THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

ROBERT B. DRUMMOND

The Christology of the New Testament

Five Expository Discourses

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

IT will be readily understood that this little book makes no pretension to anything like a systematic or adequate treatment of the subject named on its title page. Its aim is merely to throw light on one or two special points of interest, and to explain, from the point of view of modern criticism, a few of the most disputed texts of the New Testament. For much of its exegesis I believe I am indebted to Professor Pfleiderer, in his fine work on Primitive Christianity, perhaps more than I was conscious of at the time of writing. I have also to express my thanks to the McQuaker Trustees for their kindness in undertaking the expense of publication.

R. B. D.

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I.

'For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'—1 *Tim.* ii. 5, *A. V.*

'For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, *himself* man, Christ Jesus.'—*Ib. R. V.*

A COUPLE of generations ago a keen controversy was carried on, on the subject of the Trinity and the Godhead of Jesus Christ, between those calling themselves Unitarians, on the one hand, and, on the other, those who upheld the orthodox theology, both making their appeal to Scripture, whose word they acknowledged as final and authoritative. Not that the Unitarians ever accepted the doctrine of

plenary inspiration. They did, however, take the Bible as an infallible rule of faith and practice; and this ground being common to themselves and their opponents, by the verdict of the Bible, fairly interpreted, they were content to abide. In that controversy the text before us was a famous one, and one often urged on the Unitarian side as subversive of the orthodox doctrine of the Godhead of the Son. It is the text, as you know, which your predecessors in this Church placed above the entrance to their house of worship,[1] to proclaim to all the world their Unitarian faith—their belief in the supreme Godhead of the Father only, and in the mediatorship of the divinely-appointed man, Christ Jesus. I suppose we regard the inscription now very much in the light of a historical record—the relic of a past controversy—

[1] The text is conspicuous as the inscription upon a large panel stone in the central pediment of St. Mark's Chapel, Edinburgh.

though even yet perhaps not without its significance; but in those days—in the times to which I refer, some three-quarters of a century ago—this was undoubtedly looked upon as the great Unitarian text.

And yet I am not at all sure that, even considered from that point of view, this text was by any means so decisive as was then assumed. There is no need, of course, for me to state the case for the Trinitarian; but it is only candid to remark in passing that, after all, the text contains nothing really inconsistent with orthodox doctrine — certainly not in its affirmation of the humanity of Jesus. The doctrine of the Church, I need not say, is that Jesus Christ was perfect, *i.e.,* complete man, 'of a human body and human soul subsisting,' as well as complete, or perfect, God. God and man in him were combined in what, in the technical language of theology, is called a hypostatic union, so as to make one person, but the presence

of the divinity in no way nullified or did away with the humanity. A mediator between God and man might be expected to partake of the nature of both. From the statement in the text it might be inferred that there were some—as indeed was the case—who had been denying the humanity of Christ, and that hence the apostle was led to affirm it; but that he did not here mention the divinity because it was disputed by none. This would at least be a plausible view. On the other hand, it might no doubt be contended—and this is the strong point of the Unitarian view—that the language of the text plainly differentiates Jesus from the one God, as a separate being—the differentiation, however, being less marked in the revised rendering; and further that, if the apostle had held the Trinitarian doctrine, he would have obviated all misunderstanding by the use of the phrase which would flow so readily from the pen of a modern

controversialist, but which nowhere occurs in the Bible, the God-man; or, if no such word was included in his vocabulary, by some term which would have put his meaning beyond doubt. Still, so far as the text can justly be claimed as a Unitarian one, it must be allowed that it is in virtue of what it omits rather than of what it affirms.

But how slightly do these mere textual controversies interest us now! With the advance of scientific criticism, with the change which has come over men's minds in their relation to the Bible and revealed truth, there has disappeared that old method of controversy which consisted very much in the balancing of one text against another, and which aimed at deciding the most momentous questions of divinity by the reading of a MS., or the particular interpretation that might be put upon some phrase of doubtful meaning. If the Bible is not an infallible revelation

from God communicated to the world through men who were merely His instruments, it is obvious that its value as a standard of faith is at once immensely reduced, and that we are interested in its sayings, not as the oracles of eternal Truth, but simply as the opinions of the historical persons by whom the several books were written, or whose lives they record. If there is any doubt who those persons were, or whether the writings themselves are authentic, so much the more will our interest decrease. Certainly we are no longer inclined to acknowledge finality or infallibility even in the Bible. We have found out that the letter of a book may be quite as much a yoke upon the conscience as the voice of a man or a church—is not the book, after all, only the voice of the dead? and whatever may be recorded as having been said by Paul, or Peter, or John, we regard it as simply the thought put into words of those

eminent men; we take it for what it is intrinsically worth, and interpret it in the light of our knowledge of the times and circumstances in which they lived and wrote.

It is in this spirit that we must consider these words of the First Epistle to Timothy.

The words of our text came to our ancestors with all the authority of inspired scripture. To us, it may be, they hardly come with the authority of the Apostle Paul; for it is, as is well known, one of the moot questions of criticism whether these Epistles to Timothy, with that to Titus, were written by an apostle at all. It is a question which I will not here undertake to discuss at any length. Only there is a difficulty about fitting these Epistles into the scheme of Paul's life as otherwise mapped out. They imply, at any rate, that he was acquitted on his trial before Nero, that he went on a further

missionary journey, perhaps to Spain and Britain, and was afterwards apprehended and imprisoned for the second time, and again tried and found guilty—all which, I suppose, is not impossible, though neither very probable nor satisfactorily confirmed from other sources.

Then, it is said, the style of these Epistles is very different from that of the Epistles of Paul about which there is no doubt. That is a matter which everyone can judge for himself. There is certainly this difference of style, but then it is argued that a man may have two styles, that the style changes with the advance of years, and that Paul, writing to the young Timothy (who, however, was really a man of some experience at this time) with reference to the duties of his ministry and the particular questions then demanding attention, would naturally fall into a somewhat different style from that which he used in addressing, under quite other

circumstances, the Churches of Rome or Corinth. What were those questions? It is contended lastly—and this is an important point—that they were questions which had not arisen in Paul's lifetime, and which he could not have anticipated, and hence that these Epistles must have been written by some one who, living after Paul, desired to add the weight of Paul's authority to his own compositions. To this, however, it is again replied that the questions referred to—of which I shall have to speak presently—did arise at an earlier period than might otherwise have been supposed; had arisen, in short, in the life-time of the apostle himself.

I do not suppose that there is any standard of taste or criticism by which this question of authenticity having been once stirred can ever be finally set at rest, so as to be no longer capable of dispute; but we have surely gained much if we have recognised that the question is one which cannot

be settled by any external authority, and about which it is permissible for people to differ without blame. And there is one thing at least which we may affirm with confidence, that, whoever was the author of these Pastoral Epistles—whether the Apostle Paul or someone of a younger generation assuming his authority and endeavouring to imitate his style—he certainly wrote with immediate reference to the controversies of his own time, and in no anticipation of those of our day.

And now, then, I come at length to the question—Who were those at whom this text was aimed, or who required to be told that there is but one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, or Christ Jesus who was himself man? The stress, of course, is on the second clause, and we read—'As there is but one God, as all acknowledge, so also can there be but one mediator.' There were, then, those who denied that there

was this one and only mediator; who denied that he was Jesus Christ, or that Jesus Christ was a man.

That there is but one God was the common creed of both Jews and Christians. This had been from of old the belief of the Jewish Church. It was the belief in which Saul the Pharisee had been brought up, and which as Paul the disciple of Christ he was not asked to abandon. The time had arrived when this grand creed was to become general, and all the motley crew of heathen divinities[1] summoned up from the world of imagination were to go back into darkness. The question of Christ, of the Messiah, of the Son of God, of his nature, his rank, his relation to the Father, had still to be settled, and it took a few centuries to settle it finally to the satisfaction of the orthodox party, *i.e.*, the majority in the Church. It is wonderful,

[1] 'Der alten Götter bunt Gewimmel.'—Goethe. Die Braut von Corinth.

certainly, and yet perhaps not so very wonderful, considering how rife speculation was in those days, when eastern dreamers and fanatics were continually passing westwards carrying with them their strange fantastic systems of theosophy, considering, too, that there was as yet no central authority like the Roman Pope to whom appeal might be made, no canon of Scripture even which all acknowledged—it is wonderful, I say, and yet not so very wonderful, how soon differences of opinion and belief began to assert themselves among those professing Christianity, and how soon there began to shape itself out an orthodoxy from which it was a crime deserving of anathema, if not more tangible punishment, to dissent. The genuine Apostle Paul delivered over to Satan, or rather commanded the Church to take whatever measures were implied by that phrase towards the Corinthian Christian who had committed a grievous

moral offence; the later Paul of the Epistles to Timothy has the same sentence for those who differ from him on a speculative matter, viz., whether the resurrection is already past.

