world. A life of penitence, of confessing our sins, of childlike trust and childlike simplicity is the very antipodes of what the modern man seems to desire. More than ever is Christian humility anathema to the world. More than ever are men preferring "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life" not merely as pleasant and convenient in practice, but veritably as Gods to worship. Be yourself, they tell us; be a man. Have done with the vain image of renunciation and agony with a penitence fit only for priests and women.

> "With this futile message to a beaten race
> Under the heel of Rome."

Or again—

"By Thy Name that in hell-fire was written and burned at the point of the sword,
Thou art broken, O Lord, Thou art broken, Thy death is upon Thee, O Lord.
And the love-song of earth as Thou diest resounds through the wind of her wings.
Glory to man in the highest, man is the master of things."

Men have, for the most part, done with lamenting their lost faith. Sentimental tears over the happy, simple Christendom of their fathers are a thing of the past. They are proclaiming now their contempt for Christ's character, and their disgust at the very name of love.

Scorn and hatred, difference and division, must be more than ever our lot, if we would be the followers of Christ in these days. Conventional religion and polite unbelief are gone for ever. You cannot live as comfortably if you are a Christian, as if you are not—so do not try. Penitence alone is a sword to pierce the heart. Nothing blinds to faults like selfishness. Worldliness, in all its forms, is like a cushion round the soul, but Christ arises to help us to know ourselves. "The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword piercing, and the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." If you want a comfortable and pleasing existence, don't, I beg of you, don't try to be a Christian.

For we must face the facts, and not shirk them. Christ did come not to send peace but a sword. There is no use our trying to live or think, as though it made only a superficial difference whether we call ourselves Christians or no. If you serve Christ, He will be content with nothing less than the whole of you. The service means taking up the Cross; being hard where others find it easy, being regarded by some as unintelligent, by others as *bigoted, by others as uncharitable—for* Christ's lordship is intolerant. We are His sworn men and owe Him "life and limb and earthly worship" and service against all other lords; and we cannot reduce our faith into mere commonplace morals or respectable citizenship. Whatever Christianity is, or is not, it is not commonplace or respectable, and good sense always condemns it. It is not to pleasant days, and well-fashioned lives, and sheltered peace that Christ summons you, but to tears and the splendour of *sacrifice, and the height and depth of lives* lived in warfare, a world of wonder and of joy, but of anguish and agony. Riot paints a city red, religion dyes the whole world purple.

Let us live, then, as Christ's servants under no delusive dreams; for life will not be easier, but harder, infinitely harder if you are to be His soldiers against sin, the world, and the devil. Embrace if you will the banner of Love, Love flaming,

intolerant, revolution incarnate. Follow Christ to joy and to worship, to exultation and to agony. But never for an hour or an instant, never forget —it is not peace, but a sword that you bear and wield.

LITTLE CHILDREN[1]

"*Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom.*"—ST. MATT. xviii. 3.

WELL as we know those words, we do not know them well enough. Yet the call to be children is Christ's supreme call. Failure to meet it was the cardinal sin of the respectable religious people of that day. It was because they would not bow themselves, *could not be anything but grown men before* God, that He told them that many should come from the east and the west and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and the children of the kingdom be left in darkness without. The offence of the Cross lies just in this—its simplicity. It is not because the faith is hard that men despise it, but because it is easy. It is hard, but believers feel most of that. What repels people is its direct appeal—its command to us to shake off the paraphernalia of sophistry with which we love to envelop our life.

One critic attacks us for worshipping the symbol of an execution, for making a Cross the crisis of all history. How silly to make of that vulgar occurrence

[1] Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, Sept. 27, 1908.

—the murder of a harmless prophet—the one great fact, the supreme gift of God to men! We shall never, he tells us, make Christianity modern and effective until we get rid of this ridiculous emphasis on the Crucifixion and put the Cross in its proper place. And so throughout. How trivial the sprinkling of unconscious babies with a little water! And there, men are asked to believe, begins the spiritual life. How slight a bond it is to receive in common a little bread and wine! Yet we are to say that in that sacrament God gives us Himself, and we are in touch with the heart of things. How supremely ridiculous! The great God, "Who made the stars and the tiger," can never be working in so mean a fashion. Sacramental doctrine is pretty and useful for children—but that is all. That *is* all. We *are* children where God is concerned. We do not need Christ to teach us the majesty of things, and the sublimities of the starry heavens. All can admire the splendour of the sunset on the rose-crowned hills, or bow before the glory of a Shakespeare or a Newton. But Christ alone can consecrate the trivial and give distinction to commonplace things. Not the greatness of the great, but the greatness of the little—the worth of the lily and the manger, the infinite value of the poor and the publican; that is the message of Jesus, His message and our hope.

For it is we, the poor and sinful, to whom He does such honour, calling us friends, and raising us to His level. Raising, but on one condition. First, we must be lowered. Even Eternal Love must "stoop to conquer." We must repent, and be like children. How easy and simple it is for a child to repent—how bitter for us! The truth is we are afraid—afraid to repent lest love and faith should carry us we know not where. We cover ourselves with many wrappings of position, calling, philosophy, just because we are cowards, and dare not face ourselves. Half the problems we think so dark, half the difficulties we multiply so proudly, take their origin in this. We dare not be alone. "I was afraid and hid myself, because I was naked."

And yet the natural line is that of Christ—to feel sorry like a child, humble like a small schoolboy who knows he is at the bottom. This is all we can do, when the facts stream in upon us. This, above all else, divides us from the world. We do, they do not, think repentance and humility a duty. Our enemies tell us that we are not better than they are, and often worse. Alas! we know it. It is because we are bad that we want to touch the hem of His garment, not because we are good. Many who do not own Christ's call overtop us in courage and perseverance. We wish we were like them, but we are not. We have no power of ourselves to help

ourselves, and cannot get on at all but by God's grace. And even then we move slowly, and fall so often. Again and again we must kneel in penitence, and weep like St. Peter. Yet this, more than anything else, makes us what we are—weak and untrustworthy, but real and affectionate children of God. We do—and others do not—feel the duty of being humble and confessing our faults like children. And like them, we are not to trouble at the contempt of others, or when they laugh at us. They do laugh. The man who cries Abba Father, who bows his head in confession, has a different ideal from those who do not, and to such he seems absurd and weak, below the dignity of educated modern man. Quite right. There is something wrong about your religion when the world does not think it silly.

But though it begins with humbled grief, repentance does not end there. The child who says he is sorry always adds, I'll try and never do it again. That faith in the future, even more than the grief, is the note of the Christian. He believes, the world does not believe, that with God's help he may become better. For a certain number of years, say twenty-five, we take it for granted that not only mentally but morally and spiritually a boy or man may change. After that we label them, put their characters into pigeon-holes, and expect

our rough classifications to be eternal. But Christ teaches the opposite of all this—the whole sacramental system of the Church implies a belief in real progress, in genuine power of amendment. The world laughs at this optimism, and we too find it hard to credit, unless of set will we remain of the child's mind with faith undimmed by the clouds of appearance.

That is the essence of it all. For the child's repentance and the child's amendment we need the inexhaustible *faith* of childhood, its infinite and inalienable romance. The faith of a Christian, that faith we have agreed to call child-like, is at once the crown and the basis of all his efforts, their goal and their starting-point. It is the inward "peace at home" amid the outer conflicts of will and circumstance. That which springs up naturally in human childhood is for us the supreme gift, a grace to be sought with prayer—this faith, that is at the root of the careless gladness of children, and of the ease and buoyancy of saints like St. Francis—this faith, so uplifting, so hard to win, yet so essential. For without it where are we? Whether we look at the prospects of the Church or our own life, probability, rational calculation, common sense are all ranged on the cynic's side.