Now, if you will turn first to the opening and then to the closing verses of the First Epistle to Timothy, you will find two very significant sentences which at once reveal the object for which the Epistle was written. The first says: 'I besought thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain persons that they teach no other doctrine (than the orthodox one), nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith.' The other reads in the Authorised Version as follows: 'O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called;'—where, however, the

rendering of the Revised Version is to be preferred, 'the profane babblings and oppositions of *the knowledge* which is falsely so called.' Now, here, the original word for knowledge is *gnosis*, and this reminds us at once that in those days—in the early part of the second century and the latter part of the first, possibly in the lifetime of Paul, but certainly when the Pastoral Epistles were written—there was a sect, or rather there were several sects, who maintained that man was to be saved, not by faith, but by knowledge (*gnosis*), who claimed for themselves to possess the true saving knowledge, and who, on that account, were called Gnostics. We are all familiar with the word Agnostic. The Agnostic is properly the man who does not know, or who maintains that knowledge on certain subjects is unattainable. The Gnostic, on the other hand, was the man who knew, who possessed the true knowledge. The Church in our day condemns the

Agnostic, ironically calls his repudiation of knowledge false modesty, and charges him with gross presumption and pride in choosing to be ignorant of what the Church could so easily teach him. The Church in those days still more vehemently condemned the Gnostic. We see that Paul, or pseudo-Paul, denounces his knowledge as knowledge falsely so-called. The fathers took a deal of trouble in exposing and refuting his errors and denouncing his theories, and by common consent of the orthodox the Gnostics were regarded as the sworn enemies of Christ and of the truth; and all their different heresies were traced back to the arch-heretic, Simon Magus, the great opponent of St. Peter. These Gnostics may have been very presumptuous persons; their theories were, no doubt, very fantastic, and rested upon no solid ground of reason or Scripture. They were drawn from their own imaginations, and, except in the most general

sense, they have long since ceased to have any meaning for the world. Yet as the free-thinkers of those days, as men who dared to look in the face of truth for themselves, who tried to hold their ground against the encroachments of the authority that was soon to over-ride all private opinion, to foreclose inquiry and force all minds into the same mould, the old Gnostics claim the same sympathy which we accord to all bold and independent spirits. In some respects they were in advance of their time; and at any rate, those who keep thought alive and active, who dare to use their own minds and look at the world with their own eyes, are always benefactors to whom we should be grateful, even though we may be able to prove them wrong in the particular opinions they advance. Now the Gnostic, like Paul, believed in one God; but He was not exactly the God of the Old Testament, and therefore He

was not exactly the God of Paul, or of any orthodox Christian. Paul had been reared as a strict Jew, and a Jew he remained to the last in everything except that he believed that the promised Christ had come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and that he by fulfilling the law had put an end to it. For Paul, therefore, as for every Jew, God was an image of wrath, or at best, of wrath mingled with mercy—a wrath which would inevitably fall sooner or later on a guilty world; a mercy which held back for a season the arm of vengeance, to give sinners a chance of escape through the redemption that was in Christ. But these eastern dreamers had no affinities with the orthodox Judaism, which, indeed, some of the Jews themselves—notably Philo, in Alexandria, under the influence of Platonism—had outgrown. They did not look on the world exclusively through the spectacles of Moses, or by the aid of any Jewish rushlight. Without the

medium of any supposed revelation, the great universe itself, in all its vastness and all its mystery, pressed in upon their minds, and their idea of God was not the personal finite Being of the Old Testament, but an immense Deep which no man could fathom, a Being of pure spirit, without attributes, without name, separated by an impassable gulf from the world of matter. In this respect, indeed, it may almost be said that the old Gnostics were really agnostic—their thought was akin to the agnosticism of our day. It was a principle with these thinkers that matter was essentially evil, and that between the material world and God there could be no contact. How, then, came the world to be? It was made, they said, not by the Supreme, but by an inferior being—the Demiurge or Creator —and here it was that their system found its connection with Judaism. They did not deny that this world was made by

the God of the Jews; they only refused to worship him as an imperfect being—the enemy of man—and preferred to honour the Wisdom, symbolised by the serpent, which had led the father and mother of mankind into revolt. One sect even went so far as to worship the serpent. The Supreme Being they brought into connection with the visible world by a series of emanations—one following another in a long, if not literally infinite, chain—undoubtedly the endless genealogies to which Paul exhorts Timothy that he should give no heed—emanations of whom one was Christ, who came into the world to undo the work of the Creator, and to deliver man from his power. Was Christ, then, in their view not a man? No; this was another point on which they dissented from the doctrine that eventually became orthodox. Some of them held that it was only a phantom form that walked through the fields of Galilee, imposed itself on the

simple disciples, and spoke the words of life to the multitudes assembled on the green hill-side. Others taught that Jesus was indeed a man of solid flesh and blood, like all others of our race; but that the Christ had entered into him at the moment of his baptism, when he was proclaimed the beloved Son, and again left him before his death. It was held, too, that it was a phantom that hung upon the cross; by some it was said that Simon the Cyrenian, who bore his cross for Christ, was also crucified in his stead; and by others that it was the traitor Judas who deservedly met that fate.

And do not these facts throw a great deal of light, not only on the Epistles to Timothy, but on many other parts of the New Testament as well, particularly on the Johannine writings and their insistence on the truth that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh? We now understand what is the knowledge falsely so called

which Paul condemns. We have here the explanation of the endless genealogies of which Timothy is to beware, and we now see why the writer of the Epistle emphasises so strongly his assertion that Christ Jesus is a man, and that, as there is but one God, so there is and can be but one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus, who was himself a man. The Gnostics, we have seen, affirmed that between God and men there intervened a whole chain of mediating beings—that there were, therefore, many mediators, and in reply the Epistle affirms that there is but one. The orthodox doctrine, of course, triumphed, or rather, to speak more correctly, the doctrine of the Epistle triumphed and became orthodox ; but Gnosticism, notwithstanding, had its revenge in the prevalence for ages of the principle which taught that man's body is a vile thing, and that it is only by its mortification and ill-treatment, by subject-

ing it to long fasts, watchings, and cruel lacerations, that the soul can be saved.

And now, to speak for a moment of this text in relation to our own thought and our own age, we may observe, in the first place, that the notions and doctrines which it was intended to meet, and which I have endeavoured briefly to explain, have long since passed away, and have become mere matters of history, never, I suppose, with the least chance of being revived in serious earnest in this world. That our spiritual ancestors, called upon to meet a dogmatic Trinitarianism which denounced them as infidels and doomed them to perdition for their inability to embrace an arithmetical contradiction, should have greatly rejoiced in this text, and considered it a stronghold of their faith, is certainly not to be wondered at, although, as I have shown, it lends itself only doubtfully to their cause. But these things too have now passed away. 'Jesus Christ our

only Mediator and Redeemer' is an old Unitarian phrase which, I suppose, has long since become obsolete, and is no more heard in our pulpits. When to the scriptural Unitarians of the older school there succeeded others of a more spiritual faith, when after the Priestleys and Belshams, who in their day and according to their light fought a brave battle for liberty and truth, there came Channing, and Emerson, and Martineau, and Tayler, and Parker, teaching us that God is not dead or asleep, but that He lives still, speaks still, in the universe and in every human heart, that the world around us is a perpetual revelation and man the only miracle, and that God is to be sought for and will be found in the pure heart and humble mind to-day rather than in books written long ago in ages of darkness and ignorance, the question might well arise whether the soul had need of any mediator between itself and God, and soon it was

expressly declared that there was no such necessity. The whole idea of mediation, of Christ, as a High Priest, standing between man and God, bringing down the grace of God from heaven and carrying up man's prayers to the throne on high, however appropriate in a world on the scale of the Mosaic heavens and earth, was at length seen to be inapplicable to a universe to which there are no known bounds, and in which this earth is one of the smallest of the globes that throng the fields of space. And, accordingly, these ideas have now in a great measure passed into oblivion. If God, while He is indeed an infinite Deep, is yet everywhere present; if He is in every atom of matter and every soul of man, and from the fountains of His being has come the life which throbs through us everyone, what mediator is required, or can there be, to bring us to Him who is already the best part of ourself, or what need have

we of this apparatus of sacerdotalism, borrowed from Jewish and pagan superstitions, suitable perhaps for the childhood of the world, but to be put away as we attain maturity of reason and judgment?

Or, if it is said, as it may surely be said with perfect truth, that we shall always need help and guidance, that the majority of men, weak and imperfect as they are, will ever stand in need of some one to lift them above themselves, to raise them to a higher plane of life and bring them into more immediate contact with God, then may we not claim that there are more than one who are competent to perform this service for us—may we not venture to say, without any suspicion of going back to Gnostic heresies and the doctrine of emanations, that there are many mediators—if, at least, we use that term, between God and man? At least we will acknowledge our indebtedness, not only to the Prophet of Nazareth, in whose pure

and beautiful life and sublime and admirable precepts it is not wonderful that many have found their perfect Ideal, but to whomsoever, by the utterance of an inspiring word, by the setting forth of a great truth, by the power of a living example, by the clothing of beautiful thought in beautiful forms, has helped us to find God in our own hearts, to believe that the world we live in is divine, and to feel that the life we enjoy in it is of immortal worth.

II.

'Thought it not robbery to be equal with God.'—*Phil.* ii. 6, *A. V.*

'Counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God.'—*Ib. R. V.*

PROBABLY there are not many texts in the New Testament which make a stronger impression on the ordinary reader, as affirming in a very decided way what is called the Godhead of Jesus Christ, than that one in the Epistle to the Philippians which, as vulgarly translated, says that he, 'being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' The very word 'robbery,' almost startling in its emphasis, suggests in a most forcible way what an awful crime he would commit who should claim equality with God without the strongest possible title thereto; and this brings home to us how indefeasible must have been the claim of him who could make it without the slightest sense of wrong. If Jesus did not think it robbery to be equal with God, then he must have been equal—such is the natural inference—and as God has no equal but himself—as saith the prophet, 'To whom, then, will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith your God'—then he must have been God.

What, however, if the real meaning of Paul, in this passage, is just the opposite of what our common version makes him say? No doubt for most of us the time is past when, on such a subject as the

nature of Christ, a text of Scripture could materially influence our judgment. We hold Jesus to have been of simply human nature on grounds of reason and history, and whatever Paul or John may say, the opinions of those apostles are no way binding upon our conscience; we do not regard them as infallible. At the same time, the doctrine of Paul, and the doctrine of Christendom founded upon it, cannot be wholly indifferent to us. However much we might wish it were otherwise, dogmas are still a great power in the world. I hope, therefore, it will not be found unprofitable or uninteresting to consider this morning the real meaning of these words of the Apostle Paul, and how far they bear out the Church's doctrine concerning the nature of Christ.

I have just hinted that the text, when rightly translated, really says the opposite of what it seems to say in the common version. To show this I have only to

ask your attention to the Revised Version, which reads as follows:—'Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize'—(in the Greek, the margin says, '*a thing to be grasped*')—'to be on an equality with God, but *emptied himself*,' instead of '*made himself of no reputation.*' You will at once perceive the difference,—the contradiction between the two statements. The one is that Jesus, inasmuch as he was already and originally in the form of God, did not think he would be committing any act of violence in asserting equality; the other, that although he was in the form of God, and might therefore be supposed to have some claim to equality with him, he did not regard such equality as a thing which he ought to grasp at; so far from that, he made himself of no reputation, as the common version paraphrases,—literally '*emptied himself*,' whatever that may mean—and

for the form of God assumed that of a servant, or slave. Nor can there be any doubt that this is the more correct rendering; for not only has it the sanction of the learned scholars to whose labours we owe the Revised Version, but it gives the better sense, as marking more clearly the contrast between the glory which Jesus renounced and the humiliation to which he condescended. What is it, however, to be in the form of God, and what does Paul mean by saying that Jesus was in that form? Does he speak here of Jesus as he appeared among men, when he went about preaching in the villages of Galilee, or as he was in some state of pre-existent glory, long before his birth into this world, perhaps before the world was made? Surely the latter, as is evident from the whole context. In this world, Paul says, Jesus took the form of a servant and appeared in the likeness of men. It must, then, have been before his birth that he

had the form of God. And here let us say at once that we must give up all idea of finding our own doctrines and beliefs reflected in the Bible. You know there is an old saying—it probably originated with some sceptic, but it is wonderfully true—that the Bible is a book in which everyone *seeks* his own dogmas, and in which, accordingly, everyone *finds* his own dogmas. But, as men are at last beginning to find out and confess, this is not the way to read the Bible at all—this is not the way by any means to discover its real sense. The right way is to go to it with a perfectly independent mind, without any assumptions as to inspiration or infallibility, and inquire what is the true meaning of the words before you, just as you might inquire into the meaning of a passage in Homer or Shakespeare. Taking the passage in Philippians in this way, whatever may be our own belief as to the nature of Christ, we must admit that Paul certainly

did not think he came into existence for the first time in the manger at Bethlehem, but held that he had lived in a previous state of glory with his Father in heaven. With this remark I return to the question, What is meant by the 'form of God'—by the statement that Jesus was in that form? On this point much might be said. Many, I find, contend that 'form' here means either the essence, or that which expresses and shows forth the essence, or essential nature, of any thing or person, and they say that the form of God is equivalent to the equality with God which Christ did not regard as a prize or a thing to be grasped at. But surely this cannot be. If it were so, how could it be said that, being in the form of God, Christ did not grasp at equality with him? People do not grasp at that which they already possess. I can see no reason for putting on the word 'form' any other meaning than that which it naturally suggests—that of resemblance—

strictly, outward shape, but metaphorically, likeness of nature, of mind, and disposition; or if a distinction is to be made between it and the word 'fashion' which afterwards occurs — 'being formed in fashion as a man'—it is perhaps that 'form' denotes something more settled and permanent. There is no need to inquire here into the use of this word in Aristotle and Greek philosophy generally; the Apostle Paul, as I venture to think, wrote not as a philosopher, but as a preacher and orator; and here we may point out that it is the very same word which he employs in regard to Christ's earthly condition. Originally in the form of God, Christ assumed the form of a servant—that must surely mean 'took the condition or outward appearance' of one; nor, in any case, can Paul have meant more by saying that Christ was 'in the form of God' than he meant when he said, in the Epistle to the Colossians,

that he was 'the image of the invisible God.'

If Paul conceived of Jesus Christ as existing before his birth into this world, let it be noted, he still thought of him as *man;* not as God, but as man bearing God's image yet unmarred and in all its original brightness. In short, the pre-existent Christ was, in Paul's view, the archetypal man, the heavenly pattern after which the earthly Adam was created. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, it will be remembered, in that grand though highly rhetorical passage on the resurrection, Paul speaks of two Adams. He calls Christ 'the last Adam.' He calls him also 'the second man.' 'The first man is of the earth, earthy.' 'The second man is the Lord from heaven,' as we generally read it, though the better reading seems to be simply 'is of heaven.' This idea of the heavenly man, traceable to the twofold account of man's creation in the

Book of Genesis, was already current in the Jewish-Alexandrine school of philosophy, and is very clearly set forth by Philo, the leading representative of that school, in his treatise on the creation of the world. Referring to the text (*Gen.* ii. 7), 'the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,' he says:— 'Moses, by this expression, shows most clearly that there is a vast difference between man as generated now and the first man who was made according to the image of God. For man as formed now is perceptible to the external senses, partaking of qualities, consisting of body and soul, man or woman, by nature mortal. But man made according to the image of God was an idea, or a genus, or a seal, perceptible only by the intellect, incorporeal, neither male nor female, imperishable by nature.' Does not this passage throw a great deal of light on Paul's doc-

trine? Adopting this idea, Paul evidently assumed the existence, before the creation of the world, of one who was, so to speak, not essential God, but essential man—the type from which, however, the earthly man was far removed. That this being was not, with Paul, a mere idea in the mind of God, but was endowed with consciousness and will, is evident from the attribution to him of spontaneous acts. 'He emptied himself.' 'He took the form of a servant.' It was an original thought of Paul to connect this idea with the Messianic hope. This being it was who appeared on earth as Jesus Christ.

Christ was the last or second Adam—second in historical manifestation, first in the reality of things. It is in the story of the first Adam in the Book of Genesis that we must look for the complete explanation of the vexed Philippian passage. Christ did not think equality with God a prize, or a thing to be grasped at. Was

there not once a man who did so think, who did grasp at this equality, and by so doing brought ruin on himself and his posterity? You remember what the serpent said to Eve when she told him that God had forbidden the new-created pair to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on pain of death? He said, 'Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.' 'Ye shall be as gods' is here the common reading, but the word, though plural in form, is that which generally stands for God, and the Revised Version is probably correct in rendering 'Ye shall be as God.' Here, then, we have Adam, the first or earthly man, aspiring to be 'as God' by eating the forbidden fruit, thus standing in the strongest contrast with the second man, or man from heaven, who did not think that such equality was a thing to be grasped at; but, instead, took on him

the form of a servant. It is impossible to doubt that Paul had this story from the Book of Genesis in his mind when he wrote his Epistle to the Philippians, and equally certain would it seem to be that he must have been thinking of the passage in Isaiah about the servant of Jehovah, when he wrote that Christ took upon him the form of a servant or slave. For the earthly condition of Jesus, though humble, was, of course, not really that of a slave. He was a free citizen of Galilee, under the Roman rule, even belonging, according to popular belief, to the royal line of David; but we know that the passage in Isaiah which tells of the afflictions of the servant of Jehovah was very early applied to the sufferings of Christ, and clearly it was this that led Paul to say that the heavenly man, divesting himself of his divine form, put on him the form of a servant.

'Divesting himself of his divine form,' that seems to be the meaning of the word

translated in our common version 'made himself of no reputation,' and with literal accuracy in the Revised Testament, 'emptied himself.' It is a word on which a new and strange doctrine concerning the person of Christ has been founded in these latter years. Some of you may possibly have heard of the doctrine of *Kenosis*. It is a doctrine which has been a good deal discussed in recent theological literature. The word means emptying, and the idea is that God, in becoming man, laid aside, or emptied himself of, a certain portion of his divine attributes, virtually ceasing to be God from his birth to his resurrection. The doctrine is put forward in the interests of orthodoxy, but if the doctrine of the Church Catholic be the standard, it is, I believe, exceedingly unorthodox. It deserves, however, a few moments' consideration.