People talk of the Church in danger—the Church is always in danger; the miracle is not in her weak-

ness, but in her existence. The betting is always in favour of the devil. It was not human chance, but God's grace, that gave to the early Church its victory over the most imposing civilisation and the strongest government the world has known. It is only as we throw ourselves on God that we shall certainly conquer—for "of ourselves we have no power to help ourselves." Yet with that aid victory is not merely likely, but certain. "For God hath chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and *base* things of the world, and things which *are* despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence."

APPENDIX

THE NEW THEOLOGY AND BISHOP BUTLER[1]

The apparition of the New Theology is interesting in various aspects, and I do not think that it can be dismissed with contempt. The arrogance and superficial smartness of Mr. Campbell's well-advertised work, doubtless, conduce to this view, and lead to our imagining that there is "nothing in the movement;" but this is greatly to misconceive the situation, and to underrate the importance of certain permanent tendencies in the human mind.

The New Theology is really but a recrudescence of "natural religion" in a Christianised form, expressed under the conditions of pantheistic rather than deistic assumptions. As such it is certain, whether within the Church or without, to exercise a powerful attraction upon the minds of the cultivated or semi-cultivated "masses," for it will never appeal to the uneducated or to the multitude. But we

[1] The *Church Times*, Sept. 27, 1907.

have to face the fact that there exists, and has existed for a long while, a very large class of people, removed by position and training from the grosser evils of life, of which they know only by hearsay, interested in religious topics and desirous of finding some ideal with which they can square their intellectual convictions or assumptions. Indeed, for two hundred years the great discussion between Christianity and its opponents has been carried on within this charmed circle. Nearly all apologists make the assumption that their opponents are equally disinterested with themselves, and equally certain of the *main dictates of conscience, if not of creed.* Consequently, the condition *sine qua non* for Christianity, man's need of redemption, is apt to be ignored or thrust aside by apologists, except the vulgar sort who argue that unbelief is never the result of anything but moral turpitude. Granted, however, the hypothesis that the grosser sins are not actually in question, and that men in general desire a high ethical standard, the attraction of natural religion in some form or other will always be irresistible for many, perhaps the majority, of cultivated men. To them the claims of a human Christ are quite sufficient, and the belief in a noble aim will in their view speedily eradicate the relics of sin, which are besides being removed by the general course of progress. An evolutionary philosophy, masquerading as a

spiritual religion, gives them all they feel the need of, while on the intellectualist assumptions the objections to the Christian faith must always appear very nearly insuperable. At least they make it easier to "interpret" than to accept the creeds. It is only the individual's passionate insistence that he *must* be redeemed, that carries him beyond the ordinary assumptions of idealism, to a belief in a personal Saviour, in the Church, the Cross, and the Sacraments. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," is a maxim to be remembered by the apologist, no less than by the mission preacher. Unfortunately the academic atmosphere which surrounds the former is apt to make him forget what his comparatively despised practical brother has had burnt in upon him by his daily work. (A notable exception is Dr. Bussell's recent Bampton Lectures.)

Here, however, what I desire more especially to insist upon is the interest of the new movement in showing us the inadequacy of the famous argument of the "Analogy." It is generally supposed that as an *argumentum ad hominem* the "Analogy" is irrefragable. Butler's thesis was that probable evidence was all that could be expected in favour of a religion and that this was sufficient. In this he probably did permanent work, although it is work which constantly needs renewing; for people in whom the

intellectualist attitude is strongly marked are always demanding more in the way of external evidence than can possibly be secured; and are at this moment striving to substitute a purely outward historical certitude for faith. They have given up the old idea of demonstrating Christianity, but much of modern criticism seems to proceed from the notion that it will sometime be possible to get all educated men to accept the same account of the Gospel narratives, apart from their *philosophic and religious prepossessions*; and this will never be the case, in dealing with professedly *abnormal* narratives, even if it be so (though that is very doubtful) in other cases.

Butler, as is well known, went on to argue that the natural religion of the Deists was equally open to objection with Christianity; and that either they must go back or go forward. Roughly speaking, his dilemma was accepted in the nineteenth century, and the majority of educated men were either Christians or agnostics, and attempted no longer to dwell in a half-way house. Now it is the weak point of this position, accepted, be it remembered, by the foes no less than the friends of orthodoxy, that is the real ground of the attack made upon our position in favour of a transformed edition of "Christianity not Mysterious." Butler was quite right in urging that mystery was inherent in our

experience and that Christianity did not introduce it; that natural religion did not remove it; and that many of the difficulties which disturbed the Christian were found in an equal or increased degree in the system of the Deists. I am not sure that Butler's own language goes further than this, but in the general interpretation he has been thought to mean more. His book is taken alike by friends and foes as an argument to show that the difficulties of natural religion are not merely the same as those of nature, but the same as those of "revelation," and that nobody who has found it possible to accept the one ought to have any reasonable trouble about receiving the other. Now this is not the case. And the fact that it is not the case is the great leverage of the new theology. Whether or no natural religion in the form proposed is really more easily capable of something like demonstration than Christianity, I will not inquire. Personally, I think that it is not, and that it rests on an equally unsupported series of assumptions—the assumption that the world is that of modern scientific inquiry. But I am sure that the difficulties of revealed religion are *different* in many cases from those of natural religion; that the grounds which make those plausible make the other improbable; and that neither in degree nor in kind are the two conceptions of life at all parallel. For instance, both the charm and the

stumbling-block of the Christian faith is that it worships a definite historical person—One whose actions upon earth were subject to the same methods of appraisement as those of any other carpenter. (It is amazing how the modern "snob" will go to church and ignore this fundamental fact.) Secondly, Christianity by its whole idea consecrates a particular *moment in past time*, the *moment* (shall we say?) of the Resurrection; and is thus radically opposed to the assumption of the progressive evolutionist that everything is always moving on, though to what end he does not know. Our faith finds, in fact, an eternal meaning in the particular, the isolated, and the exceptional. Natural religion dwells in a world of abstractions and ideas, and owes its strength to this very fact; it appeals to those persons to whom "conceptions" are everything and persons little or nothing. It lives and breathes in an atmosphere of notions. Again, natural religion treats the world as a "closed circle," abhors the thought of the "miraculous," and harps upon the unity of Being, riding roughshod with the Juggernaut-car of universal notions over the intimate, the individual, over the suffering and the sad and the sin-stricken.

The Christian faith does just the opposite of all this. It has the *Nachtrag* of miracles, exceptions, revelations, hard to reconcile with the notion of a mechanical universe, and the majesty of law. But it

also has its advantages. It appeals to the average man's desire for "some voice that we could trust" to "murmur from the narrow house." It ministers, not to the love of law, but to the hatred of an iron uniformity; to the desire of the spirit of man to be raised above the apparently inextricable web of causes and effects in nature, to that passion for "the Beyond" which is too deep and permanent ever to be eradicated by materialism or even utterly degraded by superstition. Natural religion is primarily a philosophy and deals in ideas. The Christian faith is primarily a living trust and is essentially bound up with the concrete. Sacramental doctrine—often ignored or thrust aside by the apologist as only concerned with the internal content of the religion—is, in fact, the *differentia*, by which its whole system may be discerned. Indeed, one main reason why sacramental doctrine has been, *par excellence*, the stumbling-block of the rationalists is, that it contains in solution nearly all those elements in religion which the modern world finds it hardest to assimilate.