The Church's doctrine is, we all know, that in the person of Christ there were combined two distinct natures, the divine

and the human, without any detriment or diminution to either, so that Jesus was at once perfect God and perfect man. Of course, there are many obvious difficulties in the way of this doctrine. If Christ was omnipotent, how is it there were some things he could not do? Mark says that in a certain place he *could* not do many mighty works because of their unbelief. If he was omniscient, how is it there were many things which he did not know? It is said that Jesus grew in *wisdom* as well as in stature. He says himself that 'of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.' He evidently entertained the popular belief of his time and country in regard to demoniacal possession and the supernatural. It is clear, too, that he was quite a stranger to those views which are now so widely spread as to the late date and uncertain authorship of some of the Old Testament books. He

speaks of Moses as the writer of the books of the law, of David as the author of the Psalter, although modern critics are satisfied that both views are erroneous. Those who accept these views are compelled to ask themselves, if Christ were really God and therefore omniscient, how could he be ignorant of these things? Or if he knew them and concealed them, was he not guilty of duplicity? The old answer to these questions was that Christ knew as God that of which he was ignorant as man, and that when he said he did not know it was the man who spoke. For a long time this answer was deemed satisfactory, but the critical movement in our day has stirred the question afresh, and now this new answer has been devised, that God, in taking on him the nature of man, divested, or, to use Paul's word, emptied himself of a certain portion of his divine attributes, actually laid them aside for the thirty or more years of his sojourn on earth, in order

to resume them again on his resurrection. But is this, we must presume to ask, even an admissible thought? Surely there are some things which it must be admitted that even an Omnipotent Being could not do—*e.g.*, reconcile contradictions, cause a part to be equal to the whole, or two and two to make five. Is it conceivable that the Self-existent Being—he who hath no beginning and no end of years—though omnipotent, should be able, by an act of will, to terminate his own existence? Is it conceivable that he should be able to alter his own nature, or to give up any portion of his attributes? I think you will say that this is inconceivable, or at least that the thought cannot for a moment be entertained. Grant, however, that it is otherwise, suppose, if you can, that God *could* lay aside his omnipotence, I would ask, then, where is the power by which he could ever resume it? When Othello blows out the candle before executing his fell purpose

upon Desdemona, he says he can easily rekindle its light—

> 'If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
> I can again thy former light restore,
> Should I repent me,'—

but then turning to her, he adds—

> 'But once put out thine,
> Thou cunningest pattern of excelling nature,
> I know not where is that Promethean heat
> That can thy light relume.'

So I say if it were possible to conceive of God emptying himself of his omnipotence and omniscience in order to live as a man on earth, it is inconceivable that, being a man, with the limited power and knowledge of a man, he should ever be able to recover those attributes.

But no doubt the doctrine of the Trinity will be called in to solve the difficulty. We shall be told it was the Son who laid aside his omnipotence, the Father who restored it to him. The universe was not left without

an Almighty Ruler during the sojourn of Christ on earth. God still reigned in heaven while his Son was suffering on earth. They may accept the explanation who are content with words as a substitute for thought. The doctrine of the Trinity is already a self-contradiction, and the doctrine of *Kenosis*, it seems to me, does but add another to the difficulties of the orthodox faith.

But, after all, it was not so much to enforce a doctrine as to impress a moral lesson that Paul wrote the words we have been considering. He wrote them as an exhortation to humility, and the avoidance of strife and vainglory. He says, 'Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' Paul's theology and his ethics were closely related to one another as both constituting his religion. His ethics were those of Judaism, of the Law, softened, tempered, sweetened by those of Jesus and his disciples—the ethics of the later Psalms,

world. What a motive is here to humility, to love, to self-sacrifice for the good of others! Hence these are the two great missionary religions of the world, whose ideal will never be satisfied, until all the distinctions of race and class and country are broken down, and all are united in one universal Brotherhood. But the Heavenly Man was to be more to Paul and his disciples than a mere external example. He was to be also the principle of a new life within them. Present at all times, and especially when meeting as brethren they solemnly broke together the bread that reminded them of his death, the thought of Jesus was an influence for good which could not be put by, and one stimulative of all tender and holy feelings. And may we not find here something of which even we can take hold, something which may help us in the warfare of life. Paul's theology may be as dead as you will. It is evidently far from Trinitarian orthodoxy, and it is at least equally remote from any form

of modern Unitarianism. But the thought of Jesus as the ideal of humanity has been found in all ages a stimulating and elevating power; and that Ideal, whether connected with Jesus, or any other, is a permanent possession and principle, which is indispensable to the moral progress of the world. Let the same mind be in you as was in Christ Jesus—the same spirit of humility, the same spirit of condescension to the needs of others, the same spirit of love and of self-sacrifice, and then whatever may be our creed, whatever doctrines or opinions we may hold about Christ, we shall be one with him in life and thought, and members of the great Brotherhood which he lived and died to establish on earth.

III.

'Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.'—*Romans* ix. 5, *A. V.*

'Whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.'—*Ib. R. V.*

HERE, surely, is a text in which, whether the Authorised or the Revised translation be followed, Deity is plainly and unequivocally predicated of Jesus Christ. 'Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever.' What could be more explicit? The margin of the Revised Version, however, informs us that there is a doubt, not indeed as to the reading of the passage, so far as the words are concerned, but as to its punctuation. It tells us that 'some modern

interpreters place a full stop after *flesh*, and translate, *He who is God over all be* (*is*) *blessed for ever:* or, *He who is over all is God, blessed for ever';* while others place the full stop after the word all. The MSS. are agreed as to the reading. The question of punctuation is beyond their competence, because it is pretty certain that the original autographs had no stops, and such as occur in the MSS. that have come down to us have only the authority of the scribes by whom they were copied. If the modern interpreters—who, it may be mentioned in passing, include Erasmus, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Jowett, and many others —if, I say, they are right, it is obvious what a difference is at once made in the meaning of our text. As usually interpreted, it certainly looks at first sight as if Paul here made Christ God in the modern Trinitarian sense—an interpretation, however, which, remembering our discussion of the Philippian passage, we shall not in any case be in

haste to accept; but if a full stop can be legitimately placed after the word 'flesh,' as undoubtedly it can, and if we can satisfy ourselves that this is the correct punctuation, it follows that the word God is not predicated of Christ at all; but that 'God who is over all be blessed for ever,' is a doxology, after the manner of the Rabbis, and of Paul himself in other passages, suggested by the reference to the privileges of Israel.

Here, then, are two points for our consideration. How are we to read this text—as it stands in our common version of the Bible, from which the revised rendering scarcely differs, or as it appears in the margin of the Revised Translation? And secondly, if any doubt remains, assuming that the current reading is correct, in what sense shall we understand the words 'God over all' as applied to Christ?

As to the first point the arguments on one side and the other seem to me to be

very evenly balanced, so much so that it is by no means an easy matter to come to a definite conclusion. In regard, first, to the general sense of the passage, it is objected that a doxology is here out of place. The mind of Paul is full of sadness. He writes that he has great sorrow and unceasing pain in his heart. He could even wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren who had proved themselves so unworthy of all their great and divine privileges. Why, then, should he choose this occasion for breaking off in the middle of a sentence to give glory to God? The ordinary Rabbinical and oriental usage of adding an ascription of praise wherever the name of God has been mentioned will not account for it, because there has been no previous mention of that name. To this, however, it may be answered that Paul was a man of sudden moods, and why might not the mere thought of the privileges of Israel, even though rejected, call forth his praise?

The argument has force, but cannot be considered conclusive, and we must probably acquiesce in the judgment of Sanday and Headlam that while 'it is impossible to say that a doxology could not stand here, it is certainly true that it would be unnatural and out of place.' [1]

Another and perhaps stronger objection to putting the full stop after 'flesh' is that by so doing we bring the sentence to a rather abrupt end. The statement that it was only 'as concerning the flesh,' or in his fleshly nature, that the Christ was of Israel, clearly wants something to balance it. If Christ was of Israel according to the flesh, the question naturally suggests itself, what was he according to the spirit? The answer is that he was 'over all, God blessed for ever.' Quite a parallel case occurs in the opening of this same epistle. There the apostle speaks of Jesus Christ as 'made of the seed of David according to the flesh.'

[1] *International Commentary on the Romans*, p. 237.

But he does not stop there. He immediately adds that he was 'declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness.' Thus we have here the precise antithesis which would be wanting in our text if we adopted the punctuation of the 'modern interpreters.' When we notice further that it is exactly the mention of Christ *after the flesh* that evokes the doxology, its incongruity becomes still more apparent.

But a more forcible objection still is that the grammar of the sentence is against it. To appreciate this argument no knowledge of Greek is necessary. The question is simply this: Why should Paul, at the risk of being grossly misunderstood, have used the expression 'He who is God over all be blessed for ever,' when he might far more naturally, and without any fear of misapprehension, have said simply 'God over all'; just as one would more naturally say, 'the richest man in Edinburgh' than 'he who is

the richest man in Edinburgh.' In English there is no ambiguity because the personal pronoun is expressed. In Greek there is ambiguity, because the personal pronoun is merged in the relative; but what is contended, as it seems to me, with great force, is that this relative properly refers back to an antecedent in the preceding sentence, and that antecedent is necessarily Christ. A nearly exact parallel is furnished by 2 *Cor.* xi. 31, where we have 'The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.' It is true the mode of expression to which exception is taken is not unexampled; but the examples are sentences in which there can be no doubt as to the meaning. Certain it is that Paul might have expressed himself in a way that would leave no room for dubiety; and unless we can suppose that he quite needlessly adopted a form of expression which could not fail to give rise to misunderstanding, we can scarcely escape

the conclusion that in this case the traditional interpretation is also the right one.