The *Sacramental System* stands for a belief in the concrete presentment of eternal truth; for its embodiment in ritual and cult as in one form vital to man's religious life; for the lasting significance of a moment in human history, the death of Jesus upon the Cross; for the consecration of suffering as the

highest expression of love; for the socially authoritative nature of religion; for the depth of sin, the *reality of forgiveness*, the *possibility of redemption*; for the union of God and man through Him, Who is both "very God of very God," and yet "man of the substance of His mother."

Now it is just these conceptions which are the supreme difficulty to the minds of men enraptured with the miracles of modern science and enthralled by the siren-song of evolutionary philosophy. Such minds will accept an immanent God, provided nothing is said to disentangle Him from His works; they can bow before the majesty of eternal law and strive for some harmony of emotion which may bridge the gulf between themselves and the universal mind; they may even go the length of saying, "Our Father," and, of recognising the duties of human brotherhood, may strive for noble and disinterested service; this ideal, they think, *is* sufficient to drive out the relics of sin, and they can "move upward working out the beast," not without effort indeed, but with no need of supernatural assistance; and the theology of "grace" is to them not so much false as superfluous. In some degree this is true for men with happy temperaments and cultivated interests and sheltered lives. But for the toiling masses, for the profligate, the luxurious, and the scoundrel; for those who are ruined by pleasure,

and those who ruin themselves in the effort to *acquire the means of it, no such* rosewater creed can ever be a gospel. It is useless to talk to the drunkard or the harlot, to the man enslaved either by passion or greed, of the upward progress of the race and the gradual amelioration of life—useless, even if it were true to the facts, which it is not. Either he will not listen, or if he is in a mood to listen—in other words, under conviction of sin—it is redemption, atonement, miraculous grace, that he cries for, and repudiates the abstractions of idealism as the stone offered for bread.

What I want here to point out is that the kind of difficulty to which natural religion is subject is not the same as that under which Christianity labours; and that the kind of appeal it makes is also different. Our faith is something *sui generis*, more akin, indeed, to other "institutional" religions, which, at least, have ministered to great masses of men, than to this comfortable philosophy of *cŏterics*. The "new theology" is a sort of university extensionist's religion. Our faith, even if it were false, is something bigger than that. The ordinary assumption since Butler is that everybody who is not an agnostic ought to find no difficulty at all in passing from Theism to Christianity; and that there are no real *difficulties* that are not common to both. That some such difficulties—*e.g.* those of freedom and a

spiritual world—are common to both, I do not deny. But I do emphatically deny that our faith has no greater difficulties, or that it has not correspondingly greater advantages, than that system which bids fair to be its rival. There are all the difficulties connected with its historical character. To the mind fed on universal notions, it seems degrading to pin so much faith to a particular life on earth, *even apart from any question of the miraculous.* A great many modern critical prepossessions start from the claim of Christianity not so much to be miraculous as to be *actual.* Then there is, of course, the perennial difficulty of miracles. Their old evidential value may be gone; though I think too much ought not to be conceded here. To the average man in the street, not to the learned, the miraculous is the assurance that there is a "beyond," that man is not bound hopelessly to the iron rule of nature. So with forgiveness. This is always the crux of the philosopher, and the consolation of the vulgar; the reason being that to the philosopher sin is a sort of growing pain which man will soon transcend, to the vulgar it is a daily agony, an everlasting tragedy, the torment and the centre of his moral life. I need not go on. This paper is merely meant to indicate and suggest. What seems to the writer increasingly important is this. Do not let us make too much of the argument from analogy.

It is useful, but in no sense adequate. Do not let us imagine that if you can make the agnostic a theist, there is no valid intellectual ground for his remaining a theist. There are plenty of such grounds, and they are intellectually quite respectable. Do not let us underrate the significance of this recrudescence of natural religion. (Of course I am using this term in the old sense, not in that given to it in his admirable essay by Father Tyrrell.) It appeals to arguments and to temperaments very common, and likely to become commoner among the more or less cultivated members of society.

It is not, in fact, by any argument from analogy that men can make the leap over the tremendous gulf which divides Christianity from its rivals. There is one argument, and one alone, which has the force to carry reflecting minds on so far and perilous a journey—that argument is the personal need of redemption, the refusal of the sinful soul to be put off with anything short of forgiveness. Redemption is the supreme miracle of all; if that can be accepted, nobody will really think it worth while to "boggle" over the *details* of a system which must be supernatural, if it be not a mockery.

NOTES

I.—REVELATION

(1.) A. L. Lilley, "Modernism," p. 212.

(2.) F. W. Bussell, "*Christian Theology and Social Progress*," pp. 75–76, also p. 281.

"It has been maintained in them that the present age is the real 'age of Faith,' because the function of reason has been reduced to a registry of phenomena, because no single tenet of the scantiest theology or of the most attenuated moral code remains at the present moment unshaken. Let it be clearly understood, and let men face the issue honestly, that the doctrine of purposive creation and moral plan in the world, the very definition and use of 'virtue,' the justification of unselfishness (otherwise aimless), stand on no different level to the particular dogmas of Christianity."

Again, p. 280: "The 'Ages of Faith' in reality began with the Reformation. The emphasis on belief has been ever since growing more intense. The discord of faith and facts—facts political, social, domestic, scientific—has never before been so acute. And yet the world walks still or tries to walk by faith and not yet by sight. . . . Examine what you will of the tenets of reforming propaganda, in one and all you will find the scientific view of man and society conveniently forgotten and obscured, whenever that comes into conflict with the 'dim mythologic postulates' of man's freedom and worth;—which *must still animate the eloquence or the appeal of secularism.*"

(3.) "Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another which may

be called 'the ethical process.'"—Romanes Lecture, 1893: "Evolution and Ethics."

The position adopted by Huxley is, of course, the exact opposite of that of Nietzsche, "the only man perhaps who rigidly applied logic to life" (Bussell, p. 317). It is, indeed, asserted by some that Huxley painted too dark a picture, and that evolution develops the altruistic qualities no less than the egoistic—as was argued by the late Henry Drummond in "The Ascent of Man." On such a point the unscientific can offer no opinion; but, in any case, Huxley's lecture remains a noble protest in favour of human against merely naturalistic ethics, and against the innumerable forms of pantheism, which shut their eyes to facts and assert, in the ironical words of Mr. Bradley: "The world is the best possible of worlds and everything in it is a necessary evil." Of Pope's famous line, the ethics of pantheism—

"One truth is clear, whatever is is right,"

Huxley says: "Its fittest place would be as an inscription in letters of mud over the portal of some stye of Epicurus" (p. 25).

(4.) It is called "semi-theism" by Dr. Caldecott in his "Philosophy of Religion."

There are evidences in "The Autobiography" that Spencer's position towards the Church became far more understanding towards the close of life. On the other hand, his attitude to the classics and to art as such are an illuminating instance of what is the logical result of rationalism, if it be applied remorselessly to the whole of life.

(5.) *Cf.* Frederic Harrison, "The Creed of a Layman."

"We must give human nature its fair chance and accept what it demands; and if human nature call out for Religion, religion it must have" (p. 210).

Again: "How will *free thought* teach discipline to the young and self-restraint to the wild? What sustenance will the imaginative and the devotional nature receive from the principle of free inquiry? Human nature is not a thing so

docile and intellectual that it can be tamed by fine thoughts, nor is society amenable to pure ideas" (p. 224).