Another point, on which, however, I would not lay any great stress, is that the word 'blessed' in Greek as in English would naturally stand first, which is not the case here. Thus we should say 'Blessed be God' not 'God be blessed.' Yet we should probably say 'God be blessed for ever' rather than 'Blessed be God for ever.' If the rule is not more imperative in Greek than in English—and it does not seem to be—this argument cannot count for much. Yet, it appears, it was sufficient to convince Socinus, notwithstanding his anti-trinitarianism, that the reference must be to Christ. And here, certainly, is a very interesting fact. Socinus, though a strong anti-trinitarian, did not find it impossible that Paul should give to Christ the title of God; and by owning this he did credit to his own candour, even though the argument to which he yielded may not be absolutely sound.

So far as the considerations hitherto dwelt on are concerned the conclusion seems to be, either that the orthodox interpretation of our text is the right one, or that the true meaning is uncertain. The question being one of grammatical structure, we can never be sure that the less obvious of two possible constructions is the one intended. We may go even further and say that the contemporaries of Paul, even his personal disciples themselves, would have been no more able than we are to resolve any doubt, if any had arisen, as to his meaning in this passage. Paul, as was the manner of the time, it should be remembered, did not write his epistles, but dictated them to an amanuensis. Suppose, then, that in dictating his epistle to the Romans, he made a pause equal to the time allowed for a period after the word 'flesh,' it may be asked, Could even Tertius himself who wrote the epistle, have said positively whether during that interval the apostle

was thinking how he would finish his sentence, or composing a new one? If not, how vain is it for us to think we can settle the matter though we disputed about it till doomsday! Let us rather be content to believe that there are really some things which must remain doubtful for ever, and that this is one of them. At the same time I am bound to say that in my humble opinion the defenders of the traditional interpretation have a decided advantage. They can say at least this: If Paul meant what *we* say, he could scarcely without constraint have expressed himself more clearly; if he meant what *you* say, he has shown himself a very careless writer; as he might with the greatest ease have put his meaning beyond dispute.

But what, it may be asked, are we to make of the testimony of the 'modern interpreters'—the chief critical editors of the New Testament during the last four hundred years? Well, they seem to have

followed the punctuation of the MSS., and yet the evidence of the oldest MSS. is not entirely in their favour. The Alexandrian MS. puts a point after 'flesh,' but its value has been questioned. The Vatican, one of the two most ancient we have, has a colon, but whether by the first hand is doubtful. Its companion, the Sinaitic, has no punctuation at all, so that this evidence does not really come to much. Indeed it can scarcely count at all in face of the fact that the great majority of the Fathers, whether Greek or Latin—'an immense preponderance of the Christian writers of the first eight centuries'—refer the words to Christ.

Apart, however, from external testimony and from all mere questions of grammatical construction, there is another objection to the reference to Christ which to Unitarians at least will seem the strongest of any; and that is that nowhere else in his epistles does Paul give Christ the title of God, and that to confound him with God is contrary to the

whole tenor of his teaching. And this leads directly to the second point I have proposed for our consideration—supposing we accept the current punctuation and reading of this passage, in what sense are we to understand it?

The objection is thus stated by Professor Jowett, with whom probably it weighed as much as any other:—'That the language here applied to Christ is stronger than that used elsewhere, even in the strongest passages; *Titus* ii. 13 (1 *Tim.* iii. 16, where the reading is doubtful); *Col.* ii. 9.'

It is true that this is the only passage in Paul's undoubted epistles in which the apostle distinctly applies the name of God to Christ; but then, it is contended on the other hand, surely with some justice, that he elsewhere ascribes to him such exalted attributes as imply that he was nothing less. We cannot, indeed, place much reliance on the verse from the Epistle to Titus, 'looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the

glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,' assuming that this is the correct rendering of the text—(it is that of the Revised Version)—because the Epistle to Titus, as one of the so-called Pastoral Epistles, is of more than doubtful authenticity. And the same thing may be said of that from 1 *Timothy*, which, moreover, when read correctly merely enumerates the stages of Christ's passage from earth to glory, and says nothing of Godhead :—'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory.' In the Epistle to the Colossians, however, Paul uses language of Christ which puts him apart from all created things or beings, and might seem to make him truly God. He calls him 'the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation' (*Col.* ii. 15), and again declares that 'in him dwelleth all the fulness

of the Godhead bodily.' The genuineness of the Epistle to the Colossians has indeed been called in question, and in any case it must, I think, be taken as marking a more advanced stage in the growth of the Pauline theology than that to the Romans. But in the still earlier First Epistle to the Corinthians we find Paul again affirming the supremacy of Christ as the spiritual man over all things so emphatically that he finds it is necessary to add by way of caution that if all things are put under the feet of Christ 'it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him' (1 *Cor.* xv. 27). And yet this passage itself, it may be noticed, furnishes the strongest evidence that Paul did not fail to draw a sharp distinction between Christ and the Supreme Deity, since he winds up his argument with the words, 'When all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that GOD may be all in all.'

It is quite clear—it must be admitted by every honest exegete—that Paul nowhere confounds Christ with the Supreme God, places the Son on an equality with the Father, or says anything to justify the self-contradictory propositions of the Athanasian creed. This follows from the passage to which I have just referred. It is shown by this other passage of the same epistle, 'unto us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him' (1 *Cor.* viii. 6). It is evident from the passage, considered in a previous discourse, in the Epistle to the Philippians, where Christ is presented as the Divine Man who deemed equality with God not a thing to be grasped at. Then could Paul, thus thinking of Christ, even once have given to him the name which all Christians now regard as appropriate only to the Supreme Being?

Let it be remembered that throughout

the Gentile world, the Greek word *theos* (God) had a much wider application and more general meaning than our word God when written with an initial capital. No doubt we use the word in speaking of the objects of heathen worship, but we do not apply it to real existences such as angels or glorified spirits, whereas, in the world before Christ, if it was sometimes used, with the article, as a proper name, to designate the One Supreme, it was also freely applied to the crowd of inferior spirits who made up the heathen Pantheon, and whose number might receive accessions at any time whenever a great man was enrolled among the Immortals. To the Jew, whether he remained a Jew, or embraced the faith of Christ, there was indeed but one God ; yet even he could not help using the term in a subordinate sense whether as applied to the objects of heathen worship or to the great ones of this world. As Paul himself says, there were many that were called gods both

in heaven and earth; but whereas he avowed that 'to us there is but one God the Father,' this, it must be admitted, is so far against the supposition that he would use the word of any but the Father. In John's gospel again, we find Jesus quoting the text from the Psalms—'I said ye are gods'—as a justification of his own claim to be called the Son of God,—'if he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God!' Here at any rate there is a clear recognition on the part of a Jewish and Christian writer of the propriety of applying the word *theos* to others besides the supreme Father of all. Moreover, it is undeniable that John gives this highest name to the Word. This gospel, however, is a good deal later than Paul, and marks a more advanced stage in the development of the Christian doctrine of the Son. Again, let it be remembered that many of

the so-called 'gods' of the Gentile world, like Hercules and Bacchus, were mortal on at least one side of their parentage. Hercules reached heaven through the gates of death, and after a life spent in the service of humanity. The Roman emperor was divinised even in his lifetime, perhaps then receiving the sincerest homage in the shape of incense burnt before his statue. After his death he rose to full godhead. Thus, in the inflated, perhaps sarcastic invocation of Lucan, the infamous Nero is invited to say what place he chose to occupy as a god, whenever he shall seek the heavenly mansions.[1] Having all this in mind can we fail to see that to a Greek certainly, but even in many cases to a Greek Jew, embracing the faith of the cross, the risen and glorified Jesus, now sitting on the right hand of God in heaven,

[1] —'tibi numine ab omni
Cedetur, jurisque tui natura relinquet
Quis deus esse velis, ubi regnum ponere mundi.'
Phar. I. 50-52.

fulfilled all the conditions of godship, as they were then understood, and could be nothing less than himself a god. Such a one might believe—whether as a Jew or a Christian, he would believe, that there is but one Supreme all-perfect God; but this would not be in any way inconsistent with his giving the title of God in a subordinate sense to other and inferior beings, especially to one so highly exalted as Jesus. Our question, then, resolves itself into this:—Was it impossible for Paul, a Greek-speaking Jew, familiar with the use of the term *theos* in the Gentile world, a man of ardent impulsive nature, and not always strictly consistent whether in thought or speech, to permit himself for once to give this title to the divine man, Jesus Christ? However unlikely it may at first seem that he would use the word in this way it cannot surely be said that it is impossible, and if not, then why not take his words in the sense which otherwise they would certainly bear? Paul

believed that Christ was not only the Divine Man, but the Son of God, and if any extension of the term God was thought permissible, as the son of a man is necessarily a man, it would seem but natural to say that the son of God must himself be a God. At the same time there can be no doubt that the common translation of our text is calculated to give an erroneous impression of the apostle's meaning. Strictly it should read—'of whom as concerning the flesh is Christ, who is over all, deity[1] blessed for ever.'