This book and others since published, "The Philosophy of Common Sense," afford illuminating and pathetic evidence of the need of a religion in human nature so strong that it attempts to make one with the sorry basis of more humanity. But in the assertion oft repeated of man's real freedom, of the inadequacy of the intellect to save him from moral ruin, and the futility of mere analysis to satisfy the soul, which lives by "admiration, hope, and love," Mr. Harrison has few equals.

(6.) John Davidson, in Epilogue to "Mammon and his Message," pp. 171–173.

"What we require is a renewal of imagination. . . . There cannot be a rise of Rationalism. There was only a decay of Imagination. . . . Rationalism evacuated the old form and substance of Imagination and rested there wondering what had happened. One thing had happened; the world had come to an end for the Rationalists. By Imagination men live. Surgery has found out that, unlike the holothuro, man can get along without a stomach; but Art knows very well, that the world comes to an end when it is purged of Imagination. Rationalism was only a stage in the process. For the old conception of a created Universe, with a fall of man, an Atonement, and a Heaven and Hell, the form and substance of the Imagination of Christendom, Rationalism had no substitute. Science was not ready; but how can poetry wait? Science is synonymous with patience; poetry is impatience incarnate. If you take away the symbol of the Universe, in which since the Christian era began, poetry and all great art lived and had their being, I for one decline to continue the eviscerated Life in Death of Rationalism. I devour, digest, and assimilate the Universe; make for myself in my Testaments and Tragedies a new form and substance of Imagination; and *by poetic power certify the semi-certitudes of science.*"

If this be not an appeal to faith of a sort, it would be hard to know what is. Mr. Davidson's views are never disguised

and can be read at large in "The Triumph of Mammon," "The Testament of John Davidson," besides the work from which this quotation is derived. He stands as a reviewer stated not long since for the newness and glory of life, the breach with the past, the unconquerable audacities of the human spirit; while, on the other hand, his contempt for Christianity and desire to shatter every relic of it, and to abolish every form of culture, including wit and humour, are so loudly, not to say blatantly, expressed, that they are likely to be innocuous.

(7.) G. Lowes Dickinson in the *Hibbert Journal*, April 1908.

(8.) G. Lowes Dickinson, "Religion: A Criticism and a Forecast," p. 90.

Cf. also the following passage, p. 93: "Faith is the sense and the call of the open horizon. If we abstract it from the forms in which we clothe it, from the specific beliefs which are, as it were, its projection into our intelligence, it presents itself as the spring of our whole life, including our intellectual life. It is the impulse to grow and expand; and just because it is that, it has itself no form, but may assume any form. It is a taper burning now bright, now dim, and changing colour and substance with every change in the stuff it consumes. The frailest thing we know, it is also the least perishable, for it is a tongue of the central fire that burns at the heart of the world."

On page 70, Mr. Dickinson discusses the relative value of Christianity and paganism as symbolised by their architecture. I think he is quite right in taking the two forms Gothic and classical as expressive of the two religions, though I do not, of course, accept his strange account of the beauty of a cathedral, where he apparently sees nothing but gloom in stained-glass. Without in any way subscribing to the heresies of the Gothic revival, with its depreciation of every other form, I do think it true to say that the attraction and meaning of Christian faith was never more fitly enshrined, and would willingly take the other horn of the dilemma which Mr. Dickinson offers.

(9.) John Davidson, "Mammon and his Message," pp. 103, 135.

(10.) *E.g.* Dr. M'Taggart, Mr. Bradley, and Mr. A. E. Taylor. *Cf.* an interesting article on "Absolutism and Religion," by Dr. Schiller, in "Studies in Humanism."

In addition to this, fashions in philosophy are very variable, and to tie Christianity down to a particular phase of idealism, as some would do, is an extremely dangerous policy. It must be evident that the idealist position or positions has nothing like the strength to-day which it had in the palmy days of T. H. Green and his followers. Evidence of this can be found not merely in the apparition of pragmatism, but still more in writings like those of Bergson, or Messrs. Moore and Russell, or such an essay as the opening one in Professor Pigou's new book.

(11.) Mr. Frederic Harrison, in his article, "Pantheism, Cosmic Emotion," states and rejects the claims of pantheism, which ever since the great vogue of Hegel has more or less dazzled the Western mind.

Pantheism in the widest sense is become the "great halting-place between the devotion to God and the devotion to Humanity" ("Creed of a Layman," p. 190).

He sees that the real question is between a belief in personality and its denial.

"If the starry night is beautiful, it may be nothing to the smile of a child. One speech of Prometheus or of Hamlet or Faust teaches more than ten thousand sunsets" (p. 200). His view is essentially practical. "The main daily business of Religion is to improve daily life, not to answer certain intellectual puzzles." "The weak side of the official Christianity after all is not so much its alienation from science, its mystical creed, or its conventional formulas, as the palpable fact that nineteen hundred years have passed since the death of Christ, and the Gospel has been preached by millions of priests, and yet in spite of it the practical order of society is so cruelly hard . . . that it still is a world for the strong." This is to ignore the fact well pointed out by Dr. Inge that Christianity is "still a very young religion."

He sees, however, the true source of religion, and the danger of making a god of nature.

"There lies in the heart of the poorest and meanest child a force that cannot be even stated in terms of the deepest philosophy of the physical universe. . . . If we are to seek the sources of religion in the rushing firmament of suns, or in the withering waifs and strays of humanity who are yielding up their last breath in mutual trust and love, we shall have to look for it in [these latter]" (p. 214). It is strange that the writer should not see how all these aspirations are satisfied in the Incarnation.

(12.) Matthew Arnold, "Obermann Once More."

(13.) For evidence of this, see the writings of Mr. Dickinson *passim*. His review of Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, published in *The Independent Review*, is peculiarly illuminating.

See also Mr. Bradley on "Social Surgery"; and Mr. A. E. Taylor on "The Problem of Conduct." The subject is discussed by Professor Sorley in "Recent Tendencies in English Ethics."

(14.) Boussot, "What is Religion?" (pp. 274–277).

After an inspiring description first of Goethe, then of Bismarck, the author goes on:—

"Christianity in its essential idea, dominant up to the present, is based on a fundamental conception utterly opposed to the ideal of life, which has just been described. . . . In the centre of religion is placed the consciousness of sin, and the consolation of freedom from sin and guilt. . . . If we accept in its entirety this conception, if, that is, we take from modern life its very essence and force it to self-renunciation, we shall have absolutely to cast on one side such complete and great figures as those of Goethe and Bismarck." If this frank recognition of the facts were more fully realised by orthodox Christians, perhaps we should see less of the essays to strengthen the faith by accommodating it to a spirit fundamentally its adversary. But as Mr. Davidson well says:—

> "The inbred fault and meanness of the time
> In art, in thought, in polity, in trade
> I charge directly to the ruined will

That neither takes nor leaves the Omnipotent
Creator, the Immortal soul of man,
Heaven, Hell, the Cross of Christ, and all that once
Was great in Christendom, *when God meant God*."
—*Mammon and his Message*, p. 60.

(15.) See the use made of this by Mr. J. M. Robertson in "Pagan Christs," and, on the general topic, Robert Blatchford, "God and My Neighbour." The strongest point in this very able and honest book is its insistence on this historical argument, and also the use it makes of certain statements in Dr. J. G. Frazer's "*Golden Bough*."