In conclusion, I have only to point out that the question is one simply of the use of a particular term—did Paul apply the term God to Christ upon this one occasion, or did he not?—and to insist that the punctuation of this text should not affect one way or another either our view of Paul's Christ-

[1] By the use of this word it is possible to express in English the distinction between *theos* with and without the article in Greek. Thus, a good translation of *John* i. 1 would be:—'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the Deity, and the Word was deity.'

ology or our personal belief. Paul believed the Son to be inferior to the Father, and whether he exceptionally called him God in his epistle to the Romans or not, he certainly thought of him as Man prior to his incarnation, as well as since his birth into this world. And again, whatever Paul's doctrine may have been, and whatever language he may have employed to set it forth, let it be remembered that that doctrine was strictly Paul's, and must be looked at in the light of whatever knowledge we possess of Paul's character and training, and the circumstances and events of his life. Unitarians believe, on historical and critical grounds which are satisfactory to themselves, in what is called the simple humanity of Jesus. If, however, they believe also in the divinity of humanity, they are perhaps not so far from the thought, even though they do not use the language, of Paul.

IV.

'I and *my* Father are one.'—*John* x. 30, *A. V.*

'I and the Father are one.'—*Ib. R. V.*

THIS text is naturally much relied upon by Trinitarians in proof of the deity of Jesus Christ, and as naturally it has often been a source of serious perplexity and misgiving to those who have been brought up in the opposite faith. And, indeed, if it were certain that Jesus really spoke these words, that they have not been merely attributed to him by a disciple, but that they came thus solemnly, in his conflict with the Jews, from his own lips, it must be owned, it is by no means easy to evade the inference which they inevitably suggest. What assertion of divinity, it may be asked, could

possibly be plainer or more emphatic? 'I and the Father are one.' Is not this very much as though he had said, 'I am God'? Certainly the Jews so understood him, for we read that they immediately took up stones to stone him, and declared that they did so because he, 'being a man, made himself God.' Nor is this by any means the only passage in this gospel which seems opposed to our humanitarian view of Christ's nature. There is the still more startling reply of Jesus to Philip when he exclaimed, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us'—'Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.' Even the saying, 'The Father is greater than I,' though it may at first sight look inconsistent with the others, is really even more decidedly against the humanitarian hypothesis; for what man, unless he intended to claim a position a little below God Himself—and this certainly Jesus does in

this gospel—would ever think of announcing what otherwise would be such an obvious truism as that 'God is greater than I'? The statement seems to imply on the part of the speaker that he has been making claims which, without this correction, might have been understood as putting him on an equality with God. Then there is the confession of Thomas on beholding his risen Saviour, 'My Lord, and my God,' which may, it is true, be taken as an exclamation of wonder and glad conviction; but which has scarcely that appearance. Of course, Unitarians have their own explanation of our text, which we shall presently consider, and of the other texts to which I have referred; but in the meantime I make this remark, that in considering any text which is found exclusively in the Fourth Gospel, it is always well to remember that this gospel is of very doubtful authenticity, that it was written long after Jesus had left this world, and when many of his first disciples were

dead, and that even orthodox critics have admitted that the discourses it contains must be regarded as more or less coloured by the thoughts of the writer. In short, this Fourth Gospel, or gospel according to S. John, whoever was its author—and I have sometimes thought it not impossible that John, the son of Zebedee, in his old age *might* have written such a gospel to the glory of his master, though it is hardly probable—is to be looked on more as an idealised biography — you might perhaps almost call it a theological treatise in the form of a biography—than as a literal matter of fact narrative. It was probably written towards the close of the first Christian century, and its author was most likely a mystic of the Alexandrine school, who had been familiar with the Apostle John at Ephesus, and had perhaps derived from him some sayings of Jesus not recorded elsewhere.

Let us first look at the matter as it presents itself on this understanding.

The Gospel of S. John, everyone will remember, begins with the purely theological announcement, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' It goes on to say that by this Word—the Word, or Logos, or Reason of God, it should be mentioned, was a term of the Alexandrine philosophy—that by this Word all things were made, and that in it, or in him (it was generally personified) there was light and life. And then a little further down it tells us that the Word was made or became flesh and dwelt among us, and 'we,' says the author, 'beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' Thus Jesus Christ was the incarnation of this divine Word, the only begotten Son of God, flowing forth from the Divine Essence, just as light, to use the old and obvious illustration of the church fathers, flows forth from the sun. After this, then, what assertion of divinity on the part of the Incarnate One need surprise us?

Jesus, in the Fourth Gospel, it is true, is assumed to have come into the world by natural birth as described in other parts of the New Testament, to have passed from infancy up to manhood in the usual way, and to have been subject to the infirmities of the flesh, only without sin ; but all this time he is still the Divine Word, the only begotten Son of God. By him all things were made, and so he converts water into wine and creates bread in quantities to feed the hungry multitudes. In him was *light*, and so he restores his sight to the man born blind, and proclaims himself as the light of the world. In him was *life*; and accordingly he calls Lazarus from the tomb and declares himself to be the resurrection and the life. He experiences no temptation from the devil—he endures no agony of Gethsemane ; but declares that he has power, of his own untrammelled will, to lay down his life and to take it again. What wonder if he should be found saying,

'I and the Father are one'—'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' The words are surely only natural and appropriate on the lips of one of whom it could be said that he was 'with God in the beginning and that he was God,' or of the same divine nature—for I presume a distinction in any case must be drawn between the God with whom he was and the God that he himself was.[1] In short, all the acts recorded of Jesus in this gospel, some of which are peculiar to it, while others are borrowed from the Synoptics—all the sayings and discourses ascribed to him which are almost entirely original, having no parallel elsewhere, are all calculated to set forth the glory of the divine Word—to present Jesus as that Word incarnate in the flesh. If the great miracle of the raising of Lazarus is matter of fact, and not a mere symbolical narrative, how comes it to have escaped the observation of all the other disciples—at least to have been

[1] See note on page 75.

left unrecorded by them? The same question may be asked of the other great miracles of the man born blind, and of the turning of water into wine? It is clear, then, from all this that no absolute dependence can be placed upon any words which are reported in this gospel only, as genuine words of Jesus; and to any difficulties that might be raised on the ground of the text, 'I and the Father are one,' a very good and sufficient answer would be that we are not certain that Jesus ever spoke these words at all.

If Jesus had spoken these words, is it not strange that they have not been recorded anywhere but in this one late gospel, that they have found no place in the collection of *Logia*, or sayings, preserved in Matthew and Luke? A declaration so striking, so emphatic, so publicly made, one would suppose, could hardly have failed to impress itself on the memory of all who heard it, to have gained circulation, even if only whispered at first among the disciples,

and to have been incorporated in any written record of the Master's life. Yet no such words are to be found anywhere but in this one gospel, nor any words at all like them, or to which the same meaning can be attached. The nearest approach to them is in that saying at the end of *Matt.* xi.—'No one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him'; and this stands so much alone that it has all the appearance of an interpolation in the latest edition of our first gospel. Here, it is true, Jesus does seem for a moment to place himself on that elevation, by the side of God, which was afterwards assigned to him by theology; but elsewhere, in the Synoptic gospels, he speaks not of *the* Father (a theological term), but of '*your* Father,' and '*our* Father,' and among those sayings which may be most certainly relied on as authentic, the greatest perhaps is 'The pure in heart shall see God,'—a saying which does not

claim for the speaker himself any special pre-eminence, but only affirms that everyone who has kept himself unspotted from the world, unpolluted by selfishness, by avarice, by impure and unholy thoughts and desires, shall enjoy that highest blessedness, of a clear conscience and a heart reconciled to the universe, which may be described figuratively as seeing God—or as the the poet Shelley has so beautifully expressed it, 'that a being of pure and gentle habits will not fail, in every thought, in every object of every thought, to be aware of benignant visitings from the invisible energies by which he is surrounded.' We can have no doubt that Jesus did say this; for such a saying was well worthy of the great Prophet and Teacher we believe Jesus to have been. But the statement that he was one with God, or one with the Father, is, on the face of it, more likely to have been made of him by another, than to have been made by himself.

Let us, however, now turn to the other

hypothesis. Let us take it, that after all, and notwithstanding these reasonable doubts, Jesus did speak the words in question. What did he mean by them? I have admitted that the Gospel according to S. John was in all probability written more or less under the influence of the apostle of that name, by some one who knew the apostle, and who may have derived from him some of the materials which he made use of. There is nothing improbable therefore in the suggestion that some genuine sayings of Jesus may be incorporated in it. It is, indeed, almost universally conceded that the discourses as they stand are more or less the composition of the writer; but they might be this, and yet contain, here and there, genuine utterances derived from the aged apostle himself worked into their texture. One would wish to regard as such an utterance, *e.g.*, the grand saying, expressive of universal religion—'God is spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him'—not in

Samaria or in Jerusalem, but—'in spirit and in truth'; but no doubt the words are equally weighty, whoever was their author. Well, then, let us suppose that Jesus did really say, 'I and the Father are one'—it is to my mind the manner in which he is represented as making this announcement, publicly to the Jews, in answer to their challenge, 'If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly,' as though he were making a formal revelation of his real nature, rather than the announcement itself that presents any difficulty. If we might suppose that the words had not originally this public character, but that Jesus in conversation with his disciples, and on some occasion which naturally called it forth, made the declaration in question, we need see in it nothing more than an assertion of such perfect agreement between himself and the heavenly Father as may easily exist between any two perfectly separate minds and persons. What, indeed, is more common than to say of any two

persons who are understood to be in entire accord with one another that they are one? 'You and I are one upon that point'—there would be nothing unusual or unintelligible in such an expression, nor would anyone infer from it a unity of nature or essence. This is the old Unitarian explanation of this text—that what it affirms is a unity of purpose and will, not a unity of essence, and so far as this text taken by itself is concerned I see no objection to it. The only question is whether a man, however morally perfect, yet making no pretensions to be in nature anything more or higher than a man, would or could use such language of himself, and that is a point on which we should scarcely venture to dogmatise. Nor should it be over-looked that in a subsequent passage—in the prayer of Jesus in Chapter xvii.—he is represented as asking for all his disciples, that they may have the same unity with God which he himself enjoyed.—'Holy Father, keep in thy name them that thou hast given

me that they may be one, even as we are . . . . that they may all be one, even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be in us.' Jesus then affirms as existing between himself and the Father only such a unity—such perfect community of spirit as *may* exist between himself and his disciples, between his disciples and God.