(16.) This position is admirably set forth by Mr. Tyrrell in the first essay in "Through Scylla and Charybdis": "Reflections on Catholicism."

(17.) In a sermon by Dr. Alexander, Archbishop of Armagh.

(18.) T. T. Munger, "*The Freedom of Faith*."

(19.) Henry Newbolt.

(20.) Dr. Illingworth, in his "Reason and Revelation," p. 103, says that "miracles cannot be for us what they were for those to whom they first occurred." Doubtless, but that is because they are *more* to us than to them, not because they are less.

On this question of the value of the miraculous, see an interesting article by Father Kelly, S.S.M., on "Revelation and Religious Ideas," in the *Church Quarterly*, January 1900.

"Law is coextensive with Nature, and there is therefore no way in which a Revelation of that which transcends Nature can be given within the natural sphere, except by *transcending* the law by which the natural is normally bound. Miracles in this sense do not guarantee or authenticate, they actually constitute the Revelation, exactly as it is his talking 'freely' outside the strict terms of the official programme which reveals the man behind the official" (p. 334).

The whole article is most valuable. It is to be noted that it is only with the growth of the sense of law in nature that this *essential* need of miracle becomes evident.

(21.) The notion of freedom at once upsets the idea of a universe perfectly "given," and predictable. Moreover, the actions of a free being such as a man would seem miraculous to anything in the purely mechanical order, such as a stone, could we conceive it endowed with consciousness. The idea of the miraculous does not do more than apply to God what every one who believes in freedom applies to man in regard to his use of the natural order.

On the whole question of freedom, *cf.* James in "The Will to Believe"; Schiller, "Freedom" in "Humanism," pp. 301 *sqq.*; and above all, Bergson, *Les Données immediates de la Conscience*, chap. iii. I think M. Bergson does not quite adequately discuss the phenomena of remorse in the actor; he seems to treat it only from the spectator's standpoint.

See also Margaret Benson, "The Venture of Rational Faith"; W. H. Mallock, "Religion as a Credible Doctrine on the Practical Basis of Belief"; and Professor Pigou's valuable essay in his volume on "Theism." On Bergson's view that free acts are of rare occurrence, *cf.* a popular exposition of the same truth by R. H. Hutton on "The Limits of Free-will," in his "Aspects of Scientific and Religious Thought," pp. 353 *sqq.*

(22.) *Cf.* Bergson, *L'Evolution Créatrice*, and Ward, "Naturalism and Agnosticism."

II.—MYSTERY

(1.) "Christianity not Mysterious."

"They trifle then exceedingly and discover a mighty scarcity of better arguments, who defend their mysteries by this pitiful shift of drawing inferences from what is unknown to what is known, of insisting upon adequate Ideas; except they will agree, as some do, to call every spire of grass, sitting and standing, fish or flesh, profound mysteries" (p. 70).

"All faith now in the world is (of this last sort, and by con-

sequence) entirely built upon ratiocination. The last sort is *acquiescing in the words and writings of those to whom we* believe God has spoken."

(2.) It is to be noted that these works seem not even plausible to us to-day, and even to many unbelievers would seem more deficient in grasp of reality than the faith they attack. Being only one particular fashion, they have no interest for an age in which that fashion no longer rules. There is every *reason for supposing that the "New Theology" will prove* equally ephemeral.

(3.) "The New Theology," by R. J. Campbell.

(4.) "The Substance of Faith allied with Science," Sir Oliver Lodge.

(5.) "Common-sense in Religion," by Martin R. Smith.

(6.) "The Re-birth of Religion," by A. S. Crapsey.

(7.) E. A. Abbott, "*The Kernel and the Husk*"; his works on Newman are "Philomythus," "Newmanianism," and "The Anglican Life of Cardinal Newman," 2 vols.

(8.) *See* especially Bradley, "Appearance and Reality." Whatever be the defects of Mr. Bradley's system, "our absolute," as he calls it, he has certainly done great service in showing the difficulties inherent in the commonest notions.

(9.) "The Creed of Christ." In this author's view the Christianity of the Creeds takes for granted that man is . . . a naughty child,

"The morality that is based on obedience, though *suitable for children and for childlike souls, is fatal to soul-growth in its higher stages*" (p. 142).

The whole chapter is expressive of hostility to the childlike ideal, which is of the essence of the religion of Jesus; and is a very interesting piece of self-expression.

(10.) Browning, "The Ring and the Book."

"The Pope:

'There's a new tribunal now
Higher than God's, the educated man's.'"

(11.) Höffding, "Philosophy of Religion."

"It is personality which in the world of our experience invests all other things with value" (p. 270).

"The fundamental axioms of science can never be strictly proved. They appear as fundamental hypotheses, as principles which guide our searchings and inquiries by directing us how to ask and how to state our problems" (p. 245).

"Our knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of any personal being partakes of the nature of faith rather than of knowledge" (p. 145).

"Experience will always retain the stamp of individual personality; 'common experience' is more or less an illusion, because, as a matter of fact, different individuals interpret and apply this 'common' experience each in his own way" (p. 105).

"The intellectual interest prompts us to conceive existence as a great immeasurable system of causal groups and causal series; the religious interest moves us to a conception of being, as the home, as the development and conservation of value" (p. 93). In other words, the intellectual instinct drives us to make of the universe a single system, which in the long run means a mechanism—the religious instinct lays stress on personal forces, and meanings, a world of freedom, of the many—it is the struggle between the Pantheistic and the personal conceptions of life.

"Mysticism joins hands with critical philosophy which asserts that our ideas are not adequate to express that which exists outside the form of our limited experience" (p. 81).

"Every particular individuality is a little world" (p. 40).

"*The given is never ended*, new experiences are always appearing which demand a new determination of our concepts" (p. 30).

"Every individual is holy as a centre of value and as a centre of experience" (p. 208).

"Scientifically regarded, personality is the last—perhaps insoluble—riddle, the concluding point dimly discerned in the distance. For scientific thought is itself a spiritual activity, which can only be exercised by a person—and the last riddle would remain unsolved, even if science could explain everything

else so long as it did not explain its own ultimate presupposition. . . . *But in life personality is the first; it is that* which supports all—even science, and which impresses its seal on all things" (p. 317). It is this contrast which is at the bottom of the opposition between religion and science, or to be more accurate between the personal and the rationalist standpoint—an opposition which is real and is not, as some apologists seem to imagine, merely transient and apparent. It is, of course, to be resolved by recognising with Bergson the abstract and partial character of scientific inquiry. The trouble comes not from natural science, but from the scientific philosophy of the universe.

"No one can ever prove that the genesis of the valuable in the world is due to an accident" (p. 340).

"A too anxious adherence to experience is apt to dull our sight and blunt our instinct for new possibilities; this holds good in the practical equally as in the theoretical sphere. Heart and courage make many things possible which would otherwise never be realised, at any rate in the case of some individuals. Here, again, W. James's thesis that there are cases where faith creates its own verification holds good" (p. 340).

"It may be that poetry is a more perfect expression of the highest than any scientific concept could ever be" (p. 370).

"*The last word must lie with the principle of personality*" (p. 381).

I quote these passages as illustrations of the lecture, not because I accept the main views of the author, with his preference of Greek to Christian ethics.

(12.) Alice Meynell, "Poems."

(13.) Bergson, *L'Evolution Créatrice*, p. 170.

(14.) This phrase is that of Mr. W. G. Williams in "Newman, Pascal, Loisy and the Catholic Church."