So, if Jesus did say, 'I and the Father are one,' or if, as I consider more probable, this was said of him by some loving disciple, after all, this is no more than might be said of any one whose heart was known to be set on eternal things, who led a life of perfect innocence and purity, no more indeed than *has* been said whether of others or of themselves by many in all ages in whom the religious principle has been strong, or who have found in contemplation and retirement a blessedness and a companionship which nothing in the world could give. Even in John's gospel it would seem to be rather in the degree in which he was

possessed by the Divine Word, that Jesus differed from others, than in any essential diversity of nature. The doctrine of Philo was that the Word was in all things and all men. It spoke through the prophets. It wrought in the mighty deeds of the famous men of old. According to John it gives light to every man that comes into the world. It was in every man in some degree, but in Jesus it dwelt in its fulness; for the spirit was given without measure unto him. And, indeed, that God dwells in man, that there is in every human heart something that connects us with the eternal and supersensible world, may be said to be the teaching of almost all philosophy not purely materialistic, and of almost all religion. Does not even the great agnostic philosopher of our own day, Mr. Herbert Spencer, say that it is the same mysterious Power that operates in the outward universe, that guides the planets in their course and rounds every drop of dew, that also 'wells up in us' as

consciousness, thought and love? But the best modern illustration of our text is perhaps a passage in one of Emerson's early essays in which the mystic of Concord speaks of himself as in certain states of exaltation, when inspired by the beauty of the woods and the freshness of the summer air, feeling himself to be 'part or parcel of God.' 'In the woods we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life—no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am *part or parcel* of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental; to be brothers, to be acquaintances—master or servant—is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontained

and immortal beauty. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.'

Quaint Sir Thomas Browne, in his Religion of a Physician, though he found not enough of mysteries in Christianity, and would fain have had more, and though he desired not to have seen Christ because so he would have failed of the blessing of those who believe without seeing, said truly and wisely—'There is a piece of divinity in us; a something that owes no homage to the sun.'

It would not be difficult to find many illustrations from the mystics of the middle ages, but I shall content myself with one—the nearest at hand. Last Sunday I read for one of our lessons a passage from the writings of the famous Spanish saint and mystic, Santa Theresa. The following on God in the Soul is much to our present purpose.

'This has done me a great deal of good and it has affected me much and opened my eyes in many ways. It is an ennobling thing to think that God is more in the soul of man than He is in aught else outside of Himself. They are happy people who have once got a hold of this glorious truth. In particular, blessed Augustine testifies that neither in the house, nor in the church, nor anywhere else, did he find God, till once he had found Him in himself. Nor had he need to go up to heaven, but only down into himself to find God. Nay, he took God to heaven with him when at last he went there.'[1]

I need scarcely say that the Old Testament bears ample testimony to the same truth, and that notwithstanding the strongly objective nature of the religion of Israel, its sensuous ritual and its sacrifices of blood, and the stress laid upon ceremonies and outward forms, the deeper minds of the nation passed

[1] I quote from Dr. Alexander Whyte's delightful 'Appreciation' of Santa Teresa, p. 48.

by all these things, and laid the chief emphasis on the intercourse between God and the private soul.—'The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite and humble spirit.' 'Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' Jesus did but strengthen and deepen what had been from of old the teaching of Psalmist and Prophet, when he said it is the inwardly pure who are at all times nearest to God, and declared that the only true and worthy worshippers are those who worship in spirit and in truth. And if he ever said he was one with the Father, he can have meant only that his will was perfectly given up to the Divine Spirit working within him to do all things and bear all things prescribed by the highest sense of duty and the purest and most

disinterested love. If, as I rather believe, it was said of him, of none surely could it be said more justly than of him whose meat it was to do the will of God, and whose work to establish his Kingdom upon earth.

V.

'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.'—*John* xiv. 9.

IT was the Apostle Philip who called forth from Jesus what from the orthodox point of view might be considered one of the plainest assertions of his divinity; though indeed, it may be added, Jesus himself first suggested Philip's question:—'If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also, and from this time forth ye know him and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' It is enough. We ask no more. 'Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?' Dost thou not know

who I am, no mere Jewish Messiah, but the Word that was in the beginning, made flesh, and dwelling among you. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, show us the Father. 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father abiding in me doeth his works.' Philip, like Thomas, is known only by name to the synoptists—the first three evangelists;—like Thomas too, he is one of the outstanding figures of the Gospel of John. He was, John tells us, of Bethsaida, the city—it was a small fishing village—of Andrew and Peter. It was he who brought Nathanael to Jesus; who went to that guileless Israelite and said to him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, and he proves to be no other than Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth'—said Nathanael—the des-

pised village of Nazareth ? 'Come and see,' said Philip. With Philip as with Thomas, seeing was believing; but there was a difference. Thomas was resolved not to believe *unless* he saw. Philip had seen and believed—seen enough to convince him so far—and wished others to see and believe likewise. In the lists of the Apostles Philip is always coupled with Bartholomew, whence it has been supposed that Bartholomew and Nathanael were one and the same person, Nathanael being the son (*bar*) of Tolomœus; and if this is only a conjecture it is at least a plausible one. In after times it came to be believed, on what grounds I cannot say unless it was a genuine tradition, that Philip was the man who when summoned to follow Jesus asked leave first to go and bury his father; but this certainly does not agree with John's account of Philip, and if it had been so, it might be expected the evangelists would have given the name. Philip meets us again in John's

gospel on the occasion of the feeding of the five thousand. It was to Philip that Jesus put the pointed question 'Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat?' It may be, as the commentators think, that Philip had something to do with the provisioning of the little company of disciples, and that hence this question was specially addressed to him; but on the other hand, did they not depend on charity for their supplies? And it was not Philip but Judas who carried the money-bag. Anyhow, Jesus said this, we are told, in order to prove him. Philip evidently had no anticipation of the great miracle that was about to be wrought, for he answers coldly that two hundred penny-worth of bread would not be sufficient for this great multitude, nor are we informed what effect was produced on him, when the miracle was accomplished.

Once more we meet Philip, still in the Fourth Gospel only, when certain Greeks came over to him shortly before the Pass-

over, desiring to see Jesus. And here it is appropriate to remark that Philip is not a Jewish but a well known Greek name. There was, *e.g.*, the famous Philip of Macedon the father of Alexander the Great. And if it is asked how then it came to be borne by a Jew, it may be answered that the population of Galilee was of a very mixed kind, that Greek was generally understood there, and that the Jews frequently adopted Gentile names. Philip was probably able to speak Greek, and it was doubtless his Greek name that led these foreign visitors to address themselves to him. Whether their desire was gratified or not we are not informed; for Jesus instead of replying, is represented as exclaiming 'The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified!' After this Philip disappears from the New Testament, for he must not of course be confounded with Philip the Deacon, or as he is also called, the Evangelist, who figures rather prominently in the

Acts of the Apostles. Legend, however, has filled the gap left vacant by history, and informs us that many years afterwards in the time of Trajan, Philip, with his friend Bartholomew, arrived in Hierapolis in Phrygia, that then they were seized and put to the torture, and that Philip having cursed the city, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed it. Then his Lord appeared and reproved him for his vindictive anger, and those who had gone down into the abyss, were raised out of it again. Such, it would seem, in those days was the power of a curse that even though without the sanction of Heaven it still produced its effect. The tortures of Philip ended in his death, but as a punishment for his offence he is excluded from Paradise for forty days. After his death a vine springs from the spot where his blood has fallen, and the juice of the grapes is used for the eucharistic cup. Another story, equally apocryphal, tells us that Philip visited Athens, where he disputed

with three hundred philosophers and vanquished them all. Then they sent to Jerusalem for Ananias the high priest. He comes to Athens with five hundred warriors, who attempt to seize the Apostle, but they are all smitten with blindness. Then the heavens open; the form of the Son of Man appears, and all the idols of Athens fall to the ground. Philip succeeds where Paul had failed, and having established a church in Athens goes to preach the gospel in Parthia.