(15.) M'Taggart, "Some Problems of Religion."

(16.) Dickinson in the *Hibbert Journal*.

(17.) "The Churches and Modern Thought," by Philip Vivian. "A History of Free-thought," by J. M. Robertson.

(18.) J. M. Robertson.

(10.) It must be admitted that this argument is less strong to-day than it appeared some years back. We are now witnessing, not merely in the Church of Rome, the claim, as Dr. Gore has described it, "to hold a very high sacramental doctrine combined with extreme dogmatic weakness at the centre." Still, *that does not alter the fact that we can see historically how* the weakening of the hold on the sacraments leads in the long run through subjectivism to the surrender of the creeds; though it takes centuries to work out the immanent logic of Zwinglianism, and the very strong personal and mystical religion of many Puritans has been for a long while an effective barrier *against the tendency.* No *one could rate more highly* the value of this mystical and personal element in religion than the writer. But it ought not to exist alone, and needs to be balanced by the other factors of religion, a truth admirably expounded by Baron von Hügel in his new book on "The Mystical Element in Religion."

(20.) Tyrrell, *Lex Orandi.*

Cf., also on the subject of this lecture, p. 18: "Compared with this invisible spiritual world, that of physical Nature is more shadow. For nothing can be more real to me than myself. Self is the very test and measure of all reality. . . . Furthermore it is in willing, acting, and originating that we recognise our selfhood or reality. . . . We are most real, when we are most free, conscious, and energetic."

(21.) Bergson quotes this statement of Du Bois-Reymond, *L'Evolution Créatrice*, p. 41.

Mr. Wells sums up in a lucid and concise form much of Bergson's system, *e.g.* ("First and last Things," p. 25):—

"The human mind has to hold a thing still for a moment before it can think it. It arrests the present moment for its struggle as Joshua stopped the sun. It cannot contemplate things continuously, and so it has to resort to a series of static snapshots. It has to kill motion in order to study it, as a naturalist kills and pins out a butterfly in order to study life.

"You see the mind is really pigeon-holed and discontinuous in two respects: in respect to time and in respect to classification,

whereas one has a strong persuasion that the world of fact is unbounded or continuous."

(22.) Newman's theory of belief is propounded in his "Grammar of Assent," its essential characteristic being that real belief is a function of the whole personality and not merely of the ratiocinative faculty.

(23.) The slight mutilation of the statue is of no importance, as the imagination can readily fill up the missing lines, and it may be taken as symbolic of that transformation in regard to certain details which our view of Jewish history has undergone in the last generation without any way impairing the main lines of Christian doctrine.

(24.) Besides writers mentioned in the lecture, *see* also, on the general topic of this lecture, Balfour's "Foundations of Belief" and "Defence of Philosophic Doubt," the chapter in Dr. Illingworth's "Reason and Revelation," "Christianity an Appeal to our Entire Personality;" also *cf.* p. 209:—

"Rational certainty . . . is only possible in the case of an abstract subject matter, while the kind of knowledge which deals with human experience in the concrete, with life as it is lived, never admits of exact exposition or logical demonstration;" and *cf.* the following letter from Creighton ("Life," ii. p. 253):—

"There can be no *convincing proof* of anything that affects our inner character. What 'convincing proof' have you that your wife loves or your child? Yet you believe it; and that belief is more real to you than anything that you know or can prove. Religion must be a matter of belief not proof. It depends on a consciousness of the relation between our soul and God. Immortality depends on the knowledge of the meaning of our soul's life, which we obtain from looking at it in the light of God. The more we find our soul, the more readily do we see God in the person of Jesus Christ. Look back upon your own life, your growth, the traces of Providence, the presence of God's love. Do you think that all this wonderful process can come to an abrupt end?

"All purely intellectual positions break down. They go so far

and no further. They are beset by limitations. . . . *We are clear by missing out half the elements involved.* It is not vague emotion when we grapple with immensity, and there is immensity in every human soul. Its progress is marvellous and inexplicable. *The simplest soul is full of amazing problems.* Try to explain yourself as you can, there is a vast residuum which you cannot turn into shape. How is all this to be dealt with? I answer only by conscious communion with a Person, who is Life and Truth" (ii. p. 409).

III.—THE HISTORIC CHRIST

(1.) *Nineteenth Century*, July 1890, p. 22. "*The lights of science and the lights of the faith.*"

"No longer in contact with fact of any kind, Faith stands now for ever proudly inaccessible to the attacks of the infidel."

(2.) H. C. Corrance in the *Nineteenth Century and After*, February 1908.

The writer continues: "But the idea of such a possibility is based upon a false view of the nature of faith, which is really not concerned with the phenomenal except as a basis for the ideal. Its true home is in the ideal, the supersensuous, the unseen. Its object is not in time but in eternity, not in the finite but in the infinite, not in appearances but in reality. It uses those relativities only as a means of passing through them to the absolute.

(3.) *Il Programma dei Modernisti.*

"Importo poco alla fede di sapere se la critica può o no accettare la nascita verginale, i miracoli clamorosi, la fine la risurrezione del Redentore; se riesce o no ad attribuire al Cristo l'ammucio di alcuni dogmi, o la fondazione della Chiesa. Quei *fatti sfuggono per il loro carattere iperfenomenico alle* prese della critica sperimentale o storica; e questi ultimi essa non li dimostra."

(4.) This is most obvious from M. Loisy's two latest books. *Simples Réflexions* and *Quelques Lettres.*

(5.) Dr. Rashdall at the Liverpool Church Congress.

(6.) Canon Hensley Henson, in "The Value of the Bible," Sermons xiii and xiv. *Cf.* also the same writer in "Sincerity and Subscription."

(7.) See on this point an interesting essay by Dr. Garvie on "The Ritschlian Theology," more especially p. 222; but compare also Orr, "The Ritschlian Theology and The Evangelical Faith."

(8.) *Quelques Lettres*, pp. 93, 94.

(9.) Miss Benson, in her admirable book, "The Venture of Rational Faith," puts the exact relation of historical inquiry to the whole of Christian evidence.

"There is all the difference in the world between believing in a religion which is bound up with certain historical facts, and *believing in that religion on the ground alone of the* historical evidence for the facts" (p. 130).

"Historical evidence in the narrower sense is not enough to prove miracles, but neither is it enough to prove any fundamental Christian position. . . .

"What we want to ask with regard to historical records, when we regard them as contributing to the proof of fundamental Christian doctrine, is not altogether are 'they adequate'? but rather are they suitable? not 'do they amount to demonstrative proof?' but do they go as far as any such proof can go?" (p. 130).

"There is a growing body of people which is beginning to hold *the converse view: that counting, classification, measurement,* the whole fabric of mathematics, is subjective and untrue to the world of fact, and that the uniqueness of individuals is the objective truth" (Wells, *op. cit.*, p. 34).

"Man, thinking man suffers from intellectual over-confidence and a vain belief in the universal validity of reasoning" (p. 42).

The position is well summed up by Westcott ("Gospel of Life," p. 304):—

"Miracles and prophecies considered separately and in detail are not the proper proof of Christianity, but as parts of the whole testimony of experience they have an effective power.

Historical testimony originates and commends a religion but it does not establish it. Therefore I say the confirmation of the Gospel is as "complete as life can give," for in the end we must make our appeal to life, life as a whole. We were made for action, made to gain a character, made, in the words of the Bible, to grow into the likeness of God. The final influence of opinions thereupon the conduct of life may be taken generally as a test of their truth for us. We are so constituted as to recognise the truth which we cannot discover, and life seals the confession of the soul."