But let us now return to our text—to the demand of Philip—'Lord, show us the Father'—and the remarkable reply of Jesus. What was it, we may ask, that Philip expected? Did he ask literally to see God—to behold with his eyes the venerable face and form of the Ancient of Days—to see him seated on his throne in heaven as he looks down on the puny inhabitants of the earth? It is hardly probable that he entertained such gross and carnal ideas, or

that the evangelist ascribed to him such crass literalism. The time had gone by when men could think of God as actually wearing the human form, as having any bodily form at all, as being visible to the eye of the flesh. John himself has declared in words which may be taken as the best comment on this passage that 'no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.' It is only in this sense —in this spiritual sense—that Philip asks to be shown the Father. It is in the same sense that Jesus replies, 'He that hath seen *me* hath seen *the Father*.' He does not mean he who has seen me with his bodily eyes,—he who has gazed on my face and traced the outline of my form has also seen God—for then what would be our case—what would be the case of millions who have lived and died since Christ left the world and to whom therefore his form and features are known only through the uncer-

tain medium of pictures and traditions? They would be shut out from the highest spiritual privileges which would then be confined to the immediate contemporaries of Jesus and would be common to his enemies with his friends. No; what the writer means is plainly *this*, that he who has seen Christ with the eye of his spirit, he who has penetrated into his heart, who has understood his character, who has felt the power of his love, who possesses all the grace and beauty of his moral nature, he it is who best knows God; for this is all through the teaching—the central idea of this gospel—that Christ as being one with the Eternal Principle that made and governs all things—the human incarnation of the *Word* that was in the beginning—is the completest manifestation of the Divine on earth, so that he who has seen, who knows, who apprehends Christ knows and apprehends also the Father in whose bosom he dwells.

It is unnecessary to say that the real

Jesus—the Jesus of the synoptic gospels—the Jesus who walked through the fields of Galilee, and lingered by the shore of the sea of Genesereth, and called round him its simple fishermen to make them the apostles of his kingdom, and stood on the mountain side and spoke his beatitudes, and talked lovingly of the lilies and the birds of the air, and prayed in Gethsemane and died upon the cross, never uttered the mystic language here ascribed to him—never said, in words at least, 'he that hath seen *me* hath seen the Father.' I say this with confidence first because it is so highly improbable that he should have done so. It is almost inconceivable that any man living on this earth, however much he might feel that God was with him, should use language like this, should thus identify himself with God, or assert in such a way—even if he felt it—a way that could not but seem arrogant—his superiority to all others. I say it secondly because there is nothing like it in the synop-

tic gospels. There is at least only one passage which at all approaches it—referred to in the preceding discourse, that in Matthew where it is said, 'No man knoweth the Father save the son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him,' and this, with our knowledge of the structure of the gospels, we can well believe to be a late theological addition. Take it, however, that the words of our text are really those of the evangelist, and then we find in them both a substantial truth, and a parallel to one of Christ's least doubtful sayings. The author of the Fourth Gospel may or may not have been a personal follower of Jesus, but at all events he had found in him—in his conception of him, his conception of Jesus as the ideal man—he had found there, I say, the highest revelation of God, and in these words put into the mouth of Jesus, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' he but said in another form, what Jesus himself had declared, 'The pure in heart

shall see God.' The two expressions are not the same, but parallel. It is through sympathy with Jesus—the Divine Son—the incarnate word—that man can approach most surely to God—so the Fourth Evangelist declares. Jesus himself does not demand or suggest this mediation. He goes straight to the human heart. He says that there—in the heart of the good man—the pure man—the man who follows the pure good instincts of his heart and conscience is the truest form of the Divine. The pure in heart shall see God.

That the fullest and most perfect revelation of God was made through a man—the man Christ Jesus—was the distinguishing doctrine of Christianity. That it is in man, not one man, but all men—all men who are on his side in the eternal battle of good against evil, that God most truly reveals himself, and that it is through man and through man alone that he works in the world to bring in his kingdom, is the per-

manent Truth that will remain unshaken, after all the dogmas of the churches are buried in the dust and the wordy disputations of theologians forgotten. The change from Judaism to Christianity—Christianity being in fact, in its ultimate development, Judaism with a mixture of Hebraic thought, was essentially a passing from an objective to a subjective religion, and probably it was on account of his Greek name that the evangelist singled out Philip in particular to be the means of calling forth that utterance which in a special manner marked this change. The Jew worshipped the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. The Greek reverenced the dignity of man. The Jew regarded God as a far-off Being, seated on his throne in the highest heavens and looking down on the inhabitants of the earth, who before him are but as grasshoppers. To the Greek the whole world was full of deity. Every mountain, tree and stream had its divinity, and although throned above all was

the mighty Zeus, represented as a venerable man with flowing locks and beard, yet man was not so absolutely his slave that he did not retain some freedom of action and some power of resistance. The leading deities, though originally representing the powers of nature, tended more and more to identify themselves with the inner life of man—Zeus as 'the God of justice, the source of all rightful order and authority in the state,' Apollo as 'the God of poetry and prophecy whose inspiration must guide the minds of men when their own wisdom fails.' It was in the religion of the philosophers, however, especially in Stoicism, that this tendency culminated.[1] It is true the line of separation between these two forms of faith is not so strongly marked that they do not fade off into one another—otherwise they might have remained for ever distinct. The

[1] See Professor Edward Caird's Gifford Lectures on the Evolution of Religion :—Lectures tenth and thirteenth.

Jew also was taught to reverence man, and that man was made in the image of God. He imagined God in his own likeness—at first perhaps in his physical likeness, certainly in his moral likeness—actuated by the same passions,—hatred, anger, love, jealousy,—'Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated'—and subject to the similar limitations; for, as Shelley sings in a sublime stanza which, I always think, contains in it a world of philosophy, 'Heaven is the abode of that Power which is the glass' in which man sees his own nature reflected. The verse is in the Ode to Heaven, and it express so admirably what is now the philosopher's creed, that I may be pardoned for dwelling on it for a moment. To Shelley who, we may say, was all Greek, heaven, the visible universe, the deep, unfathomable space in which we float, with all its mighty suns and innumerable worlds of life, was not merely the 'Palace-roof of cloudless nights,' not merely the 'Paradise of golden

lights,' not merely the 'Presence-chamber, temple, and home' of all things present, past and future, but it was the dwelling-place of one infinite all pervading Power which is the source of all life, joy and blessedness to all things that breathe. But Shelley did not personify this power, nor endow it with human attributes and passions. He saw, it may be, that personification means limitation—he held with Paul and Barnabas that the Deity was not of like passions with his creatures, and that to attribute such passions to him was only to see ourselves reflected on the surface of the infinite void. But we know that in all ages man did thus reflect himself, that he imagined God to be of a nature like his own, and represented him as cruel or kind, loving or vengeful, merciful or unforgiving, according as one attribute or another seemed most worthy of honour, or according as the changing aspects of nature, or the kindness or unkindness of the times sug-

gested a friendly or hostile attitude on the part of the unseen powers. And so, with a deep penetration into the philosophy of the subject and anticipating much latter day speculation, he wrote—

> Thou art even as a God
> Heaven ! for thou art the abode
> Of that Power which is the glass
> Wherein man his nature sees.
> Generations as they pass
> Worship thee on bended knees.
> Their unremaining gods and they,
> Like a river roll away,
> Thou remainest such alway.

Ah ! yes ; if heaven were always filled with sunlight and nature ever serene and beautiful ; if there were nothing in this world we could contemplate with less satisfaction and delight than the orderly march of the seasons in their round, the ebb and flow of the tides swayed by the moon, the gentle breathing of the air, bringing fresh life to man or wafting his ships over the seas, the bursting leaf of spring and the full wains of

autumn, and if nature consisted only of rising and setting suns, and perfumed flowers and birds filling the air with their merry songs and happy creatures everywhere exulting in life, and her laws in their inexorable operation wrought only good, how easy it would be to believe that this universe was the offspring of pure unadulterated Love! But what avails it to shut our eyes to the patent facts that speak so plainly on the other side—nature, as Tennyson describes her, red in tooth and claw, shrieking against this creed—so many millions of creatures brought into existence for no purpose that can be discovered but merely to drop out of it again,—so many human beings compelled not by any fault of their own but by dreadful necessity to lead lives of abject misery, while only a comparatively few seem to live for any purpose for which life was worth either having or giving—and then the dire tortures which nature inflicts for the slightest breach of her laws, or even where there

has been none! What avails it, I say, to shut our eyes to the facts I have faintly indicated, when it is our very discontent with the world as it is that furnishes the best hope and the surest guarantee of something better? It is too late now to take refuge in the old solution of the difficulty, and say that the original plan of creation has been disturbed, that a hostile power has intervened and marred the world which God created perfect; but even this might perhaps be better and more rational than the easy optimism of those who pass their lives in comfort, and only look from a safe distance on the pains and sorrows of the world. And so, we come back to this—that it is not in the visible and material universe, not in the order of the stars or the changes of the seasons, not 'in eagle's wing or insect's eye' that we are to look for God in his holiest and loveliest attributes; but in the heart of man, even in our own hearts whenever they are filled with love and benevol-

ence towards all living things, with indignation against wrong, with a sublime discontent with the world as it is and aspiration after better things. For it is in the heart of man, as once of Jesus Christ—of all men who are Christ-like that God most realizes himself, and in this sense only can it be true that he that has seen Christ, and sympathised with him, and understood him, has had the brightest vision of the Divine—has seen the Father.

THE END.