(10.) On the need of presupposition in historical inquiry, see Dr. Illingworth, "Reason and Revelation," chap. v., and also Miss Benson's book already cited, chap. viii. p. 93.

"The demand for an unprejudiced witness is strangely unhistorical. It is the demand for one who has the perspicacity to see the weighty bearing of obscure facts without the sympathetic or imaginative nature which could be influenced by them. One part of the evidence of Christianity, on the contrary, is that the writers are "prejudiced." It is because of the inherent conviction of the story recorded that the witnesses cannot be unprejudiced."

(11.) *Eg.* the habit of bracketing lines in classical authors as spurious on purely subjective grounds has, it is said, grown to a quite extraordinary degree among certain continental critics. An instance of the way in which prepossessions affect minds on a similar level of culture, and even contemporaries, might be taken from the two books on Joanne d'Arc produced respectively by the sceptic M. Anatole France and by Mr. Andrew Lang.

(12.) Langlois and Seignobos, "Introduction to the Study of History," pp. 206–208.

"The observations whose results are contained in historical documents are never of equal value with those of contemporary scientists. We have already shown why. The indirect method of history is always inferior to the direct method of the science of observation. *If its results do not harmonise with theirs it is history which must give way.*" In other words, the

very possibility of the miraculous is ruled out of court because it does not happen to be in agreement with the opinion current at the moment among scientific men. *It is difficult after this* to blame any apologist for straining the evidence so as to support a preconceived opinion.

(13.) Miscellanies. Fourth Series, p. 229.

"Talk of history being a science as loudly as ever we like, the writer of it will continue to approach his ghosts of archives with the bunch of keys in his hand." The passage is a criticism of Professor Bury's inaugural lecture, and the whole of those *three pages, 227–230, are well worth reading in this connection.* They express the need of the personal element in the historian with moderation and truth.

(14.) "Life."

"It is an impossible claim to take up a detached, impartial, outside attitude to any subject which is intimately connected with individual life. . . . It has always seemed to me that the preconceptions of the critical mind need examination just as much as the preconceptions of the credulous mind. Human morality would disappear before the treatment which is sometimes dealt to revealed religion."

(15.) *Dr. Fowler-Jackson's essay* in "Cambridge Theological Essays," p. 518, and the note there.

(16.) Mr. Robertson, who denies the historicity of Jesus, finds himself driven by parity of reasoning to question that of Buddha and even of Montanus. His book illustrates the extreme danger to any sane view of history in ignoring *tradition* as a source of knowledge comparable with the documents.

Cf. Creighton, "Life," i. 210: "A case can, of course, be made out always about anything; and I always feel that one set of arguments is as good as another. The real question is the *nature of evidence.* Once abolish tradition, and I am free to confess that one theory *is as good as another.* How does one know that there was such a man as Julius Cæsar? A little ingenuity could prove his books to be forgeries and himself a myth. I really only believe it because it is the traditional belief of mankind since his day to this. About any historic event or

the origin of any institution I could produce an equal nebulousness as does the tract, if I assumed that everything that everybody before me had said was necessarily mistaken because it had been said or believed. I mean to say that the primary position assumed in that tract [A Quaker Tract] that everybody was deluded till the year 1680 or something of that sort, that the words on which they relied were capable of other meanings, that they had stupidly gone on doing something on the supposition that Christ meant it, when He didn't, I would never be prepared to allow—it would reduce all human knowledge to arbitrariness. . . .

"Without outward helps to spiritualise life, I am afraid that I for one am too feeble to get on. The writer of the tract says that the frame of mind of the recipient of the Lord's Supper is the important thing, not the reception. But without the opportunity of the reception is one sure of getting the frame of mind."

(17.) "Report of Pan-Anglican Congress." The gist of Professor Burkitt's speech appears to be an expansion of the dictum that the Bible is "not a revelation but the record of a revelation." The purely critical and intellectual study of the Bible is indeed recommended but not as a substitute for devotion, which is to be stimulated by the "still living Church." The speech is indicative of that divorce between devotion and criticism which is the result of the Bibliolatry of the past and of the Protestant habit of isolating the Bible from its *milieu*. Against this tendency the speaker is in reaction.

(18.) "Idea of a University," p. 210.

(19.) Creighton's "Life," ii. p. 408.

(20.) Ibid., ii., p. 212.

These letters are also printed in the smaller book, "Counsels for the Young," pp. 80–91 and p. 118.

(21.) *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1909: "Jesus or Christ," by Rev. R. Roberts, Congregational minister.

22.) This argument is excellently put by Mr. G. K. Chesterton in "Orthodoxy," pp. 58, 59.

"If evolution simply means that a positive thing called an

ape turned very slowly into a positive thing called a man, then it is stingless for the most orthodox; for a personal God might just as well do things slowly as quickly, especially if, like the Christian God, He were outside time. But if it means anything more, it means that there is no such thing as an ape to change, and no such thing as a man for him to change into. It means that there is no such thing as a thing. At best there is only one thing, and that is a flux of everything and anything. This is an attack not upon the faith, but upon the mind. I cannot think, if there are no things to think about. You cannot think if you are not separate from the subject of thought."

This position is obviously directly contrary to that Hegelian and neo-Hegelian Pantheism, which does resolve the universe into a flux in the way described.

(23.) "The Renaissance," Epilogue.

(24.) Browning, "Abt Vogler."

There is an admirable statement of this side of Browning, his emphasis on monumental moments, in Pater's essay on Winckelmann, "Renaissance," p. 205: "His poetry is pre-eminently the poetry of situations. The characters themselves are always of secondary importance; often they are characters in themselves of little interest. They seem to come to him by strange accidents from the ends of the world. His gift is shown by the way in which he accepts such a character, and throws it into some situation, or apprehends it in some delicate pause of life, in which for a moment it becomes ideal."

(25.) Bergson's theory of the reality of time overcomes the difficulty raised about conceiving it as a series of infinitesimal moments.

(26.) See the article in "The Creed of a Layman" on this topic.

(27.) G. Lowes Dickinson in *Hibbert Journal*, May 1909.

(28.) Of course the phrase "pet name" is not really a fair description, but even this expresses a truth greater than the objection. It is not merely in hymns, but in books like "The Imitation," or "The Revelations of Divine Love," or poems

like "The Hound of Heaven" that the notion of the Divine Lover can be found, and it is universal in Christian devotion, and all the mystics.

On the "romantic" character of Christianity, see Chesterton's "Orthodoxy," chap. viii.; also article in the *Hibbert Journal*, July 1908, by S. G. Dunn; *cf.* also Dr. Barry's "Newman," which shows the relation between the Oxford movement and the Romantic revival; and Wilde's *De Profundis*. It is the burden, also, of many of Mr. Bernard Shaw's attacks.

IV.—FORGIVENESS

(1.) I do not say that this solves the problem of suffering wholly, as that we may not have to admit the theory of an evil agency, as developed in that most suggestive book "Evil and Evolution."

(2.) Crapsey, "The Re-birth of Religion," p. 240.

(3.) "Man and the Universe," p. 220.

(4.) "The Creed of Christ," pp. 153, 155.

(5.) "The New Theology," pp. 140, 167.

(6.) The article in the *Hibbert Journal*, already quoted.

(7.) *Cf.* William James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 462.

"Not nearly as widespread as sacrifice, it corresponds to a *more inward and moral stage of sentiment. It is part of the* general system of purgation and cleansing which one feels oneself in need of in order to be in right relations to one's deity. For him who confesses shams are over and realities have begun; *he has exteriorised his rottenness.* If he has not actually got rid of it, he at least no longer smears it over with a hypocritical show of virtue—he *lives at least upon a basis* of veracity. The complete decay of the practice of confession in Anglo-Saxon communities is a little hard to account for. Reaction against popery is, of course, the historic explanation, for in popery confession went with penances and absolution

and other inadmissible practices. *But on the side of the sinner himself it seems as if the need ought to have been too great to accept so summary a refusal of its satisfaction.* One would think that in more men the shell of sorrow would have had to open, the pent-in abscess to burst and gain relief, even though the ear that heard the confession were unworthy. The Catholic Church for obvious utilitarian reasons, has substituted auricular confession to one priest for the more radical act of public confession. We English-speaking Protestants, in the general self-reliance and unsociability of our nature, seem to find it enough, if we take God alone into our confidence."

(8). Of course "sacrifice" in ancient religions embodies many kinds of religious aspiration, and its purgative, expiatory element is not always in the foreground, but recent research seems to emphasise this element in every kind of "mystery."

(9.) William James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 508.

(10.) Rom. vii.

(11.) Clapsey, "Re-birth of Religion," p. 247.

(12.) On this point see Acton's essay on George Eliot in "Historical Essays and Studies," p. 284.

"The doctrine that neither contrition nor sacrifice can appease Nemesis or avert the consequences of our wrong-doing from ourselves or others, filled a very large space indeed in her scheme of life and literature. From the bare diagram of Brother Jacob to the profound and finished picture of 'Middlemarch,' retribution is the constant theme and motive of her art. It helped to determine her religious attitude, for it is only partly true that want of evidence was her only objection to Christianity. She was firmly persuaded that the postponement of the reckoning blunts the edge of remorse, and that repentance, which ought to be submission to just punishment, proved by the test of confession, means more commonly the endeavour to elude it. She thought that the world would be infinitely better and happier if men could be made to feel that there is no escape from the inexorable law that we reap what we have sown."

(13.) This beautiful though comparatively little known hymn is by a famous Congregationalist of the last generation, the Rev. Thomas Binney.

(14.) Creighton's "Life," vol. ii. p. 408 :—

"Scepticism narrows the real problem, refuses to face the actual facts, substitutes energy in reforming the world for power to deal with it as it is. I can sympathise with all that it has to say and all that it tries to do : but there is so much beyond."

THE END

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London

Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.'s New Books

MEMOIR OF GEORGE HOWARD WILKINSON, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld, and Dunblane, and Primus of the Scottish Church, formerly Bishop of Truro. By ARTHUR JAMES MASON, D.D., one of his Chaplains. With Illustrations. 2 vols. 8vo. 28s. net.

A HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST. By DARWELL STONE, M.A., Librarian of the Pusey House, Oxford, formerly Principal of Dorchester Missionary College. 2 vols. 8vo. 30s. net.

THE DAWN OF THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL IN ENGLAND, 1781–1803. By BERNARD WARD, F.R.Hist.S., President of St. Edmund's College, Ware. With numerous Portraits and other Illustrations. 2 vols. 8vo. 25s. net.

THE NEW BOOK FOR LENT READING SPECIALLY RECOMMENDED BY THE BISHOP OF LONDON

LAW AND LOVE: A Study of Quomodo Dilexi (Psalm cxix. 97–104). By FRANCIS LITTLE HOYD, Vicar of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge. Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.

ECCLESIA DISCENS: The Church's Lesson from the Age. By the Rev. JAMES H. F. PEILE, M.A., Vicar of All Saints', Ennismore Gardens, S.W. Author of "The Reproach of the Gospel." Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

THE DIVINE FRIENDSHIP. By the Rev. JESSE BRETT, Chaplain of All Saints' Hospital, Eastbourne. Crown 8vo. 3s. net.

THE GOSPEL AND HUMAN NEEDS: being the Hulsean Lecture for 1908–9. With Additions. By JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS, Litt.D., of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield. 4s. 6d. net.

THE OXFORD LIBRARY.—New Volume

IMMORTALITY. By the Rev. E. E. HOLMES, Hon. Canon of Christ Church, Author of "In Watchings Often." Crown 8vo. 5s.

A PLURALISTIC UNIVERSE: Lectures on the Hibbert Foundation delivered at Oxford, 1908. By WILLIAM JAMES, Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University. 8vo. 5s. 6d. net.

ANSELM'S THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT: The Bohlen Lectures, 1908. By the Rev. GEORGE CADWALADER FOLEY, D.D., Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Care in the Divinity School of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Philadelphia (U.S.A.). With Index. Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION: The Stone Lectures for 1908–1909, Princeton Theological Seminary. By HERMAN BAVINCK, Doctor of Theology and Professor in the Theological Faculty of the Free University in Amsterdam (U.S.A.). Crown 8vo. 6s. net.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN COMMON LIFE. Addresses and Sermons by CHARLES BIGG, D.D., sometime Canon of Christ Church, and Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford. Selected and Edited by the DEAN OF CHRIST CHURCH. With an Introduction by the BISHOP OF OXFORD. 8vo. 6s. net.

ABBA, *FATHER*: A Comment on the Lord's Prayer. By WALTER LOWRIE, M.A., Rector of St. Paul's American Church, Rome. Crown 8vo. 4s. 6d. net.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CHRIST: Being Thoughts on the Doctrine of the Atonement. By the Rev. B. W. RANDOLPH, D.D. Fcap. 8vo. 2s. net.

PASTOR OVIUM: The Day-Book of a Country Parson. By JOHN HUNTLEY SKRINE, M.A., Author of "Pastor Agnorum," &c. Crown 8vo. 5s. net.

STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP. By CHARLES H. ROBINSON, M.A., Honorary Canon of Ripon. Crown 8vo. Paper cover, 6d. net. Cloth, 1s. net.

STUDIES IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: An Argument. *By CHARLES H. ROBINSON, M.A., Honorary Canon of Ripon.* Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH: In Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, A Series of Notes for Preachers and Teachers and for the private study of the Intelligent Communicant. By HENRY MARTYN SANDERS, M.A., sometime Scholar of Queens' College, Cambridge; Vicar of St. John's, Highbury, N. 2 vols. Crown 8vo. 3s. 6d. net each.

Vol. I.—ADVENT TO WHIT SUNDAY, INCLUDING THE HOLY DAYS.
Vol. II.—TRINITY SUNDAY TO ALL SAINTS' DAY.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH HANDBOOKS

EDITED BY

THE REV. W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS, D.D.
Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

Price ONE SHILLING net each volume

THE FOLLOWING VOLUMES ARE NOW READY:—

CHRISTIANITY AND THE SUPERNATURAL. By the Right Rev. C. F. D'ARCY, D.D., *Bishop of Ossory.*

SOCIAL WORK. By the Rev. W. E. CHADWICK, D.D., Vicar of St. Giles', Northampton.

PASTORAL WORK. By the Rev. R. C. JOYNT, M.A., Vicar of Gipsy Hill.

THE JOY OF BIBLE STUDY. By the Rev. HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A., Vicar of Christ Church, Beckenham.

OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY AND MODERN IDEAS. By the Rev. R. B. GIRDLESTONE, M.A., Hon. Canon of Christ Church.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION. By W. ST. CLAIR TISDALL, D.D.
Crown 8vo. 1s. net.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA