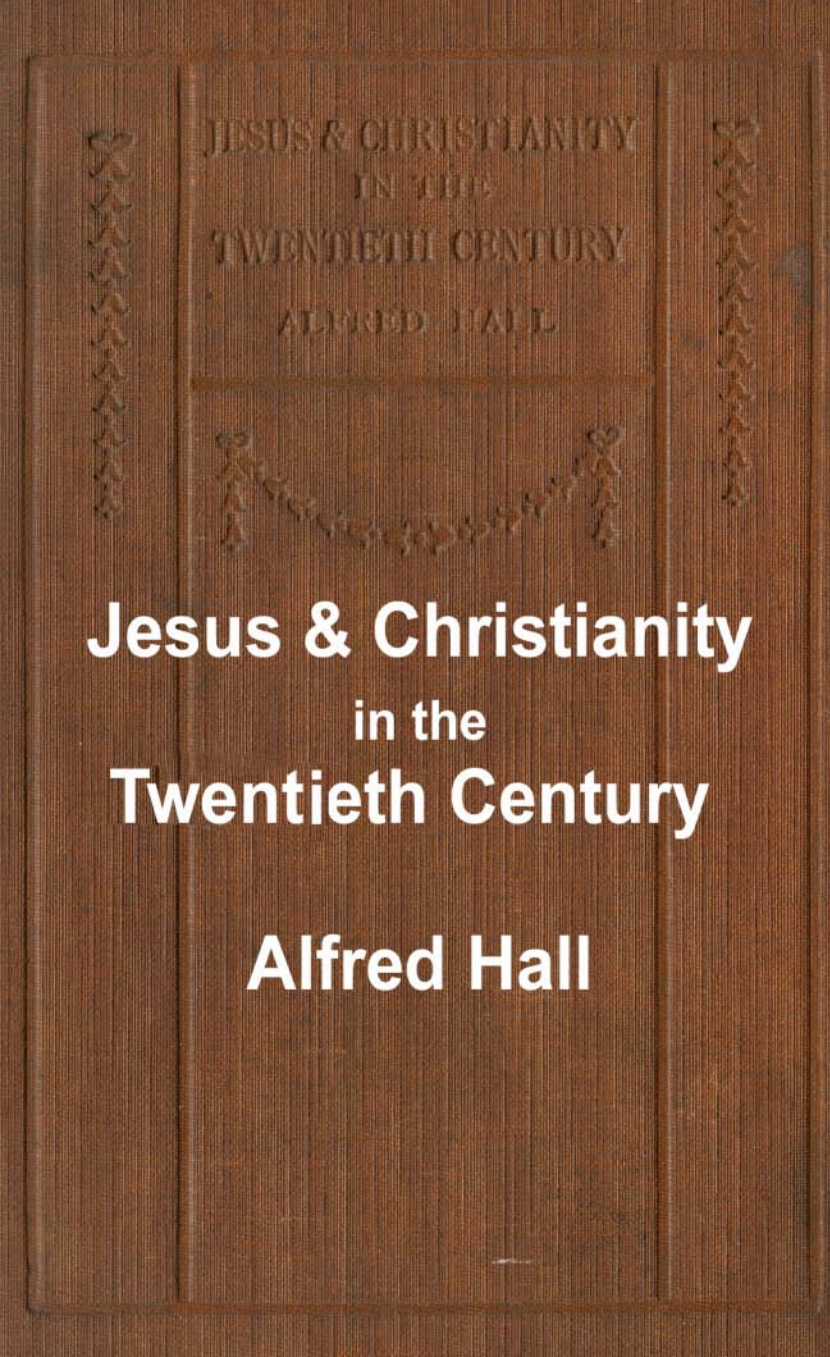

Jesus & Christianity
in the
Twentieth Century

Alfred Hall

JESUS & CHRISTIANITY
IN THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

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LONDON
5 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.
1915

THE·LINDSEY·PRESS

First Edition, December, 1915.

PRINTED BY ELSON AND CO.
MARKET PLACE, HULL

PREFACE

In a short volume of this character the treatment of such a large subject as Christianity is necessarily restricted. My task, however, has been considerably lightened because many important questions are dealt with in other volumes of this series of 'Handbooks of Religion.' It has been my object to describe clearly the various portraits which have been drawn of Jesus, and to give the chief features of the forms of Christianity which exist in the Twentieth Century.

I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, who made some important suggestions towards one chapter which was beset with special difficulty, and to my brother, the Rev. William C. Hall, of Northampton, who went carefully through the manuscript. My thanks are also due to Dr. Charles Hargrove, who read the proofs. His ripe scholarship and intimate acquaintance with the forms of Christianity have furnished me with criticisms of great value. Needless to say, I alone am entirely responsible for the volume as it stands.

A. H.

Newcastle-on-Tyne,
October, 1915.

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Chapter I

FACT OR FICTION?

THE age in which we live has frequently been spoken of as one of criticism. If this is a true judgment, let us hope it will be followed by an age of reconstruction. In every sphere of life and thought we see the old acknowledged standards being challenged. The theories which were once considered proved and final are being attacked: the established order of society is being called into question: new ideas are invading art and music, and new conceptions are undermining old philosophies. The strongholds of science are being assailed: its statements have not the weight they once had; the theory of evolution is being somewhat mercilessly examined and no doubt will be considerably modified. There is movement, change everywhere.

It is hardly to be expected that religion should escape this spirit of inquiry. Such

subjects as God, the soul, and immortality are being approached in a new way. The ideas and the evidences which satisfied our forerunners no longer appeal to us. It is chiefly because we are thinking our way to the truth that we cannot be as definite on some vital questions as we wish, and preachers cannot be as dogmatic and authoritative in theological statements as formerly. If we are thoughtful, we are unable to say in such a concise and clear way what we mean by God as most men did fifty years ago. Our thought of him is too vast for definition. As a result, we sometimes suppose that we are without genuine faith and no longer believe in his presence. What is really taking place is that fresh light is coming from so many quarters and so many new factors are being brought within our ken that we cannot synthesize them all. 'The marvellous variety of the universe' was not in the past so full of meaning as it is to-day. That variety simply overwhelms us. The works of God are seen to be so manifold that we say with deeper meaning sometimes than the Psalmist could conceive :—

> How great is the sum of thy thoughts, O God,
> If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.

Under these conditions, as might have been expected, the Bible has been studied afresh, and the life and character of Jesus have been re-examined. Important controversies raged in the past round the question of his personality, but for the most part each age narrowed its study down to a particular aspect of it. Never before has it been viewed in so many different lights as it is to-day, never before have there been so many issues awaiting settlement. It will only be possible in this volume to review rapidly the most important of these.

The question has been seriously asked 'Is Jesus an historical figure?' It has been answered with an emphatic negative by J. M. Robertson, W. B. Smith, and A. Kalthoff, but the subject has assumed greater proportions owing to the work of Professor Arthur Drews. In his volume entitled *The Christ Myth*—and in a series of addresses delivered before large audiences in Germany, he has endeavoured to show that the life of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels is a pure fabrication, fiction which has been spun out of the imaginations of his supposed followers, and that such a person never even existed, much less lived the life with the story of which

we are all familiar. We might suppose that here we have an iconoclast, desirous of breaking down the whole structure of Christianity and religion, as some who have taken this position have undoubtedly been, but Professor Drews asserts that he comes forward as 'one who has sought to build up anew from within the shattered religious outlook on the world and who has left no doubt remaining that he regards the present falling away of the religious consciousness . . . as a misfortune for our whole civilization. . . . In reality *The Christ Myth* has been written in the interests of religion, from the conviction that its previous forms no longer suffice for men to-day, that above all the "Jesuanism" of historical theology is in its deepest nature irreligious and that this itself forms the greatest hindrance to all real religious progress.'

Some of us differ profoundly from this opinion. We should be aware of an unspeakable loss, if we could no longer look back to Jesus as an historic figure. We are strengthened by the thought of his noble personality, and are encouraged by the knowledge that as he overcame self, our struggle will not be altogether vain. At the same

time we ought to acknowledge that a man who maintains that religious truth has its own inherent worth, that it has living power to-day independent of every personality, may be as religious and as reverent as the man who can accept nothing as inspired or divinely true, unless it is to be found within the covers of the Bible.

Scattered throughout the Gospels are passages which tell of the regard Jesus had for those who unconsciously follow him, and of his appreciation for those loving souls, who are, to use a modern phrase 'Christians who never heard of Christ.' Taking a universal and human view of life, he recognized, admired and loved those

> Glad hearts without reproach or blot
> Who do God's will and know it not.

Closely associated with his personality as his message has been from the outset, we can nevertheless affirm without any hesitation that no one in the history of the world would have been more content that his name should be forgotten, if only his message and spirit took possession of the hearts of men. We hold him in deeper affection because we believe that he endeavoured to make his life an illustration of the truth he proclaimed, and

recorded of his earthly career. We are not divided and rent asunder concerning the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and the parables, but concerning such subjects as his personality, the miracles, and the resurrection. It is in these latter also that we discover the cause of most of the disputes, dissensions and persecutions which disfigure ecclesiastical history. Do we not all more or less believe that the foundations of religion are in the nature of man and not in any particular event in history? To what can the most earnest advocate of the supremacy of Jesus in all matters of faith and doctrine make appeal, but to that common spirit in mankind which constitutes us brothers and gives us the right to look up to God as our Father? Is it not true that 'the kingdom of heaven is within' us?

Is it right, then, to charge those who take a similar attitude to that of the founder of our faith with professing a 'Christless Christianity'? Is the veiled sneer in this phrase justifiable? Do we not all see the necessity of seeking for the manifestation of the Divine in our life to-day apart from any event in the past? We answer that whatever took place at the beginning of our era, we must do our

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utmost to embody in thought and action not only the highest truth handed down to us, but also that discovered in our own time. We ought, then, to have no difficulty in understanding those who say that the doubts and errors of historians cannot affect the content of religion or those who believe with Arthur Drews that religion is suffering because of its entanglements with the past.

But Professor Drews fails to make good his case. He does not bring forth adequate reasons for believing Jesus to be a fictitious person, a myth. When he levels his weapons at his opponents' position, he reveals an historical scepticism rarely excelled, and when he defends his own, he is guilty of a credulity which is hardly creditable to so clear an intellect. He is too anxious to secure a result in harmony with his religious philosophy.

Only those who have studied ancient records know how difficult it is either to prove or to disprove any event in distant centuries. Probability has often to be the guide in history. Some statements we reject on account of their inherent impossibility. When we give up, for instance, the belief in miracles, it is because we know that actual

violations of law in the material universe do not take place. It needs, however, a most delicate power of judgment to decide rightly, when the probabilities on either side are to all appearances equally balanced. We have then to search with the greatest care for any fresh evidence which will throw the weight into either scale, and to watch carefully the indications of previous and subsequent occurrences. The difficulty is increased in the case of Jesus, because according to those who believe he is a myth, the evidence of the Gospels, the Epistles, and early Christian experience must not be quoted. If, however, the credibility of these could be proved, they would be allowed to count, but final proof rests with non-Christian testimony, which is said not to exist.

Imagine a similar case and the task will seem almost insuperable. It would be difficult to prove that Socrates existed, if the use of the evidence of Plato's Dialogues, Xenophon's Memorabilia, and every other shred of testimony which came from those who acknowledged his influence, was forbidden. A very good argument could be brought forward to show that Plato used the supposed personality of Socrates to con-

vey his ideas in an artistic manner, just as Paul is said to have used the 'Christ myth' to make known his thoughts on Messianic prophecy. Some support could be gained by playing with the etymology of his name, which means the 'sound, strong man.'

Professor Drews and others have striven hard to show that in Palestine, Babylon and elsewhere there were cults, out of which the Jesus-worship took its origin. Could they be discovered, there would be a slight support for the supposition that the character of Jesus is mythical. The following is the strongest evidence for this view brought forward by Professor Drews. He believes he has discovered an old Ephraimitish god of the sun and of fertility named Joshua or Jesus, who was worshipped as the deliverer of his people, and their future saviour. The hero who led the Israelites into Canaan is thus transformed into a God, and clothed with the honours of a solar deity. It is admitted that no trace of such worship is found in the Old Testament or in other Hebrew writings, but, nothing daunted, Dr. Drews affirms the worship had to be conducted in secret. Nowhere in Judaic literature is there any indication that Joshua was to be the future

hero. Other serious difficulties render the theory improbable. The name Joshua itself is a compound of the word 'Jehovah,' and is a tribute of regard to the One Deity, for whom the prophets claimed the allegiance of the people. The expected Messiah is always thought of as a descendant of the house of David, and has no relation to Joshua. The weakness of the evidence is so manifest that Dr. Drews, in a public discussion, declared that his rejection of the idea of Jesus as an historical person does not depend upon his view that there existed a pre-Christian cult for the worship of a God named Joshua or Jesus.

Many volumes and pamphlets have recently been published to prove the historicity of Jesus. The following arguments seem adequate to support the claim.

1. The credibility of the Gospels, as already stated, is doubted and denied by those who hold the idea of the Christ myth, but if we could go behind the Gospels, we should be helped considerably. Anyone who reads them intelligently must see that they bear the stamp of a great original mind. On most of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the first three Gospels there is the same unmistakable touch of genius. A connoisseur can go

into an art gallery and pick out the pictures of the various artists, because he is acquainted with their styles. A student of literature can likewise tell with moderate accuracy whether a line of poetry is from Browning or a paragraph of prose is from Carlyle, though it is quite new to him. It is known that Shakespeare borrowed the plots of his plays and the outlines of his characters from old stories, but it needed his inimitable power to immortalize them. We are likewise told that most of the teaching of Jesus can be found in the Old Testament and other Jewish writings. We may add with Wellhausen, 'Yes, and how much else.' It was no trifling task to seek for what Mr. C. G. Montefiore has termed the 'occasional pearls amid a mass of negligible trivialities.' It needed the power with which only a spiritual genius of the highest order is gifted, to select the best from the teaching of his own and previous times, to waken it into life, and to transform it into a world message which should reverberate through the centuries. As one reads the passages in the Sermon on the Mount, and above all, the parables, he must be impressed with the thought that they have passed through a mind of marvellous spiritual

discrimination and power, and undergone that sublime transfiguration which has made them distinct from every other kind of literature. If it was not Jesus who did this, then it was some one as great and as true as Jesus, and the probability is that it was Jesus and no other. Personalities with his greatness do not arrive in such numbers that they can be easily overlooked.

2. Putting aside the New Testament, it is evident from the history of the first and second centuries that a remarkable personality had appeared. A type of manhood comes into existence which was rare indeed in the ancient world. Men with gentle dispositions and spiritual minds, who could be as brave and collected in the face of danger as the most experienced soldiers and who did not hesitate to give up their lives for the cause they served, pass across the stage of history. Dr. Harnack has given the appropriate name of the 'Fifth Gospel' to the witness of the times which followed the preaching of the Apostles: it is a Gospel which in some respects speaks more eloquently and distinctly than the other Four.

3. About the year A.D. 120 Papias was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia. He was

living in the early days of the faith, before our four Gospels had attained the authority they later possessed. He wrote: 'If ever anyone came who had been a follower of the elders, I would inquire as to the discourses of the elders—what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what Aristion and the Elder John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice.' According to this, those who had known and heard the apostles were living in the early years of the second century, and Papias preferred to trust to their reports rather than to the numerous gospels which were being written. The apostles mentioned are well known and at least Papias believed that they had been disciples and followers of the historical Jesus.

4. Too much stress is often laid on the absence of non-Christian testimony to the existence of Jesus. Josephus, it is said, does not mention him. The passage in his works which alludes to Jesus is so obviously an interpolation that it is not necessary to quote

it. There is, however, a passage which may be genuine, in which it is recorded that 'James the brother of Jesus' was tried and afterwards stoned to death. This would be conclusive if we were certain that the James here referred to is the one mentioned in the New Testament, but James and Jesus were both common names. No one need, however, be surprised that Josephus does not mention Jesus, if it is true that he does not. Christianity was not in the early days a very important movement. Even if Josephus had been acquainted with it, it would have appeared to him as a fanatical schism, unworthy of notice. He could not foresee that it was destined to develop and become the religion of the Empire.

5. Christianity, however, is mentioned by the leading historian of the age, Tacitus. Writing in the early years of the second century about the great fire at Rome in A.D. 64, which Nero was suspected to have planned with the view of rebuilding the city in grander proportions, he says:—'So to stifle the report, Nero put in his own place as culprits and punished with every refinement of cruelty the men whom the common people hated for their secret crimes. They called

them Christians. Christus from whom the name was given, had been put to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate, and the pestilent superstition checked awhile. Afterwards it began to break out afresh, not only in Judea, where the mischief first arose, but also at Rome, where all things base and shameful flow together and become fashionable.' The passage, though regarded as of doubtful authenticity by Dr. Drews, bears all the marks of genuineness. It represents just the attitude which a well-born Roman would take towards a new religion from the East. We learn from the Christian apologists and Pliny's letter to Trajan, written in A.D. 112, that the new faith had become widespread : and it is clear from this statement by Tacitus that a certain man, known as Christ, was regarded as its author and inspirer.

6. Further, Christianity had to meet foes both within and without the Church. The Docetists claimed to be followers of Jesus, and though in their opinion he had not a material body, but only a spiritual, ethereal frame, they never doubted that he had a real history. The Jews opposed the apostles when they proclaimed that Jesus was the ex-

pected Messiah, and critics like Celsus, who was an earnest man of moral character, strove to expose the weaknesses of Christianity. But neither Jews nor critics ever suggested or supposed that Jesus was not a real figure in history. Had there been the slightest doubt or suspicion on the matter, they would have sought it out and dragged it to the light.

We conclude, then, that Jesus is an historic character, and in opposition to Professor Drews we hold that history has its uses, that we may learn lessons from it, and gain inspiration from the biographies of noble men and women and the story of the progress of our race. Above all, history helps us, as we consider what heights Jesus reached, to believe that this is what a man actually attained, and we too are men, born of the same spirit and endowed with vast possibilities.

Chapter II

HIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD

IN the passage in the Sermon on the Mount which concludes with the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6^{9-15}), Jesus lays emphasis on God's direct relation to every individual soul, how he hearkens to those sincere and earnest prayers which go forth from the human heart in the silence and isolation of the inner chamber. It is a truth we need to keep in mind to-day. We merge ourselves in the mass, lose ourselves in the crowd, think of the vast multitudes of men who have passed across the face of the globe, and ponder over the infinity of the universe, until we forget or disbelieve the fact that appealed so strongly to our fathers, that God has an eternal interest in each soul. Often we spend our days thoughtlessly and do not seem to care whether God loves us or watches over us, but we have our intense moments when we cannot escape from the idea that the uni-

verse is our concern, for we are an inalienable part of it, and we go through experiences which would crush us, if we were not conscious that the human spirit is for ever bound to the Over-soul. It was no small part of the secret of Jesus that he was conscious of God everywhere as a living, life-giving Spirit, who could be approached by the lowliest and the loneliest soul at all times.

It is possible, indeed, to press this truth of man's personal fellowship with God too far. That is what Tolstoy did, when he inferred that Jesus believed in private but not in public worship, and that the relation between the soul and God is such that church life is a hindrance. No doubt his experience of the Russian church and the interferences of priests drove him to that opinion, but he was forgetful for the moment of the facts of brotherhood, of the mutual helpfulness of men on the higher levels, and also of the simple testimony of history that the disciples a few days after their Master's departure began to assemble for common worship and prayer. The opening words of the Lord's Prayer, 'Our Father,' show that insistent as Jesus was on the truth that each man has direct spiritual kinship with God, he yet contemp-

lated that his followers would unite in aspiration. The Lord's Prayer is a social prayer—a prayer of brothers. Throughout the first person plural is used. 'Give *us* this day *our* daily bread. And forgive *us* our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.'

These are two facts which impress us concerning Jesus' consciousness of God. He looked up to him as a Father who loves his family as a whole, and yet loves each one for his individual qualities and powers. It is this doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, the new prominence he gave to it, which largely makes his teaching distinctive. Yet he never thought that the chief characteristic of God's Love is an easygoing indulgence towards his children, which is always destructive of the strongest elements in human character. On the contrary, close as he knew communion with God might be, he was impressed with the Almightiness, the Power, and the Majesty of the Divine Being, as Isaiah had been before him. He spoke strong words, which do not indeed support the doctrine of eternal punishment, but which proclaim in unmistakable terms that the suffering for evil-doing will be great and that iniquity involves an alienation from the life

of God. He believed it was better to pluck out the offending eye and to cut off the evil hand than to face the dreadful consequences that would follow the wicked life.

Had that been the whole of his teaching, or had this message only come down to us, there would have been nothing to distinguish Jesus from those earlier prophets who threatened, in the name of God, famine and fire and sword. He saw, as they did not, that the sufferings which pursue evil are not revengeful acts of an angry and disappointed God, but the natural results of life apart from him. Thus he pictured the prodigal son in the depths of despair, possessed of nothing that made life worth living, until he resolved to return to his father.

Needless to say, it is this conception of the nearness and tenderness of God which has made his Gospel a message of glad news to man. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit (his very life) to them that ask him.' Thus he knew from his own experience that our human life could intermingle and blend with the divine life; that man and God could come into closer communion than

exists between body and soul ; that the two could be joined in a mystic union and could *on our human level* be one in thought, endeavour, and action.

> Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet.

Can any conception of God be higher than this ? Can the human mind think of a communion which is loftier than this mingling of spirit with spirit ? At first sight it would seem that there is nothing beyond it. Yet this mystic union is limited at its best by our human finiteness. We should remember that Jesus' consciousness of God was a human consciousness. We have really no more ground for saying or even supposing that the springs of spiritual experience have been exhausted than that our intellectual knowledge is complete. There may be, and we trust there is, for ourselves and for other and higher beings, the possibility of spiritual affinities to God, of which no one who ever visited the earth has had any conception. If Jesus did not imagine vistas of spiritual truth, into which he had not yet entered, would he have spoken of things which the

Father alone knew? (Matt. 24[36]). Thus we can believe that our experience is not bounded by earth, and that we may climb heights of which man has not yet dreamed.

Owing to the advance of knowledge, and especially the increased importance of psychological study, this subject of Jesus' consciousness of God has created difficult problems for those who maintain he was very God and very man. It is quite easy to accept the doctrine of the deity of Jesus or any other doctrine, so long as one does not allow it to become a real and vital part of his belief or feel the necessity of co-ordinating it with his knowledge of the nature of man and the world. But as soon as we begin to examine the statement that Jesus was God and man while on earth, we are beset by difficulties of no mean order. These have been faced boldly by thinkers in our time who see that religion is not securely founded while it is in conflict with reason.

The following are some of the questions which have to be asked concerning Jesus by those who accept the doctrine of the Trinity. When he descended to earth, did he leave his Godhead behind him, empty himself of his divine attributes, and become a man like

ourselves, tempted in all points as we are? Or did the two natures exist in him side by side, so that sometimes he spoke as God and at other times as man? Or again did the two natures blend, so that his words were both human and divine in their origin? Each of these three possibilities has had its upholders and exponents in modern times, and we shall look in vain for uniformity or unanimity among those who regard Jesus as God.

The first position, that Jesus emptied himself of his divine attributes is known as the doctrine of *Kenosis*, which is the Greek word for emptying, and it has found many supporters among Broad Churchmen. It is based on a passage in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (2^{5-8}) which presents great difficulties. The words can bear a different translation from that in the Revised Version, the scriptural support for which is very slender.[1] A few other passages are quoted in support of this view, e.g., 2 Cor. 8^{9}, 'Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor'; and John 17^{5}, 'Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was.'

[1] See Dr. Drummond's Commentary in the International Handbooks of the New Testament, pp. 370f.

But as Dr. Sanday points out 'the general objection to building a formal theory on such foundations is that they are not really qualified to sustain it. The most expressive passages are largely incidental and metaphorical. It is a mistake to seek to harden them into dogma.'[1]

It is also unorthodox, for according to the creeds and Councils of the Church, Jesus was truly man and truly God during his stay on earth. This explanation in most of its forms differs from Unitarianism only in teaching that Jesus was pre-existent as God and after his death assumed his former glory, and those who offer it use language in no way distinguishable from that which can be found in Unitarian literature. For instance, one of the ablest exponents of the Kenotic theory, Dr. Hastings Rashdall, a candid scholar and distinguished theologian, writes: 'Upon reflection I suppose everyone will admit that it would have been impossible that Jesus, as he wandered in solitary communion with his heavenly Father over the hill-sides of Galilee, as he stood teaching those poor simple fishermen on the border of the Lake, as he drank to the full the cup of human agony in the

[1] *Christologies, Ancient and Modern*, p. 73.

Garden of Gethsemane, should have all the time had his brain full of the scientific truths which ages of patient labour have revealed to a wondering world. To suppose *that* would be to make our Lord a non-natural man, so unlike the men that we know of, as to destroy the whole purpose and meaning of the Incarnation.'[1] This theory removes some difficulties of the doctrine of the Trinity, which fails for instance, to explain how Jesus 'advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man.' It is surely better, however, to accept the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus than to base, as this theory does, his deity upon speculations concerning his nature before his birth and after his death. For if during his life here, he was man only, his message can have no more and no less weight and authority than Unitarians ascribe to it. His words have just those limitations which human nature imposes.

The other two doctrines involve difficulties of a more serious character. If we think that the Two Natures existed separately in Jesus, that he was perfect God *and* perfect man, with the emphasis on the conjunction, and that at one time he was actuated by his

[1] *Doctrine and Development*, p. 48.

human and at another by his divine nature only, we find a heavy responsibility laid upon us when reading the Gospels. We have to decide without having any guidance given to our intellect or our spirit, when Jesus is speaking as Almighty God and when as man. It is left to our judgment to say which of his sayings are human, having no other authority than that of human insight and superiority, and which are divine, the very word of God himself. That surely is an undertaking which not one of us can feel able to sustain. It is true that some of the Fathers of the Church attempted it, but who to-day would venture to separate the divine from the human element in the Gospel? Surely the most earnest supporter of this explanation of the personality of Jesus would be not a little shocked, if anyone dared to print the Gospels in parallel columns, placing those sayings which Jesus spoke as God in one and those which he spoke as man in another. No men, however great their theological sympathy, would arrive at unanimity of opinion, if they made the endeavour.

If, on the other hand, we hold with those who maintain that the human and divine natures were blended in the spirit of Jesus,

we make him something more than man and less than God. His words cease to have that authority which belongs to the Supreme Being, because in some mysterious way he has taken on the imperfection and finiteness which cannot be dissociated from our nature. He ceases also to be an example for us, because he is possessed of powers which we have not and can never hope to have. It is this doctrine, however, which seems to have won the allegiance of the majority of the more thoughtful men in Protestantism to-day. It is somewhat painful to see the shifts to which good and able men are put, in order to make their meaning clear and to overcome patent difficulties. We are not helped by being told to look for 'God in Christ.' We can see the Divine in Christ, but we fail to understand how the Infinite nature of God mingled perfectly in the manner supposed with the finite nature of man. This is not due to 'the utter relativity of our language,' but to the inability of the human mind to reconcile facts in the life of Jesus with this conception of his personality. Dr. Moberley writes that 'there are not two existences either of or within the Incarnate, side by side with one another.

If it is all Divine, it is all human too. We are to study the Divine in and through the human. By looking for the Divine side by side with the human, instead of discerning the Divine within the human, we miss the significance of both.'[1] But there are passages in the Gospels, which by no stretch of exegesis can be reasonably interpreted, if we cling to this theory that the Divine Consciousness intermingled perfectly with the human consciousness in Jesus. We cannot explain his temptations, if he were not conscious of that conflict between the higher and lower natures with which we are all too sadly familiar. We cannot understand that sublime episode in the Garden of Gethsemane, when after a passionate human appeal for dear life, he surrenders himself with the words, 'Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.' And we cannot see the reason for his prayers, those lonely communings on the mountain side, if the divine and the human were in perfect union in him.

Dr. Sanday of Oxford, whose ripe New Testament scholarship has won recognition both in England and on the Continent, feeling the weakness of all these theories has

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 96f.

put forth another. He takes advantage of the modern discovery of the significance of subconsciousness, which Professor Münsterberg has described as 'the dumping ground' for all our psychological difficulties. It would seem that it is also to be the refuge from our theological problems. Dr. Sanday conceives that Jesus in his conscious life was a man like ourselves. 'The Life of our Lord, so far as it was visible, was a strictly human life; He was as the Creeds teach, "Very Man"; there is nothing to prevent us from speaking of this human life of His just as we should speak of the life of one of ourselves.'[1] In perfect harmony with this, he tells us that, 'the Child Jesus, like any other Jewish child, first learnt to think of God on his mother's knee,' (page 180). 'His life on earth presented all the outward appearance of the life of any other contemporary Galilean. His bodily organism discharged the same ordinary functions and ministered to the life of the soul in the same ordinary ways. He had the same sensations of pleasure and pain, of distress and ease, of craving and satisfaction.' So far we can follow Dr. Sanday. But he maintains that in his subconsciousness

[1] *Christologies, Ancient and Modern*, p. 167.

Jesus was divine : that in his subliminal life he was very God. 'We have seen,' he writes, 'what difficulties are involved in the attempt to draw as it were a vertical line between the human nature and the divine nature of Christ, and to say that certain actions of his fall on this side of the line and certain other actions on the other. But these difficulties disappear if, instead of drawing a vertical line we rather draw a horizontal line between the upper human medium, which is the proper and natural field of all active expression and those lower deeps which are no less the proper and natural home of whatever is divine. This line is inevitably drawn in the region of the subconscious.'

It is hardly necessary to point out that we are here on the shaky ground of unfounded speculation. But with perfect candour Dr. Sanday proceeds to assert that there was a narrow neck through which the larger divine subconscious life filtered into the conscious life of Jesus. These are his words, 'Whatever there was of divine in Him, on its way to outward expression, whether in speech or act, passed through and could not but pass through, the restricting and restraining medium of human consciousness. This con-

sciousness was, as it were, the narrow neck through which alone the divine could come to expression.'

This is an interesting theory, one of the latest endeavours to reconcile the doctrine of the deity of Jesus with a reasonable philosophy of life and the facts of modern psychology. Incidentally we may notice that the theory of subconsciousness suffers in the process, for while it is true that 'we are greater than we know,' and that there are unplumbed deeps within us, yet our subconsciousness is to some extent the creation of our conscious waking existence. What goes on in 'the underground workshop of thought' is often decided by what is planned and executed in the upper story. Did the human experience and conscious thought of Jesus never pass down through the narrow neck and influence his subconsciousness? If not, we have to face a violation of psychological law, and to avoid one difficulty are landed into another of a more serious character.

But how does this explanation help us? If the divine element passed or filtered through the restraining and restricting medium of human consciousness, how could the voice of God speak perfectly to the world

and how did the manifestation of God in Jesus differ in kind from that made through any human life? We too are aware not only of 'uprushes from the subconscious,' but also of what Dr. Percy Gardner has termed 'inrushes from the super-conscious.' We too reflect the image of God in the same way as Jesus is here described as reflecting it, though in a lesser degree. God moves silently and secretly in our inmost being, waking the divine idea, purifying our emotions and lifting us to high endeavour. There is no reason why we should not claim for every son of God what is here claimed for Jesus only.

We turn from these metaphysical speculations to the experience of our own souls and find it gives us a better understanding of his inward life. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Jesus was uttering here a truth he had learnt from his own upward endeavour—that through the moral life, man enters into a deeper consciousness and fuller knowledge of God. In so doing we are conscious that we are passing from doubts into certainties, and we can understand the words of Jesus concerning God, because his experience and consciousness were similar to our own.

Chapter III

JESUS AND THE MESSIAHSHIP

WAS Jesus the Christ? Did he regard himself as the long awaited Messiah? These questions introduce us to the most disputed and most difficult problem in New Testament theology. Three main positions have been taken on this subject, which are mutually exclusive. None of them can be lightly dismissed, for the supporters of each have industriously collected evidence which entitles their views to careful consideration.

Dr. Martineau strongly maintained in his *Seat of Authority in Religion* that Jesus never claimed to be, and never even thought of himself in any sense as the Messiah or the Christ, and this contention has been urged afresh by a German scholar, W. Wrede. Dr. Martineau regarded the doctrine of the Messiahship of Jesus as one of the main sources of ecclesiastical error, spoke of it as

'an Israelitish illusion,' a 'monstrous mythology,' and did not hesitate to assert that it was never any part of the message of Jesus, but 'was made for him and palmed upon him by his followers.' The reason for these forcible expressions of opinion was his conviction that to exalt the offices of Jesus is to destroy the possibility of a simple spiritual relation to him—a relation of 'sublime sympathy,' 'personal reverence,' and 'historical recognition.' 'The identification of Jesus with the Messianic figure is the first act of Christian mythology, withdrawing man from his own religion to a religion about him.' Wrede holds that the first impulse to give a Messianic form to the earthly life of Jesus is to be discovered in the Gospel according to Mark. In its earliest form the doctrine had been secretly imparted to the disciples, and was made generally known by degrees, until in the Fourth Gospel Jesus comes openly before the people with Messianic claims.

There are indeed reasons for the opinion that Jesus trusted that the national hopes might receive their ideal fulfilment in himself, but the facts which appear contrary to it must not be overlooked. It is not at all certain that the Messianic hope was so widespread in the

time of Jesus as is generally supposed. A considerable number of his countrymen believed that better days would dawn for them through human agency, as opposed to the Pharisees, who taught that the deliverance of their people could only come through the supernatural action of God. A few years after the death of Jesus, owing to the disasters which befell the Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem and their futile struggle with Rome, the hopes of the people clustered more and more round the person of the Messiah. Christian preachers had to face the altered conditions and changed outlook, and their own Apocalyptic ideas were confused and blended with the message of Jesus. The most conservative New Testament scholars admit that it is doubtful whether we have the exact words Jesus used in his predictions of the calamities of future days and the final consummation of the world. 'The sayings of the Teacher about the future and the end of the age,' as Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter says, 'emerge out of a circle of fully formed beliefs in the early Church at a period when they had had time to take up fresh items of popular expectation, and even to be associated with later forms of literary expression.'

Further, we have formed a wrong conception of the preaching of the Apostles, if we suppose that it was the same as that of our own time. No Church to-day takes their attitude. It would be impossible to do so, for the burning questions of apostolic times have died down altogether. The purpose and emphasis of preaching have changed. To-day we have, on the one hand, Churches which invest Jesus with the glory of Almighty God and claim for him the highest worship, and, on the other, Churches whose members are attracted by the beauty and humanity of his character, and the loftiness and inspiration of his message. Between these are many Christian communions and organizations with differing interpretations of his personality. But where shall we find a Church whose main object is to convince the world that Jesus was the Messiah?

That was the supreme purpose of the early preachers. There is no clear evidence even in the Pauline Epistles that they believed Jesus to be more than the glorified Messiah. It was upon this they dwelt, and consequently the great moral and spiritual truths which have made and are destined to make Jesus a power throughout the ages were

relegated to a secondary position. That is why scholars like Martineau and Wrede have held that the disciples, obsessed with the Messianic idea, read it into his message, and assigned to him a conception of his personality which he never taught.

Liberal thinkers would be glad to accept this view. They would be pleased to believe that Jesus never for a moment supposed himself to be any other than the Master whom they have learnt to love. It is that side of his character which appeals to them and helps them most. But there are too many evidences to the contrary, and at least suggestions that if not before, then during the course of his ministry the conviction that he was the Messiah took possession of him. We find this conviction fully matured in the response made to Peter's confession 'Thou art the Christ.'

Jesus could not remain indifferent to this great national hope. He had to take up some attitude towards it, and he set to work to transform it. Immediately after his acknowledgment of his Messiahship, he began to give his disciples new ideas about the work and office of the national deliverer. 'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be

rejected by the Elders.' It was such a novel notion that the disciples could not grasp it, and Peter began to rebuke him. They shared the usual belief that at a great critical moment the Messiah would show himself to be the promised deliverer of God's people. He would act with swift commanding power, break the band of the kings of the earth asunder, vex the nations in his sore displeasure and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. It was this conception that Jesus determined to subvert, and by word and by life to show that the true deliverer of the world would be one whose final victory would be through uttermost self-sacrifice.

That Jesus made some claim to the Messiahship is shown by his entry into Jerusalem, his public confession before Pilate, and the inscription placed above his head on the cross, but that he was opposed to the common beliefs concerning the character of God's messenger, is equally clear in the Gospels. For his countrymen the kingdom of God was to be found in future material splendour, for him it was to be discovered in spiritual worth and self-giving service.

A third view of the self-consciousness of Jesus and his conception of his Messiahship

has recently been expressed by Albert Schweitzer and Johannes Weiss. The volume contributed to the subject by the former scholar, and translated into English under the title *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, is the ablest and best summary of recent ideas concerning Jesus, and every one who reads it must be impressed with the patience, care, and industry with which the various 'Lives of Jesus' and 'Studies of his Character' have been analysed and criticized. Its final objects, however, are to disprove what has become known as the Liberal Christian view of Jesus, and to show that he will always be to people guided by modern thought and present-day psychology an enigma and a mystery. He tells us 'The Jesus of Nazareth who came forward publicly as the Messiah, who preached the ethic of the Kingdom of God, who founded the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and died to give his work its final consecration, never had any existence. He is a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in an historical garb' (p. 396). . . . 'We have made Jesus hold another language with our own time from that which he really held. In the process we ourselves have been

enfeebled, and have robbed our own thoughts of their vigour in order to project them back into history and make them speak to us out of the past (p. 398). . . . Jesus as a concrete historical personality remains a stranger to our time, but his spirit, which lies hidden in his words, is known in simplicity, and its influence is direct' (p. 399).

Schweitzer depicts Jesus as rigidly bound in the limitations and ideas of his time, not even soaring above them as we have seen many a genius in history, but holding narrowly to the current beliefs about 'the last things,' and the speedily approaching end of the world-order, and thus sharing with his contemporaries the conviction that the Messiah would come on the clouds of heaven, shatter the nations, conquer mighty Rome, and rule all peoples from his capital, Jerusalem. It was in this somewhat violent character that Jesus secretly believed and privately taught he would make himself known. 'He was not a teacher, not a casuist: he was an imperious ruler' (p. 401).

To prove this from the Gospels is no slight undertaking, and Schweitzer, though illuminating at times, has to resort to some novel and strained interpretations. The feeding of

the multitude becomes a 'fellowship meal of the kingdom,' though according to the idea of secret Messiahship, the people could have no appreciation of the act : the words ' Lead us not into temptation ' have a temporary application, and the injunction to the apostles to watch and pray that they be not led into temptation becomes a petition that they may be delivered from the trial and awful fate that threatens himself : the failure to do any mighty work at Nazareth and his marvelling at the people's unbelief are explained by saying that ' he is astonished that in his native town there were so few believers (that is, elect), knowing as he does that the kingdom of God may appear at any moment : his disciples are not his helpers in the work of teaching . . . he did not prepare them to carry on that work after his death. . . . He chooses them as those who are destined to hurl the firebrand into the world, and are afterwards, as those who have been the comrades of the unrecognized Messiah, before he came into his kingdom, to be his associates in ruling and judging it' (p. 369) : his final visit to Jerusalem is caused by his bitter disappointment that the kingdom had not come before the apostles had finished their preach-

ing in the cities of Israel, and he hastens forward with the intention of bringing it to a violent consummation. Thus 'historically regarded, the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul are simply culminating manifestations of Jewish apocalyptic thought' (p. 366).

These interpretations cannot be criticized here and must be judged on their merits. But this is not the impression the Gospels as a whole leave upon us concerning Jesus. His disposition and the general trend of his teaching seem far removed from the violent inclinations and crushing physical power ascribed to the supernatural Messiah. We have difficulty in thinking of him in this rôle, but we can easily picture him as a suffering, enduring, self-sacrificing hero, who shall win men to higher righteousness. Schweitzer himself perceives the difficulty, and endeavours to overcome it by describing this side of the message and character of Jesus as 'the ethic of the interim.' We are told that he does not rebuke James and John for desiring the thrones on his right hand and on his left, but 'only tells them how much, in the present age, of service, humility and suffering is necessary to constitute a claim to such places in a future age. . . . To serve

to humble oneself, to incur persecution and death, belong to " the ethic of the interim," just as much as does penitence. They are indeed only a higher form of penitence ' (p. 364). Jesus must, according to this, be credited with believing that his ethical message was of a quite transitory character and before many months his words would entirely pass away.

Further, much of the teaching of Jesus is opposed directly to the conception of the sudden appearance of the kingdom, though many of his sayings give countenance to it. Two distinct ideas run side by side throughout the Gospels and neither can be ascribed to Jesus to the exclusion of the other. On a subject which concerned the future, he may be said to have had, despite his insight into the signs of the times, no decided opinions as to the process by which the new world-order would be established and his opinion hesitated between conflicting prophecies. On the one hand, the approach of the kingdom is so near that repentance must be speedy : it is in the very midst, so close at hand in fact that the poor in spirit and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake may regard it already as their possession :

the time is so short that the messengers of it must dispense with all customary civilities which delay their progress and haste through the cities of Israel: 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord'; 'Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh': be not like unto foolish virgins who have taken no oil in their lamps: 'I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.' Associated with this speedy expectation of the new era and interwoven with it, is the somewhat contradictory notion that the kingdom will be heralded by days of calamity, tribulation, and woe.

On the other hand, he asserts again and again that it would come gradually, and would grow and spread its branches abroad. All those parables which liken the kingdom of heaven to a seed—and they are many—are inconsistent with the expectation of a world ruler, whose judgment would be swift and whose rule over the prostrate nations would be absolute. The kingdom develops in the hearts of men, in some more than others. Schweitzer, with his usual insight

and alertness, anticipates this objection, and urges that in these parables of the seed, it is 'not the idea of development, but the apparent absence of causation which occupies the foremost place.' Only the initial act of the sowing and the final giving of the harvest are mentioned. But such exegesis cannot be applied to Mark's parable of the silent growth, in which reference is made to the process—'first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear,' nor again to the parable of the tares—'Let both wheat and tares grow together until the harvest.'

We are thus left in a dilemma on this important point, and it cannot be affirmed that Jesus accepted the popular notion that the kingdom would come with overwhelming swiftness. But he did not anticipate that slow development of centuries of which Christian history is the record.

If Jesus secretly prepared his disciples for his appearance before the world in magnificent grandeur and with irresistible power, then that vision of him which has been the inspiration of saints in all ages vanishes from our eyes. If for the purpose of reconciling these qualities, we say that this noble, self-effacing character was his, but he believed

he would come again with divine and miraculous glory, then we have to add that he was mistaken, for he did not reappear. Further, we have to explain how a truly lowly and loving soul could treasure the hope of being proud and imperious, and remain sincere.

The Rev. B. H. Streeter in his essay on 'The Historic Christ,' in *Foundations*, inclines to Schweitzer's interpretation 'Yet it is not without a feeling that Schweitzer himself cannot quite escape the charge of modernizing, and that his own boldly outlined portrait is a little like the Superman of Nietzsche dressed in Galilean robes.' The criticism is just. It was, however, a different conception of the personality of Jesus from that portrayed here which Nietzsche held, for though he believed Jesus would have outgrown his 'slave morality,' that 'capital crime against Life,' had he been permitted to live longer, yet he saw in him the opposite of his idea of the Superman and in his Gospel the chief obstacle to the progress of his own teaching.

But this new view of the purpose of Jesus will do good, even if it only impresses us with the fact that we have been making him too

modern and paying too little heed to early Jewish psychology. We idealize him in our own ways, so that a criticism may be passed on us similar to the one passed by Madame Darmstetter on Ernest Renan's 'Life of Jesus.' 'This Christ is too Celtic, too German: he is too much like Ernest Renan.' Of how many of us it must be said 'he supposes the historical Jesus is his idealized self.'

How many picture Jesus as he appeared even externally to his contemporaries? Some people think of him as being almost Aryan in feature, and the traditional conception of his face is European rather than Semitic in type. Others suppose that he should be arrayed in robes of priestly and regal glory, such as we see in Holman Hunt's 'Light of the World.' Others again fancy that his countenance was radiant with beauty, though with the unconscious inconsistency they repeat the words of Isaiah 'He hath no form or comeliness: and when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.' But how many imagine him as he was, a young man of Oriental type, physically strong and well-developed through his early labours at the bench, capable of remarkable endurance and strain, as the Gospels teach in many

places, awake and at prayer on the mountain side, and undergoing the agony in Gethsemane, while his followers, who also were strong men physically, were weighed down with sleep; with face bronzed in the eastern sun, dressed in Jewish garb and moving among a people who followed a semi-primitive manner of life? Any volume which can stimulate our imaginations and help us to see Jesus as he really was should be welcome, however unable we may be to accept its main contention.

Closely associated with the question of the Messianic consciousness of Jesus is the use of the terms 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man.' In the Bible the former has a variety of meanings. In Genesis (vi. 2) 'the sons of God' were evidently an order of angels or lower divine beings: in the Book of Job (xxxviii. 7) they were superior beings endowed with superhuman wisdom and power, who witnessed the creation of the world; in other books, the kings of Israel and the nation of Israel are referred to as being in a special sense the sons of Jehovah. How far the Jews prior to the time of Jesus used the term 'Son of God' as a title of the Messiah, it is impossible to say. There is little evidence

of its existence in this connexion before the days of Christianity. But the disciples of Jesus adopted it and referred it back to his times, if it was not actually then in use. The question which Caiaphas put to Jesus 'Art thou the Son of God?' which was answered by him with an affirmative strong enough to secure his condemnation, seems to have been understood in a Messianic sense. However that may be, it was a term by which Jesus never spoke of himself, even if he acknowledged it.

It became in the early days of the faith a cause of division and already in the New Testament we may find a foreshadowing of the later disputes. In the times which immediately followed the death of the apostles, 'there was as yet no such thing as ecclesiastical "doctrines" in the strict sense of the word,' says Dr. Harnack, 'but rather conceptions more or less fluid. . . . These may be reduced collectively to two. Jesus was either regarded as the man whom God hath chosen, in whom the Deity or the Spirit of God dwelt, and who, after being tested, was adopted by God and invested with dominion: or Jesus was regarded as a heavenly spiritual being (the highest after God) who took flesh,

and again returned to heaven after the completion of the work on earth.'[1]

These Christologies are mutually exclusive, and yet both can claim the support of the New Testament. According to Paul, who was the earliest writer, the sonship of Jesus to God dated from the resurrection. He says definitely that he was 'declared (the Greek word means "appointed") the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead' (Romans 1^4). A more definitely adoptionist view is to be found in the account of the baptism of Jesus by John, for it was then that the Spirit of God descended upon him. Professor Schmidt, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, holds that it is possible that one of the earliest manuscripts and a large number of patristic quotations have preserved a more original reading of Luke 3^{22}, 'Thou art my beloved Son, *to-day I have begotten thee.*' The evidence in the New Testament itself that Jesus was a man chosen by reason of his life to be the bearer of the truth, is by no means slight: and the general impression is that he increased 'in favour with God' and did not attain to the full glory of sonship until after his resurrection.

[1] *History of Dogma*, vol. I, p. 190.

The doctrine of the Virgin birth rightly deduced from the statements of the Gospel according to Matthew and Luke is held by no one to-day, for the only inference from the narrative that Jesus was conceived in Mary by the Holy Ghost is that his existence actually began then. The doctrine of his pre-existence is opposed to the doctrine of this miraculous genesis of his being. Later these views were united in thought in order that two necessary beliefs, as they were considered, should be accepted. It is this blended doctrine that has won the day in orthodox Christianity, though it was never more seriously challenged than at the present time.

The story of the Transfiguration contains the germ of another view, which was not developed. A voice from heaven declares 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.' The purpose was to show the Jews who clung to the leaders of the past that a new dispensation had been made which was above the law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah).

The apostles and their immediate successors were deeply impressed with the life of their Master: they believed that he had manifested divine qualities: but they did not lose sight of the greatness that was open to

themselves. 'Beloved,' wrote the author of the first Epistle of John, 'now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be.' Centuries later those who came after, groping though they were after the truth, limited the working of the Universal Father, confined his inspiration to writers of one chosen race and one great personality among them, and failed to rise to the New Testament conception, which is winning its way in modern thought, that all men are the sons of God, born of the same Spirit.

In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is represented as using the other term 'Son of Man' nearly seventy times. Dr. Johannes Weiss writes: 'As the primitive community did not hesitate to carry back into the life of Jesus the name "Son of God," which strictly speaking was only applicable after his exaltation to dominion, so also with the name "Son of Man." It was an extremely significant step that was taken, when the primitive tradition—influenced, no doubt, by words actually spoken by Jesus—put into his mouth on many occasions the self-designation "Son of Man."'[1] It has been

[1] *Christ the Beginnings of Dogma*, p. 58.

argued by others that the people regarded Jesus as the forerunner of the expected Messiah, a second John the Baptist, and when they welcomed him into Jerusalem, it was as the herald of the better time. His use of the term 'Son of Man' as though he were referring to a third person favours this view, and gives support to Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter's statement—'that he supposed himself to be designated to that high office (the judge of the nations), and expected after death to take his seat at God's right hand, and descend thence amid the angelic throng to summon the world to his great assize, appears to pass the bounds of likelihood.'[1]

If Jesus did use the term as reported in the New Testament, then it was a title of which he was fond. Admitting this, we have to discover what its meaning was for him, for though it seems clear, many problems are involved in it. It is sometimes thought that in thus describing himself, he was laying stress on his simple humanity, but the history of the term and especially its implications in his day have to be taken into account.

In the Hebrew language, 'Son of Man'

[1] *The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ*, pp. 106f.

was usually a synonym for 'man,' just as 'a son of Adam' is to us. It appears ninety times in the Book of Ezekiel, and its nearest equivalent in all these cases is 'prophet.' As time proceeded its signification altered, until it came to designate 'a supernatural being or a body of such beings.'[1] In the Book of Daniel we read: 'And, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even unto the ancient of days, and they brought him near unto him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' Dr. Charles, who is one of the greatest authorities on Hebrew and Christian eschatology, makes the following comment on this passage: 'Since the beings thus referred to (in the term "Son of Man") are according to the interpretation of the angel, the people of the saints of the Most High (Daniel 7^{18}, ^{22}, ^{27}) we are to infer that the faithful remnant of Israel are to be trans-

[1] Dr. Charles's Commentary on 'Daniel' in *The Century Bible*.

formed into heavenly or supernatural beings, as in 1 Enoch 90^{38} (161 B.C.), and in later apocalypses, which expect an everlasting kingdom on earth.' There is no hint or indication that the writer of the Book of Daniel had any thought of the future Messiah. Nevertheless, these words were later given a Messianic interpretation and 'Son of Man' in the time of the apostles had become an acknowledged name for the Messiah. The question at issue is whether Jesus used the term in this sense and whether he applied the passage to himself, as we are led to suppose by Matthew (26^{64}) and Mark (14^{62}).

Jesus spoke in Aramaic and the term *barnasha*, which is translated in Greek and English as 'the Son of Man,' might also be rendered 'Son of a Man,' or 'the Man,' or 'Man.' In some cases, therefore, he may not have been referring to himself at all, but to man generally. A clear instance of this is to be found in Mark 2^{28}, where a far better rendering would be 'man is lord even of the sabbath,' i.e., man is of more importance than the sabbath. It is far more in accordance with what has gone before and sheds light upon what Jesus said. It is by no means improbable that Jesus alluded to him-

self as 'the Man' and, though it was a Messianic title, did not intend that it should be understood in the ordinary Messianic sense.

If we apply to Jesus all the passages in the New Testament in which the term appears, we must admit that his hopes were far from being worldly. It is difficult to imagine that he who was meek and lowly of heart ever said in reference to himself 'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.' Within the New Testament itself it is not always in this forceful self-assertive character that 'the Son of Man' is represented. It is on very different qualities that insistence is laid—his patience, endurance, and forbearance. 'The Son of Man shall also suffer of them.' 'The Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified.' 'The Son of Man goeth as it is written of him.'

The most satisfactory solution of this problem seems, then, to be that, if Jesus did think of himself as the Messiah, he read into his office an altogether new and different meaning.

Let us note two things in conclusion.

First, in the case of a great spiritual character such as Jesus, who gains his power and his mastery over men by his moral fervour and wisdom, it is always a mistake to exalt the office above the man. By so doing we obscure the beauty of his inward life and the inherent worth of his message. We all wish to approach near to the noblest character in human history. Who shall approach nearest? Not he that repeateth the name, but he that doeth the will. Not he who cries most often Lord, Lord, Christ, Christ, but he who in simplicity of heart and sincerity of purpose strives to follow him in spirit and who in the common daily round endeavours to live a good life. So long as we do that, we need not be too careful of the name or the office, for we shall stand the test he imposed. 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me.'

Secondly, we have failed to grasp the rudiments of the Gospel unless we understand that Jesus came preaching the Lordship of Service as opposed to the Lordship of Mastery. 'He that would be the greatest among you let him become the servant of all.' That was the new standard of superiority which he raised, and the new test of worth

which he applied. We cannot remove this without destroying the Gospel, and we cannot believe that Jesus taught it, while all the time he was dreaming of and working for personal glory. It is no 'ethic of the interim,' but the very essence of his message.

Chapter IV

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF HIS MESSAGE

THE significance of Jesus for his age and our own is a subject which is always with us, though the interest in it varies. At some times it is a question of merely academic study, and at others it is in the midst of the white heat of controversy. The reason for this is that what is looked upon as Christianity in our day, even what we term Christianity in its purest and simplest form, cannot all be traced back to Jesus of Nazareth. We may and do regard him not only as the source, but the main stream of our faith, yet into that stream have flowed many tributaries: some of them have increased the force and flow of its waters and others have made them impure and stagnant. That is why Christianity in Russia is different from Christianity in Italy, and Christianity in Italy from Christianity in England. An

idea never passes from one mind to another in such a way that it means exactly the same thing and arouses exactly the same feelings. The impression it makes upon any individual depends upon his experience and his mental furniture. Similarly, what any race makes of a new faith is decided by its character, by the laws, customs, and habits which have been acquired, perhaps after centuries of struggle, and have become part and parcel of its very being. The new faith will certainly affect and may change that character, but none the less certain is it that the history and genius of the race will make no small alteration in the religion, even though it be accepted without reservation.

When Jesus was born, there were four principal types of life in Europe—the Roman, the Greek, the Jewish, and the Northern. Each of these has made its contribution to modern Christian faith and practice. The Roman prepared the way for the proclamation of the Gospel by the expansion, organization and unity of the Empire, in which were peace and safety, by the endeavour to promote justice in laws, and by allowing liberty of worship, save where that liberty conflicted with the welfare of the State. Greek art

still exercises its influence, Greek ethics still affect moral conduct, and Greek philosophy and speculation still prevail in modern thought and are more especially predominant in the creeds and theology. 'Greece provided Christianity,' says Edward Caird, 'with the weapons of culture which enabled it to subdue the minds of its opponents, but at the same time it did much to determine the main bias and direction of the religious consciousness which was established by its means.'[1] 'Greece lives,' says Dr. Hatch, 'not only its dying life in the lecture rooms of Universities, but also with a more vigorous growth in the Christian Churches.'[2] The Jewish religion was wrought very largely into the teaching of Jesus himself. Its hopefulness, its tendency to look forward which showed itself in prophecy, its spirit of joyfulness, its confidence of deliverance, its moral fervour, and its sense of responsibility to God, are evident in all the higher forms of Christianity. To the Northern races we who live in England are indebted most of all. The unparalleled chastity of the Anglo-

[1] *Evolution of Theology in Greek Philosophers*, vol. II, p. 369.

[2] *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 350.

Saxon in the home and his love of family life, his simple honesty and straightforwardness, his hardihood and fearlessness, and his feeling of the significance of the little stretch of time that extends between the eternity which precedes and the eternity which follows death, have all gone to build up our nation in virility and earnestness, and have affected profoundly the tone and character of our Christianity.

Anyone who studies the influence of these phases of life—so powerful and so distinct—upon religion to-day is sure to find himself asking the questions:—What after all was the special work of Jesus? What is the debt which we owe to him? What is it in his teaching and character which makes him distinctive? These questions should be faced squarely. Owing to their environment, men grow up believing Jesus to be the greatest of all men, but they seldom ask why, and do not compare him with other noble characters in history. Are there any reasons for judging him the greatest of the sons of God? Let us see.

1. The first reason is that he was supremely human in his life and teaching. His advent into the world meant that

greater value was placed upon human and divine love. His name stands for humanity—humanity without any limitations or reservations, humanity in its grandeur and universality. It would be equally true to say that it stands for divinity, if we kept in mind that all men are divine. But it is better to say humanity, because for nothing are we more indebted to Jesus than for the manner in which he showed how loving and human the heavenly Father is.

Think of the parables by which he illustrates the divine care. Here is little or no reference to the vast and overwhelming, to the mysterious and infinite, to nature in all her wonder and majesty. He prefers to convince men by what is commonplace, by what is happening in the ordinary life about them —the father welcoming home his wayward lad, the shepherd seeking his lost sheep, the generous lord forgoing his rightful claim upon his debtor, the sparrow alighting upon the ground, and the clothing of the wayside flower in more than regal glory. By means of these simple events and homely illustrations Jesus shows how the heavenly Father has a human heart and is near to his children.

We miss much of the force and meaning of

his Gospel because we do not understand the language which he spoke. It was that of the working people of his day. The words he used were those with which the common people and the children were familiar, and only a few of them have been preserved to us. One of them is 'Abba,' Father. How much that conveyed to his hearers we can realize, when we reflect that it was one of the first words, perhaps the first, which Mary taught him to utter. 'Abba,' he cried with delight, when Joseph returning from some task entered the home. With the consciousness of the boundlessness of the divine tenderness, he was later to look up to God and cry 'Abba,' Father.

Not only in the Hebrew Scriptures, but among the Gentiles too, as Paul reminded the Athenians, the Fatherhood of God had been recognized. It became a fundamental doctrine of the Stoics, prior to the days of Christian influence, and no one could state in plainer language than that used by Epictetus that we are God's offspring, but it was Jesus who brought this truth home to the soul. He saw, as none other had done, the kinship of the divine and the human, the closeness and intimacy of the relation between them.

We shall see the importance of his emphasis on what is human, if we contrast his work with the contributions made by the four types of life to which reference has been made. We can point to influences and institutions in history and say, 'This is distinctly Roman; this distinctly Greek; this Northern, and this Jewish.' Whenever any of the representatives of these nations met, there was conflict—conflict of ideals due to the different outlook on life and the world. Not one was capable of absorbing all the good in the other. The Roman soldiers turned the finest examples of Greek art into tables on which to cast their dice: the Greeks could not understand the aversion of the Romans to philosophy: the Northern warrior ruthlessly sacked cities and harried fertile lands, the outcome of generations of labour: the Jew stood proudly apart. At first, the cleavage was most marked, and later, one or the other had to give way. The Greek yielded to the Roman in law and the Roman yielded to the Greek in art. The process was not one of absorption, so much as of appropriation. Fortunately the good in each case triumphed: the supreme efforts of each nation and the creations of its peculiar genius were thus

preserved for the blessing of the race, and have become integral parts of its accumulated greatness. But none of the elements lost its national distinctiveness.

Now when we study the life and message of Jesus in their full development we find none of the peculiar marks of nationality.

That is the secret of the devotion which has been paid to him. We are sometimes irresistibly attracted to people we meet, and we can give no adequate explanation of their power. Many Christians have to make the same confession concerning the founder of their faith. They reverence him, but do not know why. If they could get rid of their theological prejudices and presuppositions, they would find that one reason why he makes so strong an appeal to them is that they see in him *the great essentials of human nature*. He is greatly, gloriously, and pre-eminently man. If some one spoke of him as the ideal Jew, we should feel the words were an inadequate description of his character, because he rose above the limits of nationality. It may indeed be said with truth that no other nation but Israel could have given birth to such a man, but the reason was that Judaism, as shown in the writings of Second Isaiah,

was rising to the conception of the universality of God, and the noblest of the people were dreaming of the time when all nations should worship one God in the Temple.

2. Again, Jesus takes his place as the greatest of all teachers because his message was universal in its appeal. It was not for a few favoured and capable men, but for the whole race, for man as man. It was intended for all, for the strong and the weak, for rich and for poor, for learned and ignorant. 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' Ordinary human distinctions fade away and cease to be according to his teaching and all men stand before God as children.

Contrast him with other teachers and thinkers in history, who have been said to approach and even to excel him in purpose and character. To Buddha the world owes a deep debt which should be willingly acknowledged, and from him and other Eastern religious leaders we men of the West have still much to learn. But as we think of Buddha, contemplative, peaceful, immobile, having attained Nirvana, and being de-

livered from the woes and miseries of time, we feel he is far removed from us. As we read how we too may reach this blessed state if we are loving, compassionate, and self-controlled, we feel that though this teaching is high, there is something higher. Salvation to Jesus was not so intensely individual as it was to Buddha. The loftiest realm was the kingdom of God, in which men won salvation not as individuals, but as members of a community. No soul could be saved unless it was lost in the being of others. The dark colours also in which Buddha painted the life that now is, and the vale of woe he represented our existence on earth to be, do not appeal to us so powerfully as the doctrine that God's will can be done here. The East owes an incalculable debt to him and the world will finally be blessed by some truths in his teaching, but philosophically considered, gloomy is the religion, the spirit of which Edwin Arnold expressed in the lines :

> We are the voices of the wandering wind,
> Which moan for rest, and rest can never find;
> Lo! as the wind is, so is mortal life,
> A moan, a sigh, a sob, a storm, a strife.

Buddhism is the *Will to die*, the deliverance from life : Christianity is the *Will to*

live, the deliverance from death. 'I am come that ye may have life and have it more abundantly.'

When we think of Socrates seeking for truth, willing to teach 'a few boys in a corner,' faithful unto death and honourable beyond all praise, we are drawn to him, but somehow we feel and know that unless we showed capacity for knowledge and could follow the arguments he used, we should be rejected by him. Knowledge, he tells us, is virtue, and salvation is by wisdom. Though he turned the world from the study of matter to that of man, showed the superiority of personality over outer things, taught that 'an unexamined life is not worth living,' and revealed the worth of moral purpose, yet the heights he climbed could be attained only by a few. Judged by the standard of knowledge, small is the merit of those earnest souls who have responded gladly to divine impulses to seek that which is good and to labour for others, but have formed no theory about them.

Thus we might study all the other leaders, thinkers and teachers of the past, and we should find that the emphasis they laid upon the development of peculiar kinds of ability

would exclude more men and women from their circle than it would welcome in.

When we turn to the New Testament, we find the message of Jesus to be comprehensive. We hear him speak of the lofty calling of the lowly. The little child is set up as an example, the man with one talent only is reminded of the responsibility God has placed in him and of the high trust which must not be despised: the day labourer hears the call to work.

To the ordinary observer there is nothing commanding about Jesus save that authority which comes from personal worth and character. He does not move among the acknowledged leaders of his day: he is not invited to be the companion of the wisest men of his time: he forms no select school of able youths and powerful thinkers. He associates with the common people, mingles with ordinary men and women, enters into their homes, and sits down at their tables. His invitation is to a life which even those who have been broken and bruised in the struggle of life can pursue. He says: 'Come unto me, ye weary: Come, ye despised and outcast: Come, ye heart-broken and lonely: Come, ye publicans and sinners.' And his force of

character is such and his message so inspiring that men and women who come into close touch with him are impressed at once and cry out, 'Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.' He is put to death as a common malefactor and so small is the stir at his departure in the world at large that the historian of the times, Josephus, makes no reference to his crucifixion. But in the hearts of a few who heard him he has wakened the noblest desires, and they can never forget either his presence or his word.

John Stuart Mill, who did not take the name of Christian, wrote towards the end of his *Three Essays on Religion*, when summing up the general result of his examination, the following words:—'When his pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed on earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now, would it be easy to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract to the concrete than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life.'

Why do men thus desire to be worthy of

his approval? Is not one simple and true answer that Jesus by his life and teaching laid the emphasis on those qualities which are the great and unmistakable essentials of human nature? Here was a man who brought into the world a spirit so human that Greek, Roman, Northman, and in the early days many Jews, could acknowledge it as the highest. That early writer who heard the angels herald his coming with the words, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased,' saw the truth Jesus had taught, that in the sight of God every soul is of immeasurable worth, and grasped the significance and universality of his message.

Let us understand quite clearly that this is an important distinguishing and elevating characteristic of the message of Jesus. We look to others for special contributions to the various domains of thought, and for instruction in definite branches of knowledge, but to him we look for the manifestation of those graces and virtues which are the special possession of no set of men, but which belong to all. These are the qualities which are essentially human, which though undeveloped, are universally potential, and

which alone can bind races and men with their diverse individualities into one. Buddha, Socrates, and others are great; they rise above us in thought and aspiration; and at their feet we must sit and learn, but we turn to Jesus as 'the way,' because he has shown us what all humanity may become. He has not pointed out what eminence this or that man may attain in any particular calling or work, but he has done what was most needed; he has made clear to us the human splendour and grace which every man may gain.

3. The late Mr. Lecky once said that we could arrive at the knowledge of the moral condition of peoples in the past by studying their regard for women and slaves. We can certainly gain some conception of the worth of moral and religious teaching by considering its power to elevate those who have been dependent. Under this head would come children, women, and slaves. What message had Christianity in its early days for these?

(*a*) We have rightly regarded the welcome Jesus gave to children in the words 'Suffer the little children to come unto me' as one of the most beautiful episodes in his life. To us who have been educated under

Christian influence and who can see the sanctity of child-life, this incident cannot seem of such importance, as it must have done to men and women who thought it no great sin to leave an unwelcome child to die of starvation and cold. The children must have flocked round one who showed such great affection for them, though be it remembered that the countrymen of Jesus had an unusual tenderness for their children, and the modern Jew has inherited this from his ancestors. 'Mr. Burkitt has recently remarked,' writes Mr. T. R. Glover, 'that we may read far and wide in Christian literature before we find any such feeling for children as we know so well in the words of Jesus: and in classical literature we may look as far.'[1] We picture Jesus, more than any other teacher, with the children around him, and this is not altogether due to the influence of Christian art, but to the important position the child takes in his message. 'Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' 'Take care that ye offend not against one of these little ones,' 'And he called to him a

[1] *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, p. 122.

little child, and set him in the midst of them.'

In emphasizing the importance of the child Jesus was laying stress on what history has proved to be the greatest educative influence of our race. Nothing has contributed in human evolution to the strength and self-control of men and the tenderness and self-sacrifice of women so much as fatherhood and motherhood. 'When the first mother awoke to her first tenderness and warmed her loneliness at her infant's love,' wrote Henry Drummond, 'when for a moment she forgot herself and thought upon its weakness or its pain, when by the most imperceptible act or sign or look of sympathy she expressed the unutterable impulse of her Motherhood, the touch of a new creative hand was felt upon the world.' 'Love is love and has always been love, and has never been anything lower. Whence, then, came it? If neither the husband nor the wife bestowed this gift upon the world, who did? It was a Little Child. Till this appeared, Man's affection was non-existent; Woman's was frozen. . . . One day, in the love of a little child, Father and Mother met. That this is the true lineage of love, that it has descended not from husbands and wives but through

children is proved by the simplest study of savage life.' The child was the discovery of Jesus. And in making it so significant for religion, he gave an impulse to the noblest spirit of humanity, which is active in the world to-day.

(*b*) What was the effect of his message on slaves who were oppressed under pagan systems? Did it bring them any blessing or alleviate their hardships? Slavery, we know was justified by philosophy in the ancient world. In early Christianity the slave was regarded equally with his master as the son of God. Paul, like Jesus, knew neither bond nor free. In the catacombs of Rome, no mention is made of anyone being a slave, though hundreds of slaves must have been buried there. Though later Christians returned to this abominable traffic, they never could justify the practice by any word of Jesus, or lawfully claim his sanction. In thus levelling distinctions between bond and free, in banishing class and dwelling upon the essential oneness of the race, he was leading men to a truth which has yet to be realized.

(*c*) From the outset women were recognized in Christian work. They ministered unto Jesus himself; they took such a high

and purity, divine manliness : divine womanliness. In all noble characters you find the two blended : in him—the noblest—blended into one entire and perfect humanity.'

We may date the impulse given to the emancipation of woman, which is not yet complete, to the influence of the spirit of humanity which Jesus awakened in the hearts of men.

Jesus, then, occupies the first place as teacher, because he found greatness not where men had been accustomed to find it, and where they still largely find it, in the vastness of the influence exerted, in the power wielded, which after all may not be due to any worth in the man, but to the means at his command : he found it in those qualities which are intrinsically human, in qualities which can be gained and expressed by beings comparatively powerless, even by the little child. Life he taught is a trust, to be used for blessing others as well as ourselves. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' 'Whoso would save his soul must lose it.' By sayings such as these he declared that whatever we have, even of inner power, must be regarded as a communal opportunity, as a gift to be used for a larger

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life than that of self. The world has yet to travel far before it reaches this ideal, but when it does reach it, many a name which now figures large on the pages of history will disappear, and many an obscure man and woman will shine forth with the greatness of divine constancy and love. Christianity, as he taught it, involves a revaluation of values: it exalts the lowly, and glorifies the essentially human.

Chapter V

THE RELEVANCY OF CHRISTIANITY

JESUS OR CHRIST?

THE most serious charge which has been brought against Christianity is that it has failed even in its highest forms to supply the practical needs of to-day. It is no longer able to give satisfactory answers to the difficulties of our complex life. It is inadequate as a guide, especially on the social problems which are perplexing us. Admirably adapted as it was to be a living and powerful message in the first century, it is for that very reason inapplicable to the conditions of life in the twentieth century. It knows nothing of political economy and nothing of the problems of our industrial world. It has nothing to say concerning the numerous sciences which have developed in recent years and which have entirely changed our religious outlook. It has nothing definite to teach on many humanitarian questions,

for we find professing Christians ranged in opposite camps. Not only does it leave us in the dark on such subjects as poverty, communism, woman suffrage, vivisection, and temperance, it does not, if we are to judge by the divisions among its adherents, deliver an unequivocal message on the great question of international peace, despite its principle of the Brotherhood of Man. Even its message concerning home life, marriage, parental responsibility and filial duty is singularly deficient.

This is a severe indictment of the comprehensiveness of the teaching of Jesus and of Christianity in all its later developments. It is a charge which has to be honestly considered. Every one is aware that in our country alone there are thousands of intelligent men who are attracted by lecturers on social and ethical subjects, but not by preachers of the Christian religion. Has the Gospel lost its relevancy? Have we outgrown it and left it far behind? Must we dispense with it as a living faith and regard it merely as an historical study? Does it continue to be proclaimed because of the elaborate organizations which have interests in supporting it, or does it possess some inherent

power which still secures for it the recognition it receives? Is it destined soon to pass away? Is it played out?

We do not overcome the difficulty here stated by asserting that men have not yet lived up to the teaching of Jesus, and that until they do we may leave the matter in abeyance, assured that it will not pass away so long as it remains an ideal. That is not the charge. It is that on questions of vital and pressing importance Christianity has absolutely nothing to proclaim.

Before any attempt is made to discover the justice or injustice of the charge thus made, it is only right that we should inquire into the origin and cause of our social, domestic, intellectual, and moral problems. For what strikes us as we look at the world to-day is that these problems arose in the first instance and are still most to the fore among those nations which have been most under the influence of Christianity. They are now, it is true, beginning to press on other peoples, but they have been carried over from the West to the East. Are they the result of a spirit which has been generated and maintained by the faith that is thus put upon its trial? Is the cry that Christianity as taught

to-day is irrelevant, the voice of one of her own children who has wandered away from its mother, but who is strong because of the sustenance she first gave ?

One interpretation of history asserts that in spite of all the external progress in which we rejoice, human nature has not improved, and men are really no better than they were in the past.

> We are very slightly changed
> From the semi-apes who ranged
> India's prehistoric clay ;
> Whoso drew the longest bow
> Ran his brother down, you know,
> As we run men down to-day.
>
> Thus the artless songs I sing
> Do not deal with anything
> New or never said before,
> As it was in the beginning
> Is to-day official sinning
> And shall be evermore.

Christianity, striving to regenerate the *spirit* of man, has been engaged in an undertaking foredoomed to failure. The only advance made has been in secular knowledge. Civilization is the outcome of a better and saner *intellectual* conception of life. We do not use the rack, because we know it does not help us to obtain true evidence. We do not

make men walk over red-hot ploughshares, because we know that the rapidity with which their flesh heals is no test of their innocence or guilt. We do not send martyrs to the stake, because we know that it does not prevent the spread of the opinions they hold. We do not drown witches because we know they do not possess the powers with which they have been credited. By such arguments as these men have been led to the glorification of secular knowledge, in the progress of which we all rejoice, and to a materialistic interpretation of life.

1. Let us grant all that has been said here. Let us make no allowance for the gentler, more considerate attitude of most men to each other. Even then we have to go behind secular knowledge and to ask what has sustained scholars in their wearisome search for truth. And have we not to confess that the great incentive to research in any field is unhesitating belief in the invisible, the ideal, the unattained, in something above and something beyond? Man's thoughts are always ahead of nature's actual manifestations and always ahead of his realized self. Emerson wrote, 'We grant that human life is mean: but how did we find out that it was

mean ?' Thus we are led to believe that the secret of man's advance in knowledge is somehow due to an improvement in his spiritual being, and it is just with this that Christianity has had to do. It has been by developing a deeper love that better social conditions have arisen, and the stimulus which has aided many a student of science 'to shun delights and live laborious days,' has been the thought of the blessing he might confer upon the world. It has been the love of justice and of truth which has taken possession of reformer and student. If it were true that all our advance has been merely in secular knowledge, then a wise philosophy of life would teach us to give up the endeavour to be noble, for goodness follows as the result of cleverness. Lives such as those of Buddha, Socrates, Plato, and Jesus would be held to count for little in the progress of mankind. What we find is not only that they do count, but as we read more closely the biographies of men like Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Darwin, and Kelvin we discover that the force at work in their efforts is not mere intellectual interest, but what we cannot help regarding as moral and spiritual impetus. Eucken writes, after mentioning such leaders of thought as

Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, 'If, then, in spite of the differences, modern thinkers all adhere to Christianity in some form, they must, indeed, find or feel in it something which modern civilization cannot of itself create. In truth it would be easy to show that in the work of them all there is a spiritual depth and inwardness and an ideal estimate of things which is less the product of their own thought than it is the result of the traditional associations of the Christian Life.'[1]

2. Goethe once said 'Mankind is always advancing, and man remains always the same.' Harnack comments, 'It is to *man* that religion pertains, to man, as one who in the midst of all change and progress himself never changes.'[2] We see the same elemental passions and methods of thought at work, but we notice they are put to higher uses.

> The fiery soul abhorred in Catiline
> In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine.

The purpose of Christianity is to teach man how to direct these unalterable elements in human nature to their proper ends, for it is

[1] *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 299.
[2] *What is Christianity?* p. 8.

evident that they may be either constructive or destructive in their work. The energy that debases the sinner is that which transfigures the saint. It is difficult to see how anyone in face of history can maintain that Christianity, in spite of many aberrations from its original aim, has not had an inspiring and refining influence.

The mistake the critic often makes is to limit the operation of the Christian ideal to the official and traditional forms, to seek for weaknesses in them, which are not difficult to find, and to show how they have failed to further the progress of truth. May it not be that Christianity in its purest form has sometimes been more truly active in the heretic than in the orthodox believer? Is not scientific research in harmony with the tradition of the spirit which has so often been in conflict with the tradition of the letter? Such a view was maintained by Dr. Martineau in a brilliant address well worthy of study in this connexion, entitled 'Factors of Spiritual Growth in Modern Society.' 'The kingdom of heaven is not the same in its picture, though continuous in its spirit, through the centuries as they succeed: once it was a little Hebrew realm; to the Baptist it was the Messiah's

coming; to the apostles the return of Christ and the end of the historic æons; to the Chiliasts the Millennium; to the medieval Catholicism the Roman Theocracy; to the Evangelical Protestants the invisible Church of the elect; to a few the life to come; to *all* according to the measure of their conception, the Divine thought and life in the world. It has transmigrated from form to form as each became too small to hold it, or was dissolved by the touch of time; and, now amid the riches of our modern experience, beneath the canopy of Herschel's sky, upon the surface of Lyell's earth, at the end of Bunsen's ages of humanity, and in the presence of Müller's conspectus of tongues and peoples, it can never resume its antiquated shapes; nor dare we finally fix it with a Lo! here, or Lo! there; but can only wait upon the seasons of an expanding Providence, knowing that through all the kingdom of heaven is within us.'[1] Every broad-minded Christian is prepared to maintain that the spirit which seeks the best and aims at truth is that which he sees working in history and is what he understands to be the very essence of religion, whether it appear in

[1] *Essays*, vol. IV, p. 90.

preacher, scientist, artist, or any other. In any case we have to take a step beyond the intellectual, if we would discover the power at the back of all reform and all research. It is not advance in secular knowledge but improvement in moral purpose that redeems the world. The motive that animates all noble work is humane, and Christianity may lay claim to having done something to foster this spirit.

When we examine the charge that Christianity is inadequate, it becomes clear that it rests on a misunderstanding of the fundamental nature of the Gospel. It is only in a religion of Law that we ever find definite instructions as to the actual course to be taken in any social, national, or domestic difficulty. And it was the early boast of Christianity that in contradistinction from the religion of the Law it was a religion of the spirit. It did not profess to give a formal answer to particular questions which might arise in later days or even in Apostolic times. When Jesus was asked to assume the position of a lawyer he replied, 'Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?' He taught men the spirit in which they should act and the motive that should animate their

lives. His aim was not to establish a new external authority, but to teach men to rule themselves by the nobler impulses of their souls. The moral was to supersede the legal. 'The traditions of Jesus,' writes Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter, 'present us with principles, not laws. They are the vehicle of an immense moral impulse, not of a code of rules. Here is spirit instead of system; a summons to an unworldly life, not a programme of duty; a challenge to an endeavour, rather than a pattern of conduct.'[1]

It is just this that is overlooked. Neither the teaching of Jesus nor modern ethical Christianity is to be interpreted in a narrow literalistic or legalistic sense. It clearly reveals the spirit in which men should enter upon any undertaking, whether social or individual. For that very reason men with different aims have found inspiration in it, and centuries faced with different problems have turned back to it. It has not solved at once every difficulty which has arisen in the course of the ages, and it has not spoken in such a detailed manner that men have had no demand made upon their moral and intellectual energies. Indeed those who have come

[1] *The Historical Jesus and the Theological Christ*, pp. 56, 57.

under its inspiration have found the task of applying the principles of love to the conditions of their time very arduous. But it has clearly indicated to those who have honestly accepted it, the motives which should be the guiding principles of all their efforts. If all men in our day were bent upon seeking the best form in which the principles of Christianity could be expressed, many of our industrial problems, before which Christianity is said to be helpless and useless, would be solved.

Whatever the difficulties and questions, whether they are concerned with the relations of rich and poor, the social and political order, the enfranchisement of women, the control of the liquor traffic, the rivalries of nations, the rights of the lower animals, the claims of the less advanced races, the duties of family life, the sanctities of the married state, or individual conduct—Christianity declares that all must be considered out of regard for the abiding principles of justice, mercy, truth, the divinity of man, the love that rejoices to serve and the sense of responsibility to the whole. Its apparent failure to give a definite message on vital questions is due sometimes to the weakness of its ex-

ponents, who allow expediency to weigh in their decisions. No one, for instance, who has caught the spirit of Jesus can have any doubt whatever as to the Christian message concerning peace or fail to recognize that the hostile front the nations present to each other to-day is anti-moral from the Christian point of view. Men may argue that armaments are necessary, but that does not make them Christian. It simply proves that our international relations are not on a religious basis, and that the Christian Gospel has a message for to-day.

Many of the other questions on which Christianity is supposed to be silent could be dealt with in a similar manner. It is not the failure of its message which is at issue, but the failure of men to respond to its call.

All questions, however, do not yield to this easy solution. No one can reasonably suppose that all our difficulties are going to vanish at the simple proclamation of the duty of love. Indeed one of the dangers is that we may expect too much from the motive only, and neglect the help that trained insight alone can give. Christianity pointing to the kingdom of heaven and urging its followers towards it, nevertheless does not

pretend to map out the whole of the course to be taken. It calls in the assistance of experience and science: it stimulates its adherents to undertake the toilsome work of study and investigation: and it teaches that the kingdom cometh not by observation and that it cannot arrive until man devotes the whole of his powers—of intellect as well as heart, of body as well as spirit—to noble service. It is a call and a challenge to the best in the whole man.

Christianity, then, declares the attitude that should be taken, the spirit that should be shown, and the moral sympathy that should be manifested in approaching and studying any of the problems of life. Is not that after all the matter of supreme importance? What is it that kindles men's enthusiasm in history? Why does the scientist write the lives of the pioneers of science? Why does the artist turn to the story of his forerunners? And why does the explorer make himself acquainted with the adventures of brave men in new countries? One reason surely is that they desire to feel their fellowship and to be stimulated by their example. They know that it is quite as important to catch their spirit as to have a

knowledge of their equipment: and that the infection of their enthusiasm is as valuable as the external guidance they can give. It is just here that Christianity professes to be of service and is relevant to the life of to-day. This is the only claim it can make, but it is a comprehensive one. It is not a system supplying easy and ready-made solutions to every problem that may arise, nor is it a religion which relieves men from the burden of thinking and working. It is a message of the divine origin and destiny of man, which bids, aids and inspires him to live out his high possibilities and be true, in all his judgments and actions, to the life of God which he may find in his soul. As Professor F. G. Peabody, who in his volume *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, has applied the teaching of Jesus in detail to some of the problems of our modern life, writes:—'What, then, is the place of the Christian Church in the modern world? It is not a place where correctness of opinion is guarded and maintained; not a cold-storage warehouse for uncorrupted truth; not merely a place of religious utterance, or of religious symbolism, or of a gymnasium of ritual for the calisthenics of the soul. It

is, to use the language of our modern life, a "power-house," where there is generated a supply of spiritual energy sufficient to move the world with wisdom, courage and peace' (pp. 356, 7).

3. Again the charge that Christianity is inadequate is based on the fallacious assumption that the Gospel received its final form in the New Testament and can undergo no development. Even if Jesus had delivered the whole of his message in a life cut prematurely short, we do not possess a complete record of it. The fact that the early disciples wrote epistles shows that they thought it was capable of expansion: and to Jesus it was not like a coin, hard, rigid, and rounded off, but a living seed capable of growth and putting forth great branches. There has been no limit to the growths in the past—growths which have drawn their life from the parent stem and which have contributed to its vitality and beauty. Upon it also have been grafted branches from other stems. It has taken into itself influences from Greek thought, Roman organization, and Northern ideals: and if it is to remain true to the spirit of its founder, it will welcome and appreciate the faith of those who are not

found in Israel. It will open itself to new influences for good, new learning and new hopes, as it has done in the past. It may seem an easy way out of a difficulty thus to assert that Christianity is adequate to the needs of the time, because it acknowledges whatever is good and true, and claims as its own the spirit in which a problem is solved aright. But it is this that makes Christianity a religion for the future. It is progressive in spirit, and while it holds fast to the principles of its founder, it is capable both of receiving new additions and undergoing inner transformations. If Christianity be limited to its ecclesiastical forms, if its outlook be confined to the intellectual horizon of the first century, then the charge that it is inadequate may be true. But history shows that it cannot be thus restricted: again and again it has burst through the bands which have been tightened around it.

Compare even the fundamental idea of religion, our conception of God, with that of early Christianity. The world in which we live and move is altogether different from that which the Apostles knew. The little canopy which covered the earth, and on which rested the floor of heaven, has expanded into

the Infinity of Space, and we are in consequence beset with a host of philosophical problems which never even suggested themselves to them. We see the orderliness of the Universe and the majestic and invariable regularity with which effect follows cause. If the unexpected happens, we no longer report the occurrence of miracle, but wait and search in patience, until fuller knowledge reveals the explanation. Religion changes of necessity with every new view of the world. As Edward Caird, the late Master of Balliol College, said 'A man's religion is the expression of his ultimate attitude to the Universe, the summed-up meaning and purport of his whole consciousness of things.'

It can be stated with little hesitation that when we think of God the concept in our minds is altogether different from that of the early believers. Though they thought of him as Spirit, they could not possibly have imagined him as inhabiting and ruling the immensity which we know. Intellectually most of their ideas of him would not be the same as ours. Even when they thought of his Fatherhood, they must have circumscribed and limited the sphere of his loving influence. Of his probable care for beings

in distant worlds they could not even surmise. In his increasing purpose throughout the ages they could not believe, for it was contrary to one of their main doctrines, that the existent world-order would scarcely survive their own generation.

Thus we might compare the beliefs of modern with those of early Christianity and we should detect changes in them all. Especially has its social message undergone developments. Yet the connexion between early and modern Christianity is genetic; the one has grown naturally out of the other.

Is there any reason for the supposition that the growth has come to an end or that Christianity is effete and decaying? We see many forms passing away before our eyes: it is one of the characteristics of our time—this dissolution of faiths which professed to reveal a complete scheme of life here and hereafter, but we find Christianity to be as young and fresh as ever, if we separate its kernel from its husk. We have to distinguish it from those points of view which Dr. Martineau says in his Essay on *The Creed of Christendom* 'have assumed that religion was to be most clearly discerned at its commencement: that the divine thought it con-

tained would be, not evolved, but obscured by time, and might be better detected in ideal shape at the beginning of the ages, than realized at the end. . . . The merchant, the scholar, the statesman, the heads of families, the owner of an estate, occupy a moral sphere, the problems and anxieties of which, it must be owned, Evangelists and Apostles do not approach. Scarcely can it be said that general rules are given, which include these particular cases. For the Christian Scriptures are singularly sparing of general rules. . . . They are felt to be an inadequate measure of our living Christianity, and to leave untouched many earnest thoughts that aspire and pray. . . . The divine element comes forth at "the end of the ages"—the retrospect of fifty generations instead of the foresight of one. . . . The Scriptures of the New Testament are not the heavenly source, but the first earthly result and expression of Christianity, and present the perishable conditions as well as the indestructible life of religion. Only by the course of time and Providence can these be disengaged from one another, and the accidents of place and nation fall away.'

Christianity to-day is vaster than at any

time in the past; it has a fuller message and a larger outlook. It is unjust to give it its narrowest interpretation and then bring the charge that it is of little service to our age. It surely has the right, like everything else, to demand that it shall be judged by its latest and loftiest manifestations.

4. The controversy on the subject of the relevancy of Christianity has been revived in recent years under the title 'Jesus or Christ?' 'Are the claims put forth for Christianity,' asks the Rev. R. Roberts, who raised the issue, with commendable directness, 'made on behalf of a spiritual "Ideal" to which we may provisionally apply the word "Christ," or are they predicated of Jesus?' The question thus put, called forth a special *Supplement of the Hibbert Journal*, which contains a valuable summary of modern conceptions of the relation of Christianity to Jesus, and it certainly stimulated in England the study of the relation of history to theology. Among the writers were a few who accepted the alternative here offered and gave their allegiance to the Jesus of history or to the Christ of modern times. But it became apparent that the alternatives were not exclusive of other possibilities.

Why should the choice be limited to these two? Is not the ideal Christianity operative in good men to-day in historic and vital connexion with the message of Jesus? This has been the contention of this chapter. Christianity to-day, with its larger content and greater explicitness on many new questions, is so intertwined below the surface with the spirit and purpose of the early Gospel that to uproot the one means the destruction of the other. To attempt to separate modern from early Christianity or to cut them in twain, is to be guilty of violence to the axiom of modern historical research—the principle of continuity. On the one hand, Christianity cannot be understood apart from Jesus, and, on the other, the significance of Jesus becomes apparent in Christianity. Here and there the two conceptions may appear in hopeless collision, and no doubt they are, for Jesus had limitations, owing to the century in which he was born, yet they all draw their life from the same spiritual source.

We have no occasion to limit the development of the Christian faith spiritually understood. Even St. Augustine, who laid the foundation of much that is most objection-

able in Christian dogmas, wrote 'What is now called Christian religion was in existence also among men of old time, and had never been lacking since the beginning of the human race, till Christ himself appeared in the flesh. Since that time the true religion has begun to be called the Christian religion.' The language of the saints is the same in all ages and their religious affinities overleap their theological differences and bind them together in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. Running through Christianity have been two religions—that of tradition and that of the spirit, and while continuity and consistency have been the proud boast of the former, the latter alone, in spite of many modes of expression, has revealed itself in an unbroken succession of good men. 'The words of Jesus never wither,' writes Auguste Sabatier in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, 'they are truly eternal, because they leave free and do not imprison in a rigid and immutable letter the spirit of life which animates them. . . . The Christian plants have all sprung from the same seed: but they vary according to the soil in which they grow. They are all of the same species, but in that species

there are innumerable varieties. How could the external result have been the same whether the divine seed fell into the heart of a simple fisherman of Galilee, or a rabbi of genius, or a thinker brought up in the school of Alexandria?' (pp. 167, 168).

To those who can thus see that it is possible to have one spirit in many forms, 'one Gospel in many dialects,' the question of 'Jesus or Christ' presents no insuperable difficulty.

The history of Christianity is largely the story of the way in which religion has been outgrowing its forms, while its essence has remained an exhaustless force. The Christian of to-day may not resemble externally any faithful man in the past: he may not search the Scriptures for guidance in any crisis of his life or in any human relationship, yet his attitude will be such in all his concerns, whether commercial or domestic, social or private, that he will appear to his contemporaries as one who is striving towards the light and in his endeavours to solve the problems of his age, he will be actuated by that spirit of love which received such clear expression in the life of Jesus. That in the future the mind of man will grow and the

social order he will introduce be loftier than that which we term Christian; that fresh truth will pour in from the nations which are becoming known to us and the wisdom of man become deeper with his increasing experience, history shows we have every reason to believe. That the conception of the kingdom of God will be enlarged and new hopes be born in the soul of the coming race we may also believe, yet the ideal of filial love to God and brotherly love to man will furnish the solution of many perplexities and retain its inspiring power. As Professor Royce writes, 'The Christian virtues will flourish in the civilization of the future, if indeed that civilization itself flourishes. For the more complex its constitution, and the swifter and vaster its social changes, the more will that civilization need love and loyalty, and the grace of spiritual unity, and the will and conscience which the Christian ideas have defined and counselled, and that atoning conflict with evil wherein the noblest expression of the spirit must always be found.'[1]

[1] *The Problem of Christianity*, p. 424.

Chapter VI

IS CHRISTIANITY FINAL?

RECENTLY the question 'Is Christianity final?' has been eagerly discussed in Liberal Christian circles, and not a few of those who are associated with the broader ideas of religion and Biblical criticism have given to it an affirmative answer. Such an answer was to be anticipated from the Roman Catholic Church, which maintains that all revealed truth was committed to her keeping, though some of her sons, under the influence of Newman's theory of development, hold that the truth originally given needed the experience of centuries to make it clear and to bring out its full content. 'The deposit of the Faith,' as it was technically styled, was so given that Christians were not conscious of all its implications, which only came to light in the course of centuries of controversy and investigation. It is on this theory of development that such

new dogmas as the Infallibility of the Pope can be formulated. It is comprehensible also that those who believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible should look for no fresh light beyond its words. But it was altogether unexpected that those who have been under the influence of progressive thought should resort to prophecy and declare thus far and no further can religion go.

That Christianity is final is contrary to the thought of Jesus or at least to the thought of one who in the early days made an effort to interpret the inner spirit of his life and message, for we read in the Gospel according to John, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' Further an early Christian belief is represented in the words of the aged Simeon, 'This child is set . . . that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed,' Luke ii. 34, 35. Jesus did not come to give men thoughts ready made, which could be theirs without effort, or to impose upon them a system which they needs must accept, or to bestow upon them a religion which demanded no endeavour. It was his aim to waken to life the spirit within them, to kindle the powers of their minds and to develop their possibilities.

Let us look at this question in the light of the Gospels. If we consider the *method* of Jesus, we shall see how far he was from formulating a final system. 'He spake unto the people in parables.' He said, 'Unto what is the kingdom of God like, and whereunto shall I liken it?' Nothing was nearer to his heart than the kingdom of God: it was his soul's dearest hope: for this he lived and taught and laboured. Yet nowhere does he say what exactly the kingdom of God is. It is within you, he tells those about him. Search there, if you would understand what it is. His vision was evidently too vast for description, his ideal too lofty for words, and only by moving others to think and imagine for themselves, could he convey to them any notion of the coming day towards which he looked.

It is just because the teaching of Jesus is not final and he never considered it so, that it is of supreme worth. He drew up no creeds, he taught no formulas, he committed his words to the winds of heaven as the sower scattereth the seed. He nowhere attempts to crystallize his message or to harden his thoughts of God and man into dogma. No better testimony to that fact

is needed than the way in which the makers of creeds have avoided the use of his words. The nearest approach we have to formulated statement is to be found in the two great commandments he selected from the Old Testament, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,' and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' and these are not definitions of belief, but assertions concerning human duty. Their purpose is moral, not intellectual. Nowhere do we find him saying what men shall believe. Always he lays the stress on love in action, 'Go and do thou likewise.' His mission was evidently not to engrave ideas on the minds of his hearers, but to stimulate their spiritual life and to quicken their thought. No one can read the Gospels intelligently without perceiving how much Jesus left men to do and to think for themselves. His disciples come to him with the request, 'Declare unto us the parable.' Even to-day when commentary after commentary has been written and the light of two thousand years of Christian experience has been shed upon the Gospels, we are far from having reached any agreement as to the essentials of Christian doctrine. He taught that the thoughts

out of many hearts must be revealed and the soul of man made active and fruitful. 'He read and understood and decided for himself,' says Mr. T. R. Glover. 'No sincere man would ever wish his word to be final for another. Jesus was conscious of his own right to think and to see and to judge, and for him, as for the modern temper, the final thing was not opinion, nor scripture, nor authority, but reality and experience. There lay the road to God.' Jesus more than other teachers in the past, we may add, appealed to inner experience as opposed to external authority and that appeal by its very nature excludes the possibility of a final system. Nothing known to us is so progressive as human thought. For we—

doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

The belief of Schleiermacher as stated by Dr. Selbie is surely right: 'Schleiermacher is of opinion that no individual need be hindered from developing a religion suited to his own nature and his own religious sense. . . . No religion has ever exhausted

the possibilities of religion, there is always a large unoccupied region for others to enter' (*Schleiermacher*, p. 70).

Had Jesus been more definite, his teaching would not have been as lofty and helpful as it is. Had he delivered to the world a closed system of thought, it might have been attained and left far behind. It would then have been an interesting subject of historic study, but it would have ceased to have any present or future value. But he left the way open, made it possible for fresh ideas to be incorporated with his own conceptions, taught that the Holy Spirit would speak through others in time to come and gave every opportunity for new interpretations of his message. Surely that is the method of every true teacher. One of John Ruskin's sayings concerning art illustrates this, 'Nothing is satisfying that is complete: every touch is false that does not suggest more than it represents.' We should bear this in mind in looking at any work of art. Does the painting we are studying really convey to us great ideas; does it give us a fuller vision of truth; does it stimulate the imagination and stir the soul? Does it merely represent something or does it suggest

thoughts and emotions which give deeper insight into Nature and Life?

The same truth holds good in religion. Long enough has the world endeavoured to find peace in final and completed systems, and always some great souls have turned from them in despair. For what earnest men have asked and desired has been the 'wages of going on'—the possibility of further service both here and hereafter.

Of any idea or doctrine we have to ask:—What does it suggest? Does it set us on a loftier road? Does it open out a way of higher progress? For only those ideas which can keep pace with our growing life and which become enriched as experience deepens, can continue to help us. Nothing indeed can be more injurious than clinging to ideas and forms which may have helped us at one period of our life, but have exhausted their power and lost their inspiration. Only those truths which have no finality about them and which expand and change as life increases, can take a permanent place in the structure of our faith. For example: One of the cardinal principles of religion is 'God is Love.' It seems a perfectly simple and definite statement, requiring little or

no elucidation. A preacher once said that it was so clear that all one could do was to illustrate it and to give examples. Others have said that a child can understand it, and to some extent that is true. But is it such an easy proposition after all? If we review our lives carefully, we may find that none of our beliefs has changed so much as this concerning the love of God and that none has been so seriously challenged in face of the modern problem of evil. Sometimes it has been to us a mere intellectual interest, at other times it has seemed a very beautiful conception of God, but when we have had to pass through hours of trial or bereavement, it has been our life's deepest need, the one truth that could dispel our darkest doubt and remove our most awful dread.

Again, when we think over this statement, we realize not only how infinite and incomprehensible God is, how variable our experience of him though belief in his existence abides, and how changeful in consequence our knowledge of him, but also how marvellously complex love is as it appears in our human life. It is not such a simple quality as we often suppose. It awakens within

us diverse emotions; it calls for varied expressions; it moves us differently according to our experiences of joy or sorrow, of hope or fear; it is one thing in family life and another in social service: it is something else in friendship. Thus we come to see that live as long as we may and strive as hard as we can, we shall never be able to sound all the height and depth of love. 'Love only comprehendeth love'; and what man is there or has there ever been who has known all the wealth of emotions included under the word? There are qualities of it being experienced to-day which were unknown in the first century. Those who have felt the thrill of international love, with all its hope and promise and high expectation have had an inward experience which was quite impossible two thousand years ago. The expansion of our knowledge of the world has given us a fresh enthusiasm for humanity.

It needs, then, a high development of the spirit, before we can enter, even in part, into the meaning of so clear a proposition as 'God is Love.' We have to ask of it, as we have to ask of every vital element of our faith, the question Jesus put concerning the

kingdom of God. Unto what is the Love of God like? And whereunto shall we liken it? For there is no finality about it or about our experience of it. We may feel it moving in our life and informing the soul within us, yet we can behold only a pale reflection of its real glory and grandeur. If Christianity is the Religion of Love, one of its chief characteristics must be its progressiveness. The last thing that should be said of it is that it is final. To bring ourselves under any closed system, is to count that we have already attained and to deprive ourselves of the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

To believe that Christianity is final is to revert to an obsolete idea of revelation. It is to suppose that God concentrated all his truth and glory in a particular period of history and exhausted all his power of communicating his will to men. It is to make one human life count for everything and to render the rest of mankind incapable of spiritual discovery. It is to assert that the last nineteen centuries have contributed nothing to religious progress. If Christianity be final, then to speak of the evolution of religion is impiety and to hope for revela-

tion of higher truth sheer folly. Comparative religion becomes a subject of mere historic interest, and the labours of Burnouf, Max Müller, and their successors nothing more than antiquarian researches. 'It is beyond dispute,' writes Sir Francis Younghusband, 'that in the first century of our era the spiritual forces of mankind were quickened to an unprecedented degree. An immense impulse forward was given, and the moral sense was made more delicately sensitive than it had ever been before. All this is unquestionable; and that mankind will derive lasting benefit from the impulses thus given is certain. But what those who mix with men of other religions cannot allow, is that the spiritual impulses of the first century in Palestine were different in kind from the experiences in other times and in other countries, or that what men then said and did was perfect and wholly incapable of improvement in any respect. They see what they consider to be similar movements occurring to-day under our own eyes. They see what seem to them higher ideals being set up, even in our own country.'[1]

The records of the past show that religious,

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1913, p. 32.

no less than other knowledge, fashions itself according to the development of civilization. Even the Christ did not appear until 'the fulness of time.' Consequently, it is as futile to look for finality in religion as in any branch of science, art or literature. It is true that we have not exhausted and it may be granted that we are not likely to exhaust the loftiest precepts of Jesus, but is there no other ancient teacher who is still able to help and inspire us, though in a lesser degree? Has not recent scholarship also been industrious of late in removing from the Gospels much that was of transitory value—unfulfilled eschatological hopes which were once vital parts of the Christian message, errors of judgment concerning the causes of disease, mistaken interpretations of scripture and wrong conceptions of the universe?

'To such an extent' says Dr. Crawford Burkitt, Norrisian Professor of Divinity, 'are the Synoptic Gospels Jewish books occupied with problems belonging originally to first century Judaism, that it makes large parts of them difficult to use as books of universal religion.'[1] The careful reader of

[1] *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, p. 30.

the New Testament will perceive the truth of this judgment. We have to give some of the parables a new and broader interpretation, if they are to be of value to us, for they had a particular and local application when originally spoken. After the parables of 'the two sons,' and 'the wicked husbandmen' in Matthew we read, 'And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them' (xxi. 45). This Gospel thus bears witness to the above quotation concerning the association of the Synoptic Gospels with passing problems. Such sayings as those concerning cleansing the cup, tithing of mint and rue, making broad of phylacteries and the ancient method of keeping the Sabbath, had a special significance they no longer possess, while the chapters dealing with the signs of the last times no longer interest those who accept the modern conception of the universe. Twenty years ago the present Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Gore, said that if there were no demons Jesus was seriously misled about the nature of evil and was not even a true prophet. 'No one who believes in our Lord as the absolutely trustworthy teacher

can doubt that we really do have dealings with good and bad spirits—angels and devils. . . . Yes, "Satan," "the adversary," "the prince of the power of the air" and all the hosts of darkness, are real beings, who really tempt us as they tempted our Lord.'[1] To-day no lawyer would venture to plead in extenuation of a crime that the culprit was possessed, and the ordinary citizen does not shelve his responsibility for his wrongdoing behind such texts as, 'then cometh the devil and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved,' and 'behold, Satan asked to have you' (Luke viii. 12, xxii. 31). Further, any final authority ought to be settled and not liable to change, but within the New Testament itself we find important variations in the sayings as well as in the record of life of Jesus, for instance, Luke's statement of the Beatitudes differs considerably from Matthew's (Compare Matthew v. 3f. with Luke vi. 20f.). 'By the time the Christians began to preserve in writing the record of the origin of their religion, deep and ever-widening gulfs had intervened between them and the events. . . . The question that the

[1] *The Creed of a Christian*, pp. 98. 99.

scientific investigator has to ask is not why so much of our material seems to be, strictly speaking, unhistorical, but how it comes to pass that any real historical memory of Jesus was preserved. . . . Those who feel themselves free to criticize the Gospel miracles are bound to examine the credentials of the Gospel Sayings.'[1] These are the statements of Dr. Burkitt, one of the greatest modern authorities on the Gospels, whose labours have done much to elucidate the teaching of Jesus. As they stand, then, many passages in the Gospels have a transitory value unless reinterpreted, and others have been subjected to alteration, but to admit these two unavoidable facts involves the surrender of the contention that Christianity is final. If we cannot claim finality for the teaching of the Gospels, at what other stage can we legitimately fix a limit to Christian development?

We are far from being shut in between the covers of the New Testament for our faith. In some things we have passed beyond the early Christians, and our more extensive knowledge has led to a saner belief in many questions than that possessed by the apostles.

[1] *Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, pp. 8, 15, 17.

This is only a bald statement of a fact. It is true, and why should we hesitate to give expression to it ?

It has been pointed out by Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter that when we speak of the finality of the Christian religion, we must decide first, which Christian religion is intended, for there are many forms of it, from Roman Catholic to Theistic. If we limit ourselves to the Gospels, we have still to determine which part of them we mean. Further, the interpretations of New Testament exegetes are diverse and confusing. Different men claim finality for different passages and discount the claims of others. 'It finally comes to this,' says Wrede, 'that each critic retains whatever portion of the traditional sayings can be fitted into his construction of the facts and his conception of historical possibility and rejects the rest.'[1] In view also of the changes which have taken place in the Christian religion owing to the recent study of the early documents, we cannot avoid the conclusion that still further developments are in store.

Yet another serious difficulty suggests

[1] Quoted by Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 331.

itself. We may, by expanding the meaning of passages in the Gospels, find all our faith within them, but the religion of many an earnest modern man includes more than they contain. There are elements in it which cannot be historically traced to them. For instance, it is still believed by many Christians that the Gospels teach that heaven is a definite place and salvation a fixed state, a belief which was held by all until recent times. As modern men we believe in progressive life, both here and hereafter, which is a religious principle of the highest order, because with it our whole conception of redemption has been changed. To some of us this has come through Buddhist teaching and to others through the modern teaching of evolution. If we have found it at all in the Gospels, we have read it into them.

God speaks through human experience, and as this varies from age to age, the highest message is not and cannot be static. We cannot close our eyes against the light which has shone through our own time, or to the modifications which have taken place in all forms of Christian thought. Much as we may be assisted by teachers and leaders, their words can only appeal to us as our own

consciousness of God and truth is awakened. No shrine is so sacred for man as his own heart and nothing at the last is so holy as the integrity of his own soul. Whatever conflicts with that, no matter what authority supports it, must be rejected. 'Institutions arise as they are needed,' wrote Theodore Parker, 'and fall when their work is done. Of these things nothing is fixed. Institutions are provisional, man only is final.'[1] Often when men speak of the 'Living Christ' or the 'continued creative presence of Christ' they mean simply the spirit of man, in its highest known developments. They reflect their noblest spirit and best thought into the Gospels, and thus unwittingly deny the finality or completeness of any past form of Christianity.

Fifty years ago theologians and popular preachers were declaring that Jesus gave complete satisfaction for the sins of the world—a doctrine of which we have heard less and less in recent times. Paul wrote to the Colossians, 'I rejoice in my sufferings and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ' (i. 24). He

[1] *Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion*, Book V, ch. vii.

evidently thought that the suffering of more than one soul was necessary. His own hardships by land and sea, the endurance and agony of others, the noble acts of self-denial of which he was daily a witness, the heroic self-surrender and fortitude of martyrs who came after him, the unswerving allegiance of men and the unhesitating faithfulness of women in times of persecution, were all indispensable for the proclamation of the truth and the redemption of the world. And as with the afflictions, so with the message. Paul's own words and writings, his insight and inspiration, and the knowledge gained by centuries of noble living and experience, contribute to the body of Christian truth. What reason have we to limit the divine witness to those who have cried, 'Lord, Lord!'? Are there not others who also have done the will of the Father in heaven? 'Whatever things have been rightly said among all men,' said Justin Martyr, 'are the property of us Christians.' Has Greek philosophy said anything rightly? It belongs to us Christians, and we must own it. Do the religions of the East contain any truth? We must accept it. Is there anything helpful in modern writings?

It must be regarded as sacred as if it were in Holy Writ. If Christianity is a closed system claiming finality, it will be left behind by the forces of progress and will pass away. But if it is 'a free appropriative spirit,' which takes into itself all that is beautiful and true and good, then it is as eternal as the soul of man.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

In this chapter we may consider the question of the authority of the words of Jesus. Recent researches into the history and teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees have led to a subversion of the traditional Christian view that they were all hypocrites, devoid of any high and worthy view of life. Their religion, the religion of the Torah, which included not merely the Law but the Prophets together with their interpretation and also the application of these two great sources of Hebrew thought to pressing problems, was not the empty formalism it has too often been represented to be. A few years ago a Biblical scholar of the Jewish race, Mr. C. G. Montefiore, urged that the teaching of the Pharisees had only

to be studied by unbiased scholars and it would be perceived that it deserved praise instead of the ignominy which had been unwarrantably heaped upon it.[1] There is promise to-day that Rabbinical religion will not suffer from neglect and will not in future be misrepresented. One of our modern Aramaic scholars, Mr. Travers Herford, in his illuminating volume *Pharisaism*, summed up his judgment of the scribes and Pharisees in these significant words, 'Saints and Sages they were who served God faithfully and found in the Torah his full and perfect word. And to me, though not walking in their way, nor sharing in all their beliefs, yet drawn to them across the ages, they have been the companions and friends of many a year' (pp. 334–5).

It is not unsafe to prophesy that in a short time all enlightened pulpit teaching will assume a different tone from that to which men have been long accustomed, towards these scribes and Pharisees, who blind as they may have been to some truths clear to us, were so deadly in earnest about their religion that they were prepared to lay down their lives on its behalf. Nevertheless,

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1903.

the evidence is strong that they did show opposition to Jesus and his mission, and though this may have been exaggerated by the disciples who suffered persecution at their hands, the contrast between their doctrines and the Gospel, and between their system and the method of Jesus, was so marked that it astonished the people.

The difference is not hard to find. The scribes and the Pharisees were bound by the Scriptures of the past, both Biblical and Rabbinical, and in all cases of difficulty, in all questions of faith and morals, they turned to these for guidance, being still further limited by a system of interpretation which they had inherited. Acting in perfect honesty and unimpeachable faithfulness to their records, they were in consequence sometimes guilty of mere verbal quibbles and ingenious devices, which led them to exalt the letter above the spirit, and occasionally trapped them into the neglect of the weightier matters of the law. Thus, their authority was scriptural as that of Protestantism has been until recently.

Jesus, on the other hand, while he did not destroy the law and the prophets but supported his teaching by their words,

endeavoured to fulfil them by making appeal to the spirit of righteousness and aspiration in man, out of which the law and the prophets had taken their origin. His was a direct appeal to the hearts of his hearers, and as they listened to him, they felt the deeps of their souls moved within them. He abandoned the old textual method, and where the ancient commandments conflicted with right, he did not hesitate to declare, 'Ye have heard it said to them of old time, but I say unto you.' In so doing he was fulfilling the spirit and purpose of the old legislators, just as to-day a man by his high integrity may be nearer the spirit of the old Puritans, which has done much to make and build up England, than if he slavishly strove to follow their external observances.

Unconsciously during the past few years Protestants, and Nonconformists in particular, have turned from the Pharisaic method to that of Jesus. In all questions of morality and religion appeal is being made more and more to the conscience and reason of man. While numerous Passive Resisters to the Education Act have refused to pay the rate on conscientious grounds, the present writer has watched in vain for the

appearance of an objector who appealed to scripture. The authority for spiritual truth is being sought, where Jesus found it, in the nature of man.

That is the first fact we may note concerning the authority of Jesus, that it received its support and gained its confirmation in the witness of the living God in the souls of the men who listened to him. But we are rightly told that this is not enough. We must try to discover what was the belief of Jesus concerning his message. Did he regard it as springing out of his own personal being merely, as the product of the working of his own intellect, or did he believe that the truth which he spoke had an authority higher than his own? There are abundant proofs that he was convinced that his message came *through* him rather than from him, and that his words had their origin in Divine inspiration. It is hardly necessary to quote texts to substantiate this. It is reported that he said, no doubt with an allusion to his own teaching, 'Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it'; and if we are to trust the testimony of the Fourth Gospel, he also said, 'My teaching is not mine, but his

that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself.'

In the consciousness of dependence upon God, and in the awareness that the Truth is superior to him, he was no exception to the universal rule. He also was embarked on a voyage of discovery. His message was not his own creating ; it was what he found in his experience of God. According to the words quoted above, he appealed to those about him to believe that it was his *discovery* and not his *creation*. He apparently resented the suggestion that he was proclaiming a doctrine which was peculiarly his own. He believed that it belonged to the very constitution and make of the world. Of every truth, whensoever or by whomsoever uttered, the same may be said. It is built into the very structure of the universe, and only a misguided sophistry will detach it. All truth is thus discovery, never invention—

> Out from the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old ;
> The litanies of nations came,
> Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
> Up from the burning core below—

The canticles of love and woe;
The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

The claim Jesus made was made by all the Hebrew prophets before him. They too felt that God spoke through them and that the words they delivered had a higher authority than the human. With unhesitating confidence they prefaced their messages with the declaration, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Always they felt they were moved forward by a force that was irresistible. That is the burden of the Book of Jonah. It is what Jeremiah meant when he wrote, 'If I say, I will make no more mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in mine heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am wearying with forbearing, and I cannot contain' (xx. 9). Luke writes: 'In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, the word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness' (iii. 1, 2). Thus this consciousness of Divine inspiration

is not limited to Jesus, nor is it confined to the Bible.

Luther at the Imperial Diet cried out, 'Here stand I, I cannot do otherwise. So help me God.' 'The cry of God wills it,' wrote Mazzini, 'must be the eternal watch-word of every undertaking like our own.' Immanuel Kant found that the highest moral truths come to us with a Categorical Imperative, with an authority that cannot be doubted, disputed, or denied. And Arthur Clough, amid the wrestlings of many doubts, found how independent of human opinion truth always is.

> It fortifies my soul to know
> That, though I perish, Truth is so:
> That, howsoe'er I stray and range
> Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change
> I steadier step, when I recall
> That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

This simple conviction of the undeniableness of truth becomes an overpowering inner compulsion in every earnest man. It is borne in upon him with an authority before which he needs must bend or else forgo all that is sacred and makes life dear. He cannot always explain the reasons for his belief, but he has had visions which have

convinced him beyond his will. He may be mistaken, and sometimes is mistaken, but that does not in any way lessen his own personal sense of divine guidance.

The authority of Jesus differed in degree but not in kind from that which the saints of every nation have possessed. His words came with greater force as words always must, when they come from a man of loftier life. His words were truer than those of other prophets, as they were certain to be, seeing that he lived more closely to the divine heart.

'Heaven and earth,' he once said, 'shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' This can no longer be regarded as strictly accurate. The strife of modern times has been concerning the actual words of Jesus, and some of us hope that beneath some ruin may be found a truer record of his sayings than that contained in any of the manuscripts we now possess. The actual words he spoke, save five or six, are lost, for he spoke in Aramaic and our Gospels are written in Greek.

This does not, however, diminish in any way the authoritativeness of his message, save for those who are illogical enough to

suppose that because an error crept in here and there, therefore all must be wrong. We are more likely to be worthy followers of any teacher, if we do not render him that blind, unreasoning homage which refuses to question and inquire, for where we do follow him, we shall give to him the full allegiance of our hearts and the intelligent devotion of our minds. We shall feel the persuasiveness of the words of Jesus and have a deeper understanding of the moral power of his character. That we should surrender our consciences to him or put our souls into his keeping, Jesus himself never asked, despite all that modern theologians say concerning his authority being absolute and eternal. Always he endeavours to teach men the greatness of their inward nature, to show them the reality of their sonship to God and to convince them that the kingdom of heaven is within them. It would involve the surrender of our manhood and the severance of our souls from the living God, if we placed him on the throne of conscience. His words may and do quicken our sense of right, but finally the decision rests with our inmost selves. And if ever we feel that conscience urges one thing and Jesus another, then the

voice of the living God in the soul must be accepted as supreme. We have the right to bring even his words to the test of human experience, thought, and aspiration. Emerson said: 'A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across the mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages.'[1]

Could Jesus have looked into the future and seen the centuries of slow development which awaited the human race, he would no doubt, have expressed some truths differently, and he would have instructed his disciples to be careful to preserve his words for the guidance of future generations. He might have committed the essentials of his message to writing. If he had lived in our time he would have applied his principles to some of our problems, and the practical result would have been an enlargement of his message.

[1] *Essays:* Self-Reliance.

Chapter VII

THE FORMS OF CHRISTIANITY

INVESTIGATIONS into the history of the religions of the world have substantiated the belief that revelation is a gradual process conditioned by the intellectual, moral and spiritual development of man. While religion has been continuous in its growth, it has not been confined to one type. We see different forms of faith emerging from time to time, administering to the spiritual needs of the community and then declining in power, it may be to be revived later. The religion of the spirit represented by the Hebrew prophets is followed by the religion of Law, sacerdotal in character, as seen in the Book of Leviticus, and afterwards is wakened to new, more vigorous and more beautiful life in the teaching of Jesus. Later again we witness the reassertion of sacerdotal claims based ostensibly on that teaching itself. Behind all the forms of

faith existing to-day there is a history which can be traced : they are all linked with the faith of the past : not one of them is entirely new. It is because of this that the attempt to group the diverse sects of Christianity to-day is not altogether a hopeless undertaking. Such a grouping is necessary, if we are going to see the principles which underlie them.

In England we think of the various religions under the three great sections, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Nonconformist. But this is an arbitrary division, historic in origin and external in character. It conveys to us little or no idea of the principles which are the causes of the continuance of the divisions to-day, and takes no account of the undoubted fact that men in different denominations are often in close sympathy with each other. It is well known that some priests in the Church of England are so near to Rome that Pope Pius the Ninth's remark concerning Dr. Pusey, 'He is like a bell which remains outside but rings people into the Church,' might with justice be applied to them. Other Anglican Churchmen approximate in belief to the Evangelical Nonconformists and would fain join hands with

them, especially in missionary endeavour; while others again, influenced by modern scholarship and the literary study of the Bible, have affinity to those men and women who are seeking for a broader, more liberal, and more progressive faith.

Under these circumstances, if we desire to understand whatever unity may underlie the divisions of Christianity to-day, we have to abandon the historic classification. Can we find another, more satisfactory, to take its place—one that will overleap the external boundaries of the sects and include in their proper class those who are in intellectual and spiritual accord? Objections are sure to be raised to any classification, but the following seems to meet most of the requirements. Religion, as we see it in Europe to-day, takes three forms which may be thus distinguished—(1) the sacramental or sacerdotal; (2) the evangelical or propitiatory; and (3) the ethical. If we were considering religion as a whole, we should have to include a fourth type, namely, the contemplative, which would cover some of the religions of India and the East.

Sacerdotal Christianity is represented to-day by the Roman Catholics and High

Churchmen: sacrificial Christianity by the Evangelicals in many churches: and ethical Christianity by the Unitarians and a great number of others, both inside and outside the Churches, who would rather trust to the progressive revelation in the expanding life of man than rely upon tradition and ancient expressions of doctrine. Of course, the cleavage between these three is not altogether distinct: each class has some of the qualities and principles of the other. The ethical note often rings clear from the lips of the Roman Catholic preacher, and individual and social righteousness is clearly and forcibly insisted upon by the High Churchman; but for both the sacraments are the divinely appointed and only sure 'means of grace.' Without the sacraments, however moral a man may be, he runs the risk of missing the highest blessings and falls short of the grace of God. A short while ago the present writer heard an Anglican clergyman declare from the altar steps that 'we do not know certainly whether God is present with us when we assemble for praise and prayer: we do not certainly know whether he is with us when we ponder upon his holy word: but this we know that he is certainly with us when we partake of his

blessed sacrament.' Here the external rite is placed above the inward aspiration and the faith of the recipient, and also above the Bible, which has been, until recently, the bulwark of the Protestant Churches. The Evangelical likewise delivers a moral message, but according to him the only way to ensure salvation in the life to come, is to believe in the atoning efficacy of Christ's death. And among the Unitarians and other broad thinkers who believe that morality is the essential basis of religion there are those who think that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is helpful towards the culture of the soul; and all of them recognize the uplifting influence such self-sacrifice as that displayed by Jesus and other martyrs for truth has had and will continue to have upon the character of men.

Nevertheless, though these divisions are not so distinct as to be mutually exclusive, they are so clear as to have been the source of endless controversy and multiform secession.

1. Sacerdotal Christianity has during recent years made rapid progress and, confident in its strength, has put forth the claim that it is the only form of religion that can be

legitimately recognized. It reveals all its old intolerance and fighting vigour, excluding from communion all who neglect the ordinances of the Church. A hundred years ago it was supposed that it would never again lift its head in England, but, supported by men of undoubted learning and piety, such as Pusey, Keble, Newman, and Manning, it regained a vast amount of its old power and has become so popular that men who are opposed to the claims of Rome fail to see its antagonism to the cardinal principles of the religion which has been the secret source of England's love of liberty and her consequent greatness. What is called the Oxford Movement, the effort to re-establish the Church in her ancient authority, was one of the chief religious features of the nineteenth century. Much of its success was due to the highly-coloured pictures which were drawn of the Church as the protector of the weak and the patron of the arts. Newman and others turned to admirable service the revived interest in history and archæology, but they forced upon facts interpretations which they could not legitimately sustain. In their devotion to their cause they unwittingly drew largely upon their

imaginations, covered with glamour all that exalted the Church, and failed to see the abuses which had tarnished her glory. They pointed to the refining influence her teaching and her sacraments had had upon the people, especially in the early Christian and medieval ages. When kings and lords were bent only upon war and oppression, the Church taught a gentler and a sweeter way and stood forth as the champion of the defenceless. In ages marked by cruelty she spoke of the graces and tenderness of Mother Mary; she inspired the sculptor, the architect, the painter, and the musician: she originated and promoted the various charities, the hospitals, the schools and colleges, and fostered all the higher sides of man's nature. If we relied upon High Church and Roman Catholic apologetic, we should be led to suppose that the dreams of man were realized under the influence of the Church in the Middle Ages. There is, however, another side, a tale of exaction, injustice, and arrogance. But let not that blind us to the splendid work the Church did often accomplish in face of violent and serious opposition.

Let it also be freely admitted that the men who led the Oxford Movement brought into

English religion a spirit of devotion and a love of the arts which refine the life of man. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century we are conscious of the incoming of a new spirit of reverence in worship, strangely wanting in the eighteenth, which was largely the result of their labours. Indeed we have here a witness to the marvellous influence of personality, for these men by the sheer weight of their character associated with a religion, external in nature, an inward moral force which was regenerating and softening in purpose and effect, and illustrated their faith by abundant examples drawn from their scholarly researches into the lives of the saints. Everything that would awaken the sentiments of awe and wonder, and make worship attractive—whether more beautiful church buildings, more ornate services, or more frequent and more solemn celebration of Holy Communion—was developed. And so great was the influence exerted that even those who were opposed to the ideas and purposes of the Movement were affected by the effort thus made to win men's allegiance to religion and to give to worship a stateliness which it lacked.

Having thus to acknowledge a debt to this

new influence in modern English Christianity, we would speak of it with respect and with some gratitude. Yet we cannot hide from ourselves the serious errors on which the whole structure of it is built, nor can we avoid seeing its departure from the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.

Two things impress us as we read the history of the Church, even as it is told by those who are most desirous of furthering her sacerdotal claims and whose loyalty tempts them to overdraw the picture of her beauty and purity. First, these reforms and triumphs over wrong are after all the work of ethical Christianity. They are the outcome of the divine ideas working in the soul of men and have not resulted from institutions or offices, independently of human character. They are the work of the Church —no one can dispute it—but they are due to her moral and spiritual influence, not her sacramental efficacy. Very often also we have to look beyond Christianity itself for the origin of some of the regenerating powers. The Crusades brought the European Knights and soldiers into touch with a civilization which was higher than their own, and the Fall of Constantinople drove to the West

scholars who were steeped in classical literature. Both gave a great stimulus to the intellectual, and ultimately to the moral, development of the West.

In the second place, granted that the Church did stay the hand of the oppressor in the Middle Ages, it by no means follows that her methods are suited for to-day. The modern spirit of liberty and the arrival of constitutional government are altogether opposed to the old Feudalism. Ecclesiastical control, excellent as it may be for some conditions of society, becomes obsolete when man feels he can use his own judgment and fight his own battles, and when new virtues, such as self-reliance and truth-seeking, blossom in his soul. And this form of Christianity would keep him in tutelage still and make him loyal at the expense of his virility. This is one of its greatest disadvantages. As Dr. Fairbairn has said in this connexion: 'Laws good for childhood may be bad for manhood; what makes a man of a child is excellent, but what makes a child of a man is evil.'

But the great fallacy of all sacerdotal religion is that it is a practical denial of the doctrine of the sonship of man to God, which

surely was one of the chief messages of Jesus. It asserts that it is baptism 'which cleanses us from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God, and members of the Church.'[1] Whence it follows that the Greek poet was wrong in the statement, approved by Paul, 'we are also his offspring,' and that we become such only by being born again in the Church.

This doctrine leads its adherents to conclusions which detract from the dignity of man and belittle the powers with which God has endowed the soul. Newman put this plainly, when, in a famous passage, he said that men had to take their choice between Atheism and Catholicism, as though there were nothing in the nature of man that would lead him to God unless it first led him into the Catholic Church. 'I came to the conclusion that there was no medium in true philosophy, between Atheism and Catholicity, and that a perfectly consistent mind, under those circumstances in which it finds itself here below, must embrace either the

[1] *A Catechism of Christian Doctrine approved by the Cardinal Archbishops and Bishops of England and Wales*, edit. 1895. Compare the Anglican Catechism—'we are hereby made the children of grace.'

one or the other. And I hold this still."[1] That this was not a passing thought with him is proved by his reference to it elsewhere. 'Unlearn Catholicism, and you open the way to your becoming Protestant, Unitarian, Deist, Pantheist, Sceptic, in a dreadful, but inevitable succession."[2] Thus reason, conscience, and all our other divine endowments are of no avail, unless we are members of the Catholic Church.[3]

Sacerdotalism is the philosophical denial of mysticism, which is attracting considerable interest at the present time, yet the two have sometimes been found together. It is also the denial of the truths that the kingdom of God is within us and that we are the temples of God. The impression the Gospels leave upon us is that Jesus was fighting this form of religion throughout his ministry. That it has come to claim him as its founder is the greatest irony of Christian history. If any faith was anti-sacerdotal in its early form, it was Christianity. It knew little of rites, symbols, crucifixes, or even crosses: the

[1] *Apologia*, p. 198, edit. 1874.

[2] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 282.

[3] See Fairbairn's *Catholicism: Roman and Anglican*, ch. III.

Lord's Supper was simply a brotherly meal and the confession of allegiance to Jesus was adequate, according to Paul, without baptism. It was so lacking in the instruments and externalities of faith that for many years the Christians were termed Atheists, so difficult was it for people who had been accustomed to religion with idols to believe that it could exist apart from things seen. Further, the early Christians accepted the idea of 'universal priesthood,' all the followers of Jesus being under the inspiration of God. It took not less than three centuries to destroy this belief and to limit the administration of the Eucharist to an ordained priesthood.

Besides the virtual denial of man's filial relationship to God there is involved in sacerdotalism the belief, so contrary both to human experience and scientific psychology, that the means of grace are mechanical and even magical in their working, being independent of human character. According to this idea, the noblest and most saintly man cannot convey the blessings of God so surely as the duly ordained priest—who may be immoral in his life.

A claim of this kind ought to be founded on incontrovertible proof, but there is no

suggestion in the New Testament that anything like the later conception of the priesthood was contemplated either by Jesus or his immediate disciples. It is impossible to suppose that such a purpose should ever have entered into the thought of him who insisted on the necessity of becoming like little children, who said that 'the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,' and who in the closing days of his life, on the Tuesday prior to his crucifixion, made generosity of spirit the test of discipleship to him. 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these ye did it unto me.' Even if we granted that he did intend to found a hierarchy, there are still insuperable difficulties in the way of proving the succession either on behalf of Rome or any other existent sacerdotal order.

In a volume entitled *English Church Teaching on Faith, Life, and Order* a writer says:—'From the mechanical theory of Grace we wholly dissent on Scriptural grounds, historical grounds, and on our position as members of the Church of England. . . . It is nowhere stated that episcopal ordination is essential either to the Sacraments or the Covenant which they

seal, or to the Grace which they convey.' This was written before the days of the Kikuyu Conference, and it is supported by the fifty-fifth Canon of the Church of England which orders that prayer shall be offered 'especially for the Churches of England Scotland and Ireland,' that of Scotland being Presbyterian at the time the Canon was drawn up. It represents the broadest position in the Church of England. But that Church, while it may not be committed to the mechanical theory so far as the Sacraments are concerned, teaches by its nineteenth Article that one sign of the visible Church is that 'the Sacraments are duly administered.' This excludes the Quakers and many other earnest and sincere men to whom the Sacraments often form the chief barrier to Church membership. The difficulty may of course be overcome by maintaining that the word 'visible' implies the correlative 'invisible.' Accepting this explanation it is possible for Anglicans not only to include the Quakers in the Church but to repeat the words of that noble soul, Frederick Robertson of Brighton, 'But beyond the limits of the Visible, is there no true Church? Are Plato, Socrates, Marcus

Aurelius, and such as they to be reckoned by us as lost? Surely not. The Church exists for the purpose of educating souls for heaven: but it would be a perversion of this purpose were we to think that goodness will not be received by God, because it has not been educated by the Church. Goodness is goodness, find it where we may.' The same idea is repeated in *Foundations*, by the Rev. William Temple :—'Abraham and Isaiah, Socrates and Phidias, Buddha and Confucius, must be reckoned as *each in his degree*, a representative and organ of the eternal Church' (p. 341, n.).

Such statements, however, are denials of the sacerdotal idea and illustrate how far apart in matters of faith and doctrine the members of the Church of England often are. This must be a discomforting reflection to those who accept the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, for the men who hold these diverse opinions have received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands and are supposed to be specially qualified teachers of doctrine.

2. The type of Christianity which has prevailed in Protestantism has been the evangelical or sacrificial. Its two great

doctrines have been the Atonement and Justification by Faith. Though these doctrines received separate definition in the Thirty-nine Articles and in other Confessions of Faith, they, nevertheless, have been closely associated. For instance, in the declaration that 'we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith,' the word 'merit' has been understood to have a special and sometimes an exclusive reference to the atoning efficacy of his death.

Evangelical Christianity shows affinity to those religions of ancient times which offered up sacrifices in the hope that they would appease the wrath of God and gain from him remission of sins. They were termed 'piacular' by Robertson Smith. Yet it differs considerably from these, for it depends upon individual faith, and priests are not essential to it. In the Roman and other Episcopalian Churches priests are necessary because the Mass is regarded as sacrificial in character: every time it is celebrated Christ is supposed to be offered up again.

Evangelical Christianity awakened the religious life of England at one of its most critical periods and showed that religion was

by no means a spent force. It seemed, in the early years of the eighteenth century, as though the stimulus given to personal faith by the Reformation had ceased and that the sufferings for conscience' sake by the Nonconformists of 1662 had been forgotten. Butler wrote in 1736 :—'It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it, as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment.'[1]

Butler's own intellectual acumen, especially the power with which he substantiated his argument for religion and morality from the nature of man, and William Law's deep piety, as revealed in his *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, did much to deliver the country from its condition of spiritual apathy, but these writers effected little compared with the preachers of the Evangelical Revival, headed by the Wesleys and Whitefield. The preachers of this movement did not defend Christianity with intellectual

[1] Advertisement prefixed to First Edition of *The Analogy of Religion*.

weapons; they applied it to the lives of their hearers. Theirs was the more direct and practical method, and it was continued down to the present century. Nor can it be said to have accomplished its work, for in the most effective preaching to-day we may detect the old evangelical note, though the evangelical doctrines are absent. It is right that this should be remembered.

Evangelical Christianity has had remarkable power over the hearts of men. It has made its appeal to the emotions and conscience rather than to the understanding, and has evoked enthusiasm, devotion and self-sacrifice which are truly admirable. It has inspired fervent zeal and splendid heroism. Its missionaries have joyfully given up the comforts and amenities of civilized life and gone forth to preach to savage tribes. In the presence of danger they have been as fearless as the early martyrs, and strengthened by the thought that Christ died for them, they have shown themselves ready to lay down their lives in his cause.

We must seek for the secret of this influence, for we may rest assured that the devotion shown was due to the spiritual ideas Evangelical Christians found in their doc-

trine or associated with it. If we can break the husk of any erroneous dogma, we shall find a kernel of truth which was the secret of its inspiration. Beneath even the doctrine of eternal hell, which was dear at one time to Evangelical Christians, is the teaching that it is a heinous thing to do evil, and also that our lives here have an abiding significance.

Nothing, however, has been more striking among the many changes of the early years of the twentieth century than the rapidity with which this form of Christianity has lost its hold. Its appeals have ceased to move its hearers: its revivalistic efforts have diminished both in number and in power: its most earnest preachers are milder in tone and more subdued in manner than their predecessors of a generation ago; and its stirring stories of marvellous conversions are comparatively few. Conversions still take place: men turn from the evil to the good, but the whole attitude of the modern mind has changed. Those who feel the stirrings of a new and holier life are not expected to declare publicly, at the moment of their resolve, that grace has entered into their hearts, but to prove by their altered conduct

that they have pledged themselves to the higher life.

Several factors in modern thought have militated against Evangelicalism and tended to make it irrelevant. Among them may be enumerated—the belief in the love as opposed to the fear of God, the conviction that there is a law of moral sequence and consequently no final day of judgment, the growth of the idea that life hereafter is evolutionary as it is here, and the deepening sense of personal responsibility for one's life. The expansion of our knowledge of the universe has made the old theological schemes appear puerile, especially the idea that the whole purpose of creation is to be summed up in the story of our own little planet. Further, the need of a sacrifice and a redeemer was based, according to Evangelical theology, upon the fall of Adam and the consequent inherent sinfulness of human nature. Adam has ceased to be regarded as an historic figure and the essential sinfulness of man is discredited. The modern man perceives the divine possibilities not only of his intellectual, emotional, and moral life, but also of his physical being. He finds it difficult to say with Paul, 'I know that in me, that is, in

my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.' He feels the message of Browning is truer.

> Let us not always say,
> Spite of flesh to-day
> I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!
> As the bird wings and sings,
> Let us cry 'All good things
> Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul.'

3. We come now to Ethical Christianity. The name is chosen not with the idea that it is superior to the other forms of Christianity. There are those who if the choice had to be made, would prefer that the term catholic or evangelical should be prefixed to the faith they hold. Nor is it suggested that these other forms have not a definite moral message. The term Ethical Christianity is used to designate that form of religion which asserts that morality is the basis of faith, and salvation is to be sought not so much in sacrament or in atoning sacrifice as in goodness and godliness of life. When it finds itself in antagonism to other forms, it is true that it is inclined to repeat the words of Isaiah: 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. . . . Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul

hateth. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.'

This form of Christianity has spread so rapidly in recent years and has made such headway both in Free Churches and in those bound to the old doctrines by their Trust Deeds, that it might easily be regarded as of modern origin. It is the faith of most religious men who on doctrinal grounds have severed their connexion with organized religion. It is true that men have only just begun to see its significance, but we may find traces of this form of religion early in history. We may perceive it in those strivings of early man to enter into communion with God, in the longing not merely to appease his wrath but to share his life. Always within the earnest man was the yearning to come into touch with something higher, and when he had not learnt to look inward or upward but only outward, he still thought it was possible to commune with God. We to-day can look back with sympathetic understanding to those sacrifices which Robertson Smith termed 'mystic'—sacrifices of animals and of the

fruits of the field which were expressive of man's kinship to the divine. When the nation or family gathered in the temple or around the hearth and partook of the mystic meal of communion and believed God was present at the feast, then worshipper and worshipped were supposed to share one life. It has been thought that the Jewish feast of the Passover was originally of this nature. The spiritual character of their religion prevented the Jews from supposing that God actually partook of the food, but the thought that he was with them lingered on and the feast was believed to be made sacred by his presence. This idea survives in some forms of the Communion Service, it being regarded not as a sacrifice, but as a means by which the communicants are brought into touch with the Unseen, and spiritual life flows into their souls.

The real meaning of anything, however, is not to be found at its beginning but in its latest development. And the human race has not discovered anything higher than the doctrine that we are the sons of God and capable of partaking of the divine life, though it is ever exhibiting new forms of this truth.

Whatever may be the doubt about the

origin of Sacerdotal or Evangelical Christianity, it is clear that Ethical Christianity begins in the teaching of Jesus and receives its charter from him. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount his moral message rings clear. One of its highest expressions is to be found in the words: 'Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.' It is the call to let his Spirit live and move and have its being in us.

Brief as the first three Gospels are, about a third of them is taken up with an account of the last week of the life of Jesus. What an eventful week it was, marked by strenuous exertion, profound thought, and deep experience, and illustrating that life must be measured by its intensity and quality! The triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, the disputes with the Pharisees concerning tribute, and with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, the judgment of the value of the widow's mite, the denunciation of the officialism of the national religion, the weeping over Jerusalem, the agony in Gethsemane, the betrayal, the trial, the crucifixion, were all crowded into five days. It is natural for us to expect that within these crowded hours, when the consciousness of the near approach of his

death had taken possession of him, that he would make some brief statement of the essence of his teaching, which the disciples could easily remember. We are not disappointed, for we have his own summary, given in simple language so that all may know and understand. 'And he said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' (Matt. 22^{37-40}.) Further, as though he were anxious that this great principle of love should not be misunderstood, he declared that the test of discipleship to him was morality of action and generosity of purpose. (Matt. 25^{40}.)

No mention is made here of any doctrine of his personality or his death or the sacraments. Whoever accepts these two commandments and strives to fulfil this test, whatever his race, whatever his calling, whatever his creed, is a follower of Jesus and a Christian in the highest sense of that word. What a comprehensive and at the same time exclusive statement this is! How it illus-

trates and lights up the parable of the sheep and the goats and the saying that 'Many that are first shall be last and the last first'! How it takes into the Christian fold many an earnest spirit fighting with a passionate love of right, who believes that Christianity is a failure and has no message for him! How easy it is to see that under this rule 'many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven'! How it excludes every hard, unloving, and unforgiving man, who is externally faithful to his Church, attentive to religious ceremonies, and who may even believe that he is one of 'the chosen of God'! These two divine ideas —love to God and love to man—are Christianity, and all history and all life that are truly Christian are a commentary on them: and all history and all life, though termed ecclesiastical, religious, or Christian, which are not expressions of them, have no part or lot with the spirit and purpose of the founder of our faith. It was to be expected that other and opposed ideas should creep in, but they need not obscure for anyone the main principles of the Gospel.

It is necessary for those of us who term

ourselves ethical Christians to avoid every species of narrowness. If we meet anyone or know of anyone who finds the sacraments awaken his love for God or stimulate his enthusiasm for humanity, or anyone who is helped to give expression to these great principles by his belief in the Atonement, then let us confess that for him, though not for us, they may be the way to salvation. The God who in days of old helped man upward by means of stocks and stones, totems and fetishes, is certainly able to help him by ceremonies and beliefs which come to him hallowed with many sacred associations. Let us not forget that these men find something in these doctrines which we cannot. To us they may be hindrances, but if they help any human soul to nobler love or deeper reverence let us rejoice.

These Christian principles have been manifested in many ways. Life, complex as it is, almost to confusion, is based on a few very simple ideas. If we study history or look at our experience of the world, we discover many forms of evil and many different sins of which men may be guilty, yet there are those who believe, with good reason, that all the various kinds of sin can be reduced to

the one principle of selfishness. It is that which is the secret of them all and that which is running through them all. And looking to the other side, we find it almost impossible to exhaust a great idea: it is capable of diverse expressions: it can put forth many branches. We have an instance of this in the modern idea of evolution. What science, art, branch of knowledge or department of life, has it failed to invade? Everything we can mention has in our time been studied genetically: its origin has been sought: its development has been traced: its possibilities considered. It is impossible to take up a book giving the outlines of any subject, which is not shot through and through with this idea. We can no more absorb it than we can absorb the sun. Wherever there is life, there is evolution.

Such being the permeating influence of a great idea, it is easy to understand that the two important ideas at the basis of Christianity should take many forms. They were not originated by Jesus nor have they been confined to Christian lands. Long before our era men had learnt to love God, and had perceived that they had duties to their neighbours. We need not trouble to ask

whether he was the first to teach that they are the greatest commandments of all. All that we need to know is that he did say that they were the principles by which conduct should be guided. His power in history has been such that, despite the selfish inclinations of men throughout the ages, he has furthered their acceptance more than any other teacher. They were for him the only essentials of a *Full Christianity*. Whoever accepts these whole-heartedly, though he may not have an elaborate Christology, cannot reasonably be accused of holding a 'reduced type' of Christianity.

> Love God and man; that great command
> Doth on eternal pillars stand:
> This did thine ancient prophets teach,
> And this thy well-beloved preach.

We have to realize that just as one idea may be expressed in many languages, so one faith may be found in diverse forms. These Christian principles, at least, are not limited to any narrow channels of grace: they are not even confined to organized religion. Every effort put forth for uplifting humanity finds its inspiration in them.

Because of this variety of expression it has so far been found impossible to organize

Ethical Christianity. It allows such freedom of development to each individuality that it shrinks from imposing any ceremony which all shall observe or any creed which all shall accept. Consequently it lacks that outward appearance of strength which organized religions possess. But it is this very freedom, together with its insistence on goodness and godliness of life, which gives it some ground for the claim that, as it was originally announced as the essence of Christianity, it will furnish the only possible foundation for the Church Universal.

CHAPTER VIII

SACERDOTAL DOCTRINES

THE ideas and doctrines which have been more or less associated with and advocated by Sacerdotal and Evangelical Christianity demand consideration. We must endeavour to discover the truth they contain, which has been the secret of the power they have exercised.

1. Religious Conformity.—Many of the ancient controversies which threatened to rend the Christian Church asunder arose in the mission fields, and history has been repeating itself in the difficulties created by the Conference and administration of the Communion at Kikuyu. In the earliest days the apostles were concerned with the conditions on which the Gentiles were to be admitted to the Church, whether they were to be made to conform to the time-honoured customs of the Jewish faith, or to be acknowledged as soon as they showed their allegiance

to the new teaching. The controversy became most keen in the Churches of Galatia, which were composed of men whose history showed that they were brave and enthusiastic, but also restless and fickle. Thither a party of Judaizers had gone, who seem to have declared that 'apart from the Law there is no salvation': and they evidently succeeded in winning some of the people from the broad conception of religion Paul had preached. His authority was discredited; his apostleship called into question; and he dealt with the attack from the personal point of view in the first two chapters of his Epistle. But he was not actuated by vanity and he was not over-anxious about his own position. What he wished to make plain was that the call which had come to him through the Spirit was as real and as valid as any external appointment or ordination could be. 'I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it was not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through the revelation of Jesus Christ.' Whoever had heard this inward call and had felt the spirit moving within him was in valid orders

and could dispense with ceremonies. The rest of the Epistle continues in the same strain. Its subject is the superiority of Inward over Outward Conformity—the imperative necessity of the former and the inadequacy of the latter. Referring to their experience, he says 'This only would I learn from you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law or by the message of faith?' In other words, 'In the days when I was with you, when the heavens opened out for you, when new life thrilled your souls, how did the Spirit take possession of you? Was it through the toilsome performance of the works of the Law or through the quickening of your inward life?'

Everybody would agree that Paul was right when he laid so much stress on the life of the Spirit. The Sacerdotalist holds firmly to that, but somewhat like these Judaizers, he believes that it can only be gained in its fullness by ceremonies, and he regards the sacrament, which must be reserved for those who have undergone a special preparation and be administered by duly ordained persons, as indispensable. He has found helpfulness in the external rite: he has felt a new spirit take possession of him as he has knelt before

the altar and received the consecrated bread. The mistake he makes is to erect his private experience into a universal rule and to suppose that the means which are good for him are necessary to all. Paul did not fall into the opposite error: he acknowledged that the Law is good and righteous and holy, awakening his conscience though failing to deliver him from evil. Inward renewal, however, was more effective to him than observance of the Law.

Anyone who looks at the facts of experience, and the history of religious movements must observe that the blessing of God rests upon every earnest man, whatever his creed or ecclesiastical practice. Spiritual life is certainly not dependent upon theological beliefs and forms of devotion. Hence we find saints among those who supplicate the Virgin, those who pray to Christ, and those who look up to the Father. It has been rightly said that a man may be a great saint and at the same time a poor theologian. He may have a divine experience and yet fail in his interpretation of it. It seems as though God were indifferent to a man's opinions so long as he sincerely loves the highest, and consequently no one can declare

that there is only one way of life. It is for each to choose that way which wakens most easily the dormant good in his soul and to have charity enough to believe that other avenues may be open to other souls. The soul's awakening is necessary, and without it external conformity is nothing worth.

Yet it is true that by the works of the Law, the Spirit comes to some people. Outward conformity to religious practice may quicken the deepest spirit of life. The frequent doing of good begets the spirit of good. We cannot maintain an attitude of devotion for any great length of time without the spirit of devotion coming over us. The mere effort to pray creates prayer: aspiring engenders aspiration. This is assured fact: it is demonstrated truth: it is psychological law. We are sorry because we cry: we are happy because we laugh: we are angry because we strike, says one school of psychologists, and they are partly right. If we could only control the clenching of our fist, the lifting of our hand, the striking of the blow, our anger would soon die away. There is, then, a very intimate relationship between the deed and the intention, so that they act and react upon each other. The constant doing of a thing

creates the spirit in which it should be done, if the man has any earnestness in his heart at all. It is only a dead soul that can worship Sunday after Sunday without feeling sometimes the thrill that creates devotion, so close is the connexion between the outer expression and the inner life. This applies to experience as a whole. It has been so often repeated that 'you cannot make men sober by Act of Parliament' that some people have come to believe that it is true. If it were true, we should never be able to say to anyone 'If you only make the effort to avoid evil, you will find that you gradually gain strength against it.' We should have to give up our belief that the performance of vicious acts makes a man vicious. We should have to cease thinking that if we do not weary in well-doing, goodness will be our reward. We could not sing

> Prune thou thy words, thy thoughts control,
> That o'er thee swell and throng,
> They will condense upon thy soul
> And change to purpose strong.

And we should have to abandon our theory of education. For why do we instruct the child to do some actions and to avoid others, if it is not for the purpose of kindling within

him love of the good and hatred of the evil? It does not matter what the virtue may be, whether sobriety, self-control, worshipfulness, or love, the practice of it tends to create it. There is just that amount of truth in outward conformity,

> Our acts our angels are, or good or ill
> Our fatal shadows that walk with us still.

To some souls eternal life, the vision divine, seems to come by intuition in a moment of time: to others it is the conclusion of a long and laborious process, the result of years of working and waiting. And if it fail us, we cannot do better than toil on in faithful adherence to duty. If our moral impulses are weak or our inclinations opposed to the highest, it is wise to conform to moral rules, to bind ourselves by resolutions, in the hope that we shall, as indeed we shall, come to love what is just, merciful, and true.

But the mistake of the advocate of uniformity, whether in creed or ceremonial practice, is due to his failure to see that conformity is never an end but a means. The danger is that the ceremony becomes the substitute for the spirit of life, and the thought that grace can be mechanically conveyed may hinder the earnest search for it.

It was the emphasis Jesus laid on the inwardness of religion that constituted the merit of his message. The offending brother was to be forgiven from the heart; the prayer was to rise from the soul without display: the deed was to be prompted by love. It is character, inward consecration, and deep conviction that make the true priest, whether he be in orders or not. Conformity to outward rule, however faithful, is not so noble as conformity of heart and soul to the spirit of God within.

2. Symbols.—What is the worth and use of the symbol? What is its connexion with reality? It was a wise saying of Confucius that—'Fishermen use baskets to catch fish: when they have caught the fish, they neglect the baskets. Teachers use words to convey ideas: when they have got the ideas, they forget the words. May it be mine to converse with men who have forgotten the words!' The baskets are not of first importance but the ideas. When we read, if we read wisely, it is not to remember words, so much as to gain ideas. We desire to stimulate powers of thought in ourselves, and not to have fixed and stereotyped in our minds the words of another.

It is the same with all symbols. When we have gained the realities they embody, we can dispense with them. Education begins by giving us symbols and it proceeds as we learn to do without them. It is necessary that we should learn the grammar and syntax of a language accurately, but we have not mastered the language until we can speak without reference to them. Until we can do that, our conversation lacks force and animation. In all things our life long it is the same. We are continually, as we advance, learning to do without symbols, because we have grasped the realities which they represented. We no longer need to consult the law, because the purpose of our life is higher than the law. We forget the commandments, because we have no desire to break them. That is the ideal state. When the prophet Jeremiah thought of the golden age, he wrote: 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts I will write it, . . . and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord.' In the kingdom of God no law

will be required, for the hearts of men will be right towards each other. That was the prophet's hope and it was the belief of him who said 'the kingdom of heaven is within you.' We cannot abolish all symbols. Some of them are helpful to us throughout life, but many of them we outgrow. They may bind men together, as in the case of a national flag which awakens the same sentiment of loyalty in a multitude of men. They are useful so long as they suggest the realities they represent, but they lose their serviceableness and become hindrances as soon as they supplant the ideas which called them into being.

3. The Church and Apostolic Succession.—What constitutes a true Church? This is a question which does not excite the discussion it once aroused, for it used to be of paramount importance, and was one of the main causes of the divisions and sects which still exist. According to the sacerdotalists, whether Roman or Anglican, a properly constituted Church cannot exist without bishops and priests who can trace their succession in unbroken line from the Apostles, the first constituted officers of the body corporate. Presbyterianism receives its name from the

efforts of its founders to institute government by presbyteries, and Congregationalism began with the idea that each congregation must be an independent, self-contained community controlling its own affairs. The ground of the secession of the Baptists may also be said to be that of Church government, seeing that no one could be recognized as a member of their community unless he had been totally immersed. For two hundred and fifty years controversies raged round these differing conceptions, and the noise of them has hardly yet subsided. Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists are less and less inclined to contend for the divine origin of their respective Church orders. Very largely the controversy has been brought to an end by the results of historical research. It is certain that modern episcopacy finds no support in the New Testament, and it is also certain that the Congregational method of government was not of long duration. What took place is what ought to take place. The management of the Church and its rules were determined by the necessities of the age and by practical convenience. The Congregationalists may be able to make out the best case for their system, if the question is

bound down to the New Testament, but what is the value of that, if it fails as a workable scheme to-day? The fund raised by the Congregational Union marks a virtual abandonment of the principles for which their predecessors fought two centuries ago.

The general interest in this question has diminished because the idea of the Church has broadened. Men no longer hold that outside the Church is no salvation and that consequently it is necessary for the soul's welfare to discover which is the Apostolic Church. Churches are no longer regarded as the gateways for heaven, but as assem blies of men desirous of worshipping God, quickening their spiritual life and gaining strength to do their duty in the life that now is. They exist, or should exist, for fostering fellowship on the higher levels and for proclaiming great living ideas. Thus we see a tendency at work to fashion the Church so that it may most effectively accomplish God's purpose in the present world.

Yet no one can be unaware that great stress has been laid upon the idea of the Church as an exclusive community by the Roman—and the Anglo-Catholics. They have asserted that no Church can exist apart

from the orders of bishops and priests and the Apostolic succession of its spiritual leaders; but it is only assertion. It is as certain as anything in history can be, that no such thing as the modern Church was contemplated by the Apostles, for they were convinced that the end of the world was at hand. Nor have we any proof that the succession is unbroken. Roman Catholic scholars have failed to provide a list of Popes which will satisfy the tests of modern historical investigation. Further, the form of consecration or ordination has varied. To quote Dean Stanley: 'In the Alexandrian and Abyssinian Churches it was and still is, by breathing; in the Eastern Church generally by lifting up the hands in the ancient Oriental attitude of benediction; in the Armenian Church, as also at times in the Alexandrian Church, by the dead hand of the predecessor; in the early Celtic Church, by transmission of relics or pastoral staff; in the Latin Church by the form of touching the head, which has been adopted from it by all Protestant Churches. No one mode was universal: no written formula of ordination exists. The formula by which the Presbyters of the Western Church are ordained is not

later than the twelfth century, and even that varies widely in the place assigned to it in the Roman and in the English Churches.'[1]

No one can doubt that among the religious teachers in the Roman and the English Churches, there have been some of the world's noblest saints. They have shown the spirit of love and goodness which made clear that they were successors of the founder of the Christian faith. We can easily understand that in the early days, when thinking was not so reasoned and logical as it is to-day, a succession of worthy men as leaders would give rise to the idea that some special blessing had been conferred upon them, at the moment of their ordination. The mistake made was in supposing that consecration was limited to the priesthood and that laymen, although they might be equally wise and good, were not quite as much the successors of the Apostles as bishops or priests.

Here, then, we have what appears to be the right theory of succession. If we look merely to those who have been ecclesiastically ordained, we shall find breaks everywhere—breaks due to the unworthiness of the bishop to transmit the divine grace and

[1] *Christian Institutions*, ch. IX.

to the failure of mere laying on of hands to awaken the spirit of life. But no one who studies history can help observing that God has never left himself without a witness and has never failed to raise up men who love truth and goodness for their own sake. There has been what Winston Churchill in his novel *The Inside of the Cup* terms 'an Apostolical Succession of personalities—Paul, Augustine, Francis, Dante, Luther, Milton—yes, and Abraham Lincoln, and Phillips Brooks, whose authority was that of the spirit, whose light had so shone before men that they had glorified the Father which was in heaven; the current of whose Power had so radiated, in ever-widening circles, as to make incandescent countless other souls. . . . The true prophet, the true apostle, then, was one inspired and directed by the Spirit, the laying on of hands was but a symbol—the symbol of the sublime truth that one personality caught fire from another. Let the Church hold fast to that symbol, as an acknowledgment, a reminder of a supreme mystery. Tradition had its value when it did not deteriorate into superstition, into the mechanical, automatic transmission characteristic of the medieval Church, for the very

suggestion of which Peter had rebuked Simon in Samaria.'

It matters not whether men are ordained, whether they are ministers or laymen, the light shed through them will be determined by the purity and strength of their personalities. Hence it is that not few men are called and not few are chosen, but *all* are called to be, according to their abilities and opportunities, ministers who impart to others and receive from others the grace that redeems and uplifts and blesses. With one in olden time let us say, 'Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!'

4. **Sacraments.**—Questions as to the use, meaning and significance of the Sacraments are constantly coming to the front, and sometimes are the supreme matters of interest in the religious world. The controversy centres round the Eucharist or Communion Service, for this has in practice been regarded as holier and more important than other sacraments, and if a satisfactory solution of the difficulties which cluster around it could be found, the problems with regard to the rest would be solved. For a full understanding of the subject some acquaintance with the

history of the various interpretations is necessary. This must be sought in other volumes. Helpful in this connexion is the description of the early rite to be found in Dean Stanley's *Christian Institutions*, and very illuminating is Dr. Drummond's study of the subject in his *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*.

Suffice it is to say here that in the New Testament records of the Last Supper, we have no decisive evidence that Jesus intended to establish an ordinance—certainly not the elaborate ceremony which has been developed. It was a sad moment for him when he felt he was breaking bread with his disciples for the last time. What was more natural than that he should desire to be remembered by those whom he had loved and who had shared the trials and responsibilities of his ministry? His words, 'This do in remembrance of me,' suggest two possible interpretations: either he wished his disciples to remember him whenever they came to the Holy City for the Passover, or whenever they shared a meal together. The former seems the more probable intention, but the fact that the disciples met together in the early days of the faith for a common meal

indicates that they understood the words in the latter sense.

Though opinions differ widely concerning details, there are three main interpretations given to-day.

First, there is the sacerdotal theory to which some reference has already been made. According to this, after the priest has duly consecrated the bread, it conveys to the recipient the body and blood of Christ, and therewith his human soul and his divinity inseparable therefrom. It blesses and saves him, unless he intentionally interposes some obstacle which frustrates its efficacy.

The extreme form of this theory is the Roman Catholic, which is not so crude as is generally supposed. For the doctrine of transubstantiation is not that an actual piece of the flesh of Jesus is given to the recipient, but the substance or the inner essence of the body. According to medieval philosophy on which this idea is based, every visible thing is composed of essence and accidents. The accidents of bread are the things in it of which we are conscious—its colour, taste, feel, dimensions, and the like, but in addition to these is an underlying essence or substance, which is invisible. To quote from the

Catholic Dictionary, 'the essence or substance is that which constitutes the thing, which makes it what it is, and it is distinct from the accidents or qualities, which may change while the thing itself remains. Common sense teaches that this is so. If water undergoes certain accidental changes, for example, if having been cold it becomes heated to boiling point—we still call it water.'

Granted, but what common sense does not teach is that what is here termed the 'essence' can change, or that the properties of a thing can remain when the thing itself has vanished.

The body of Christ has also these two elements, the accidents being the qualities or properties in distinction from the thing in itself. When the priest uses the words of consecration, the accidents are supposed to remain unaffected, but the essence of the bread disappears and the essence of the body and blood of Christ, though not their accidents, takes its place.

No criticism can be offered on this supposed change. For proof and disproof are both impossible. It must either be accepted without evidence or rejected because there is no evidence for it.

The power of transubstantiation has been

committed, so it is asserted, into the keeping of the Church, and she passes it on uncontaminated through her appointed priests. It is impossible to conceive of the essence being contaminated or impure. Consequently it is necessary that its transmission should depend upon the office of the priest and not upon his character. That is only just. If, as the Roman Church maintains, the salvation of men depends upon the Sacrament, it would surely be wrong that a congregation should run the risk of losing their souls because their priest was either secretly or openly immoral in his life. Thus it is taught that it is Christ himself who gives the sacrament. He is actually present, so that when the priest speaks it is really Christ who speaks. In the act of consecration he says 'This is my body,' not 'This is the body of Christ.' Christ is thus supposed to consecrate the elements.

Again, criticism is out of the question, for here is only assertion, and no evidence is forthcoming which can be subjected to examination. Nor indeed is any offered save only the words of institution. 'This is my body. This is my blood.' So Thomas Aquinas, the great medieval saint and theo-

logian, in a hymn of the Holy Eucharist, a more or less imperfect translation of which is in the hymn books of the High Church party, writes :

> Sight, touch, and taste, in Thee are each deceived.
> The ear alone most safely is believed.
> All I believe the Son of God hath spoken :
> Than Truth's own word there is no better token.

Secondly: According to the second theory of Sacraments, whatever good is received is due to the faith of the recipient. This has been the most prevalent view among Protestants. The Article of the Church of England on the subject is capable of different interpretations, but one passage favours this theory. 'The mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.' To the Evangelical Christian, faith is the supreme power and all that the sacrament does is to seal and strengthen God's covenant in the redeemed soul. This view removes to a considerable extent the mechanical element involved in the sacerdotal theory, but there lingers in some minds the idea that some special blessing is received in the sacrament, which either would not have come through faith or which increases the blessing faith brings. The taking of the sacrament, how-

ever, is sometimes considered necessary, only because it is a testimony to the presence of faith in the heart, the measure of its efficacy being in the depth of the believer's sincerity. The Divine Life moving in the soul of the communicant avails far more than any virtue to be found in the consecrated elements of the bread and wine. Thus the value of the sacrament is in the personal experience, not in the outward act.

Thirdly: The third view is that the sacrament is a helpful symbol, with which is associated the best spirit of the Christian religion. It is a bond which unites the present with the past and future, and joins the living in communion with sincere souls in past ages. Many Nonconformists were accustomed a few years ago to speak of their Communion Service as one of Commemoration, and they made the effort to awaken vividly the memory of Jesus, especially on the night in which he was betrayed, and sometimes of those noble souls who have been united in their devotion to him and to the ideal he proclaimed. But they now hold that the service is not one of memory merely, but of communion in a real and deep sense. It is at least a recognition of their fellowship and living communion

with the earnest souls whom they recall. Those who partake of it endeavour to come under the influence of that Life of the Ages which was so richly poured into the spirit of Jesus and which flowed in the souls of the prophets and saints. 'The sacrament is a communion because it is a memorial,' says the Rev. William Temple in *Foundations*.

The Lord's Supper thus becomes a sign of the solidarity of the race, and a witness to one family on earth and in heaven. It is a symbol of that fellowship which Jesus wished should bind his followers together and it is a help to its cultivation. The tragedy of Christendom has been that the last act of Jesus before his assembled apostles, intended to strengthen and symbolize their unity, should have been a prolific cause of division and strife. Not till the Churches are united spiritually, whatever their theological differences may be, will it be possible to realize the ideal of communion which the Lord's Supper should represent.

In support of the service thus interpreted, it is pointed out that many of our daily actions are symbolic and sacramental in character. When we grasp the hand of a friend, it is in token of our regard for him

and an indication that nothing has occurred in our absence to destroy our feeling of good-will. In all the serious business of life and in our family and social relationships pledges are given and symbols employed. And while the bread and wine are not essential to our object in communion, yet if the common act of partaking of them brings us more closely together, or helps to awaken sacred memories, there is no reason why they should not be used. They are not essential, because so many things will call up the ideas and experiences they symbolize, but they are helpful because of the spirit of fellowship which has long been associated with them. All men in their best moments long to catch the spirit of the noblest and holiest men of our race, and the Communion Service is a special aid in this direction.

In the Church Catechism a sacrament is defined to be 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace,' and all can believe in sacraments in this broad sense. The visible world is the garment of the Invisible Reality which underlies and sustains all things. There is, therefore, a natural objection to the belief that there are two or seven sacraments. Hence our dissent from statements such as

that made concerning the Eucharist by the Rev. William Temple, 'No other "aids and helps" can ever take the place of these, because they are the means appointed by Christ, and carry us back to the moment of his supreme revelation of the Father in the Passion.' Many things may lift us into the presence of the Divine Being and aid us to partake of the holiest life. A spring day may do so; so may the face of a child, or the song of a bird. This thought of the immanent presence of God, of the possibility of finding him everywhere and of the consequent unlimited means of grace is the commonest among Liberal Christians and is the essence of their religion. Everything that serves to uplift the soul may be a sacrament, and there is hardly anything known that may not thus come to human assistance. Yet we find the soul that does not feel God moving within it at some particular time rarely has a consciousness of his presence in the universe as a whole. This was well expressed by the late Rev. J. Worsley Austin, 'What the soul needs is some realization of the way the power of God touches its own life, strengthening and blessing. And if there is no particular time, no particular

Chapter IX

EVANGELICAL DOCTRINES

1. The Atonement

EVANGELICAL Christianity has laid great stress on the doctrine of the Atonement, but strange to say, this doctrine, which has been so prominent in Protestantism, is not clearly formulated in the three great Creeds of the Church. There is not even a hint of it in the earliest and so-called Apostles' Creed. The reason is that in any systematic form, it was a late development of Christian thought. The early Church was too busy over the question of the Incarnation to give attention to the idea of Atonement. Its interest, it has been said, was in the cradle rather than in the cross of Jesus. 'It is remarkable,' as Dr. Drummond points out, 'that the doctrinal explanation of Christ's sufferings was allowed for so many centuries to remain in a vague condition and indeed

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has never been reduced to a formal dogma by the Catholic Church. Origen (born A.D. 185, died 254) says nothing about it in the summary of ecclesiastical doctrines which he gives in his preface to his *De Principiis*.'[1]

The early Christians did away with the old form of sacrifice: they erected no altars: they thought little about Atonement: they held that 'God is not served by men's hands as though he needed anything.' They believed that purity of heart, loyalty of life, prayer and thanksgiving were the sacrifices God requires. Paul wrote: 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.' (Romans 12[1].)

The doctrine of the Atonement involves the idea that God is angry with the sons of men and needs to be reconciled to them. But this idea is not that of the New Testament, which teaches that it is man who needs to be reconciled to God. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.' It abandons the plain teaching of Jesus that God is a loving Father, willing to forgive and ever ready to welcome back his repentant children,

[1] *Studies in Christian Doctrine*, p. 332.

as the father rejoiced at the return of his prodigal son. It is a denial of the universal love of God for myriads of men who had the misfortune to live prior to the crucifixion, and whole continents of people who never heard the story of the divine method of salvation it consigns to outer darkness. It falls below the modern conception of fairness and it is chiefly its moral unsoundness that has led to its rejection.

Sometimes, however, it is argued that justice demanded an infinite satisfaction, seeing that sin is an offence against an infinite being, and God alone could make such a satisfaction. But to punish the innocent for the guilty is an outrage on every principle of right we know. No self-respecting man would avail himself of the offer which is here supposed to be made; and no thoughtful man can think that merit and demerit can be passed in this mechanical and objective way from one person to another, unless he prejudges the question. It is also a strange paradox of this doctrine that God who needs to be appeased provides the sacrifice. These are some of the objections which arise to this theory of salvation.

In this crude form it has been rejected by

thinking men to-day, and is held only by the uneducated and those who are unable to free themselves from the influence of early training. Its power in the past has been due to its association with a few noble truths. Nothing, for instance, is more inspiring than to see a man devote himself to others either by living or dying for them. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' The progress of the world has undoubtedly been largely due to the sufferings and self-sacrifices of good men. Their struggles and endeavours, their agonies and aspirations, their blood and tears, make up the greater part of the story of human emancipation. Professor Royce holds that treachery may call forth a deed of atonement in some loyal human lover, so vast in power that it not only removes the evil done but actually lifts the community further along its upward way. He formulates his opinion thus: 'No baseness or cruelty or treason, so deep or so tragic shall enter the world, but that loyal love shall be able in due time to oppose to just that deed of treason its fitting deed of atonement.'

Again, the idea that God suffers with his people and shares their woe has appealed to

those who in moments of guilt have felt the need of a power stronger than that of their personal will or human sympathy. Unfortunately this notion has led to practical disbelief in the love of the Father, and to a conception of the Trinity which is hardly distinguishable from polytheism.

Various other truths associated with this doctrine have been emphasized by those who cling to the idea of atonement in some form, but the statement of them shows how real is the passing of what has been historically known as the doctrine of the Atonement.

Those who have caught the religious spirit of modern thought believe in the power of God's endowment of the soul. They hold that by the very constitution of his being man's natural place is with God. When Dante began his journey towards Paradise, he expressed surprise that he rose rapidly, contrary to gravitation, above objects which he knew to be lighter than himself, and Beatrice explained to him that the true centre of man's being is God. Therefore the marvel would have been had he settled below. The modern message of redemption declares the native power of the soul to rise above the evil that besets it.

> Unless above himself he can
> Erect himself, how poor a thing is man.

It says with Tennyson :—

> I held it truth, with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.

Even when they have been bruised and beaten in the conflict with sin they may build heaven upon the wreck of their broken endeavours. The nature of the sinner and the saint is one : the difference is in the cultivation. 'What is a weed,' asks Emerson, 'but a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered ?'

Salvation thus becomes not an external arrangement or a judicial transaction, but a process of inward renewal, continuous in action and progressive in character.

2. **Grace.**—Is the salvation of man entirely due to the grace of God or is it furthered by the upward endeavours of man himself ? Does God compel some men to take that course which leads to redemption, or does he provide them with opportunities whereby they may, if they will, work out their own salvation ?

We have here two different doctrines of

the grace of God, which have been the source of fierce controversy in Christianity. They were the subject of the contention between Augustine and Pelagius, to which reference is often made under the title of 'the Pelagian Controversy.' With the first or Augustinian theory, that man's efforts and aspirations avail nothing and God does all, have been associated such doctrines as predestination, election, and total depravity, which no longer exercise over the minds of men the powers they once exerted or suggest the fears they formerly created. But the question of grace has been of such significance that it cannot be passed by in any study of Christianity. Little support can be found for it in the teaching of Jesus; Paul and Augustine were responsible for it.

As he looked at his new life from one point of view, Paul saw a superhuman force had been at work in his soul; he, the persecuting Pharisee, had been changed, almost against his will, into a Christian missionary. It was so marvellous and unexpected a transformation that God must have intervened and stretched forth his hand to save him. He had been wrestling with evil inclinations, and trying to keep all the precepts of the law.

How hard the task; how wearisome the effort; how vain the endeavour!

> Oh the regret, the struggle and the failing!
> Oh the days desolate and the useless years!
> Vows in the night, so fierce and unavailing!
> Stings of my shame and passion of my tears!

Then in a moment the heavens seemed to open; a new spirit was born in his soul; the Christ-spirit took possession of him; and what seemed unattainable became possible. It was the grace of God that accomplished the work.

But at other times, he was painfully aware that grace had not done all, that still much of the old Adam remained and something was left for him to do. He did not count himself yet to have apprehended, nor was he already made perfect, and he felt the need of pressing on, old and worn though he was by long service in the cause of Christianity. He must forget the things that were behind, even that day of grace when the scales fell from his eyes, and stretch forward towards the things that were before. God would help him and he must walk by the rule he had attained in the hope that greater light would be his.

Anyone who is acquainted with aspiring

human nature and who has struggled for the highest can understand these two attitudes, which seem contradictory. Anyone who has triumphed over temptation has been in doubt as to the cause of the victory. Was it due to his own effort, to bracing his will against it or to the inner compulsion of God in his soul? If we want to know what Paul thought about his deliverance, we have thus to study his different ways of looking at his experience. Because theologians took only one side into consideration, they laid upon Paul the responsibility for that doctrine of grace which made man a helpless tool, with no will of his own, no power to rise and no moral strength.

It was from Augustine that the doctrines of grace, election, and total depravity in their full development were derived. His early life, according to his own *Confessions*, was spent in wantonness and wickedness, and he sank to the lowest depths of some forms of vice. At times he wished to be delivered from the sin that beset him, but he loved it too dearly. 'O Lord,' he used to pray, 'convert me, but not just yet.' Held a prisoner by his passions, he could not make an effort strong enough to shake himself free. What he knew was wrong and contrary to the will

of God, he desired and practised. 'O Lord, convert me, but not just yet.' Let me take my fill of evil and save me at the last.

Then came that incident in the garden, when he fancied he heard a voice saying to him concerning a book which lay open, *Tolle, lege*—Take, read; and his eyes fell on words which made him resolve never again to walk in the paths of the wicked. Having led so evil a life it was perhaps natural that he should regard his conversion as a special act of grace on the part of God. As he looked back later upon his feebleness, his helplessness against his passions, he came to the conclusion that his early state was the natural state, that every man is as prone to evil as he himself had been, and that there are no souls who naturally cultivate the love of goodness and persevere in the endeavours to do right. So he formulated the doctrine that human nature is totally depraved, absolutely incapable of goodness, until the grace of God intervenes. Thus largely as the result of one man's change of life and repentance for the sins of his youth there was foisted upon Christianity a doctrine which has brought misery to millions.

As Augustine looked around, he could not

help being struck by the differences among men. In spite of his theory of total depravity some men were leading lives which seemed to fit them for heaven: and others were living in such a manner as to merit damnation. How did it come about? The answer he gave was that the former were elected to eternal blessedness and the latter predestinated to eternal death. Why it should be so, we could not know. It was one of the inscrutable mysteries of God.

The doctrine of grace as here stated has been held by men and women, who were nevertheless consumed with missionary zeal. This is one of those strange instances which show that faith often provides its own corrective. Why trouble, if all had been foreordained? But men have troubled. They have gone forth in the faith that everybody has his chance of salvation, and all that is necessary is to believe in the Atonement; they have spoken and acted as if man had free will, and his fate was in his own hands and God would save him, if he would only allow himself to be saved.

It is necessary to understand the motive and inner meaning of the harsh doctrines; for they still cast a shadow on modern

Christian teaching, and the study of them may shed light upon our spiritual experience. Salvation, whether social or personal, is not the work of God alone or of man alone, but of God and man together. As Paul said, it is ours to work out what God is working in us. God does visit our souls and arouse our dormant spiritual life. Intuitions, divine impulses and visions of a better life come to us unsought and unbidden. They may only 'flash a splendour past our eyes' and then leave us 'resigned to our ignoble days,' yet within us they leave the consciousness of something better, the awareness of something that ought to be, which is nobler than anything that is. Deep down in our nature, it seems almost beneath it and separate from it, we feel there is something diviner than any thought or emotion we have had, something vaster than humanity. Sometimes it rushes up, condemns what is wrong in us, and consecrates what is right, lifts us out of evil and moves us towards good. What is this but the grace of God?

Exactly when it will exert its power over us, we cannot foretell, but we may rest assured it will always respond finally to our seeking.

Just when we are safest, there's a sunset touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
A chorus ending from Euripides—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
As old and new at once as Nature's self,
To rap and knock and enter in the soul.

A very simple incident may prove the turning point of a life. It may be reading a sentence in a book which gathers into focus and unites in power all the accumulated longings after goodness and truth, as in the case of Augustine. It may even be something discreditable, as Peter's denial led to a stronger allegiance to the cause of Christianity. But whatever it may be, there is every reason to suppose that there are potentialities in the soul of man which respond to the stimulus. God's nature is love and he does not limit his grace to any religion or any race of men.

Thou Grace divine, encircling all,
A shoreless, soundless sea,
Wherein at last our souls must fall,
O Love of God most free!

Experience teaches us that boundless as the grace of God is, the measure we receive is conditioned by the willingness of our response. The more light or truth or moral power we seek, the more we gain. We may not gain it

just when we seek. It may be that after many days the reward of our effort will come. We set processes to work in our spirit; they gather force, and lift us to the heights when we are least expectant. That is the conclusion William James reached after careful study of various types of men and women who after great wrestlings with evil were delivered from it. Their conversions were due to forces which had been silently and secretly working in their deeper life. The grace of God is always offered, but we have to lay hold of it, to partake more fully of it and thus work out our own salvation.

It may be mentioned here that recently many thoughtful people have been attracted to the Buddhist doctrine of Karma, which is opposed to the Christian doctrine of grace. It also is an extreme view—an exaggeration of the truth it would convey. On the one hand, the relation between cause and effect is so close that it cannot be arbitrarily broken as the idea of grace suggests, and on the other hand, there are forces at work which deliver us from the evil that must inevitably follow wrongdoing according to the Buddhist idea. That the sufferings of men in this world are due to

their misdeeds in previous lives may be a consoling solution of the problem of evil to those who happen to be among the fortunate, but driven to its logical conclusion, it would hinder all social reform and every endeavour to relieve human suffering. Why should we stay the hand of Nemesis and alleviate any pain, if later the punishment is doomed to descend? Why not let the afflicted bear his agony now and have done with it? The bearing of others' burdens thus becomes a fiction, for while we may be working out our own Karma, we are not really helping them. The difficulty is not removed by asserting that it may be part of their Karma that they should thus receive the help of sweetness and light from other souls. Nothing would remove us further apart than the notion of Karma, and that it comes from Buddhism which so clearly teaches the duty of compassion to man and beast is another of those paradoxes of religion, mentioned above, which show that a faith will often redeem itself.

Experience compels us to believe that though effect follows cause in the moral as well as in the physical world, yet action may be remedial and redemptive. Repentance produces a condition of grace in the soul

which inhibits the disaster that would otherwise overtake the wrongdoer. If fate rests in the character, then a change of character must involve an alteration of fate.

3. **The Sense of Sin.**—The Evangelical Christian has laid stress on the necessity of being 'convicted of sin' as the sign of the incoming of grace, but the sense of sin has never been an accurate test of a person's sinfulness. It is one of the well-attested truths of religious history that the noblest men have uttered the most agonized cries of regret over their sin. They have been tortured by the pangs of conscience, as they have seen the distance which separated them from their ideal, while those who have been guilty of the grosser vices have escaped the severest pains of self-condemnation. In the infliction of the penalties it imposes, conscience can hardly be said to hold the scales of justice evenly. Hence, John Bunyan shuddered as he reflected that his offences, which some would account to be light, indicated that he was not one of the elect; the scholarly and saintly Dr. Pusey wore a hair shirt, deprived himself of comforts, nad used himself to a life of hardship; and the zealous and strict Paul looked upon his sin as the

veritable end of all real existence and exclaimed, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

There is something very distressing about this, which we who are living to-day cannot fully understand. We have been brought up in a different atmosphere; the sombre shadows of religion do not fall upon us: the sense of alienation from the Divine Being does not trouble many of our number. 'It has been said,' writes Dr. Philip Wicksteed, 'I know not on what authority, that many years before his death, Mr. Gladstone was asked what he thought the greatest change that had taken place in his day in the religious life of England, and he answered: "The decay of the sense of sin."' Most of us are rightly glad that the terrors of religion which used to darken the lives of men, women, and children have disappeared and that in their place has come confidence in the love of God. We rejoice in the sunshine that now radiates from our faith and in the hopefulness which comes from wiser views of life. But it is no matter for gratification, if our consciences have become less sensitive to evil and if they do not urge us to do our utmost to rectify the wrong in our nature.

'Do not silence the whispers of the soul' was the advice of Dr. Channing, who preached the dignity of human nature and was one of the heralds of the brighter message.

Thus there is danger both in the sense of sin and in freedom from it, and we must seek to save the truth and cast out the error on either side. Let us be clear about the meaning of the sense of sin. For many people in the past it meant nothing more than dread of the consequences of their wrongdoing. They sought refuge from these in the institutions and doctrines of the Church. They partook of the sacraments or they confessed their faith in the atoning blood of Christ, in the hope, not so much that these would purify them of their wickedness as that they would deliver them from the penalties which would follow. The emphasis of evangelical preaching was generally here. It called men to repentance because of the awful fate that awaited them, if they refused or neglected the opportunity of reconciliation which God offered. It moved men not so much by dwelling upon the heinousness of sin as by describing the wrath to come. It needs no words to show that here was no true repentance and no genuine sense of sin. It was

men's cowardly fear, their unmanly desire, at all costs, even though some one else bore the penalty, to escape from what they had been taught to believe were the just results of their evil doings, that was the cause of their distress. We must at least make this allowance for them, that the punishments which were threatened, were altogether out of proportion to the lives they had led, bad as they may have been.

Another theory was that men are sinful by nature because of an original inherited taint, that even the infant, who had not yet done any voluntary act, is full of actual iniquity as disastrous as the worst crimes. Held logically this theory would have necessitated the tearing out from the Gospels of such sayings of Jesus as 'Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.' It is this sense of general sinfulness apart from specific acts of wrongdoing, which ecclesiastics have sought to foster. No doubt we have infirmities which prevent us from being absolutely good, but why torture our souls over these any more than grieve over the fact that we have not the strength to lift a ton weight. 'My brother Charles,'

wrote John Wesley, 'among the difficulties of our early ministry used to say, "If the Lord would give me wings, I would fly." I used to answer "If the Lord bid me fly, I will trust him for the wings."'

What, then, should we mean by the sense of sin? It is the consciousness of alienation from the life of God; the want of spiritual harmony within ourselves; the absence of the moral restfulness which should be ours as children of a Heavenly Father. Yet this should not depress us unto despair. There should be some hope in us. Our sorrow should be the proof to us that we were made for something better than our highest achievements, for it is due to the call within us to a diviner life. As pain indicates the body is not dead, so the sense of sin shows the soul is alive. Rightly have a school of writers in America, whose ideas have been loosely grouped together under the name 'The New Thought,' preached the Religion of Healthy-mindedness and condemned morbid brooding over past wrong. The surest way to court failure is to think over past failure. *Possunt, quia posse videntur,* said Virgil of the boatmen in the race; 'they can win because they think they can.' There is

a confidence in oneself which spells defeat, 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' But there is a confidence which buoys a man with hope and leads him to victory. Nothing is worse than to lose faith in the moral forces with which God has endowed the soul. It is the supreme form of distrust in God, and here the best advice is

> Let the dead past bury its dead,
> Act, act in the living present
> Heart within, and God o'erhead.

We often escape from the sin that besets us by moving forward to something higher. To quote Dr. Philip Wicksteed again, 'The Greek legend tells of two ways by which the deadly charm of the Sirens' song was escaped. Ulysses stopped the ears of his followers with wax and had himself bound to the mast of the ship. The Argonauts heard the song of Orpheus, sweeter than the song of the Sirens and so escaped their witchery.'

A healthy sense of sin takes hold of us when we quietly think over the wrong we have done, and perhaps over what we intend to do, over our hopes and ambitions, in the light of the highest within us. It needs no small amount of courage to face our consciences and to meditate silently in the presence of

Chapter X

ETHICAL CHRISTIANITY

ETHICAL Christianity is a distinct form of religion, not because it has any peculiar dogmas to proclaim, but because it discovers the final seat of authority in the soul of man. It makes its appeal not to Pope or Bible or Church or Christological idea, but to man : it applies to doctrines and beliefs, not a traditional test, or a conciliar test or a credal test or a Scriptural test, but a human test. It does not proclaim a New Theology or a New Christology, both of which have proved their ineffectiveness, but a new Spiritual Anthropology—a doctrine about man which will explain the divine nature, possibility, and destiny of his being and make clear his responsibility to God.

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It has been repeatedly asserted and it is reiterated in *Foundations*, an able volume of essays by members of the newer school of Broad Churchmen, that 'the Christian mes-

sage is first and foremost a message about God.' That is where the Ethical Christian parts company with them. To him as he reads the New Testament, the Christian message seems first and foremost a message about man—his sonship to God and his kinship to his neighbour. Dr. Martineau, at the beginning of his *Types of Ethical Theory*, makes the distinction plain and unmistakable. Whether you are going to lay the foundations of theology and ethics strong and immovable depends upon the decision you make at the beginning of your undertaking. Will you 'give the priority to Nature and God, and resort to them as your nearest given objects,' or 'will you permit the human mind to take the lead of these objects in your inquiry?' This is the point of departure and here the ways divide. Will you start from those principles which are inherent in the soul of man, to which Jesus bore abundant testimony, and find your way from what is known to what is unknown, or will you begin with authoritative statements about the Universe and God, and from these derive your conception of that inward nature which you know immediately? If you know not man whom you have seen,

how can you know God whom you have not seen ?

As we look back over the last century we recall the names of men who stood forth as champions of the truth they felt surging in their souls, men who promised to make large contributions to the religious thought of their age, but who fell back into the religion of their childhood. Some of them became persecutors of the younger men in the next generation who were standing for progress in spiritual knowledge. The reason was, they never really made the necessary break from 'authority.' Heterodox as they appeared in some of their beliefs, they had not taken the step which alone is decisive, namely, that which would lead them to hold as their first principle that religion is a power native to the soul of man and not something which has to be grafted on to him. Once it is admitted that religion comes by grace, the rest may remain as it is, sooner or later there will be a return to an 'authoritative' faith. One by one the old doctrines will be taken up again, for they are all interdependent. Whatever Church professing to possess the Truth you study, you will find that its doctrine and practice form together a well-knit

fabric. The only question which seems to matter is, 'Where are you going to begin—with an external authority which claims to be divine or with the simple data of the soul of man?'

For the verities of the religious life the Ethical Christian turns to the inmost being of man. The soul, it knows! The spirit, it comprehends! The deep, it holds the secret! Yet we are not isolated beings, but a community of souls, all drawing from the One Divine Life. Sometimes when we are on a high mountain, we may see the neighbouring peaks above the clouds, they seem to be swinging in space, yet we know they are broad-based in the earth. Our lives, too, separate, individual, isolated, are all grounded in the life of the One God. The universality of his Spirit in the hearts of men is the secret of the Brotherhood of the Race. No human being is cut off from us, because no human being is absolutely alienated from him. Hence it is that the authority of the soul is not private: its witness is not singular, and conscience is not individual. Deep as the fact of *personality* is—and whatever we may be, we all feel that we were made to count for something—the fact of *mankind* is deeper

still. Our unity holds a vaster and more important secret than our diversity. Our common spiritual consciousness contains what is vital and necessary to our faith. God has made us all one to dwell on the face of the earth.

The presence of men in the world who reveal in their actions much that seems diabolical and little that is divine in character does not detract from the truth of this teaching. We walk through the fields in the autumn and behold about us the waving corn, rich with promise of harvest. At our feet is a hard path, yielding nothing save weeds, and perchance a few wild flowers, but we know that its crust has only to be broken, tended and sown with good seed, and it also will show the same luxuriant beauty as the field of which it is a part. Within the soul of the worst man, whether his sin and crime be the result of social oppression, evil communication or personal wilfulness, is hidden the potentiality of a divine-human life, such as we see actualized in the examples of the saints. His spirit, at present unproductive of good, has only to be tended, and cultivated by his own effort and by noble influences, and he too will bring forth good fruit abundantly.

The soul of music slumbers in the shell
Till waked and kindled by the master's spell;
And feeling hearts, touch them but rightly, pour
A thousand melodies unheard before.

Ethical Christianity holds to the Right of Private Judgment in matters of faith and doctrine, which Dr. Dale said was the cardinal principle of Protestantism. In a passage in the Gospel according to Luke (12[54]ff.) Jesus is stated to have said to the multitudes, 'When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower: and so it cometh to pass. . . . Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time? And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?' You dare to form your own judgments and hold your own opinions on such external and uncertain subjects as the weather: why, then, are you lacking in confidence to judge concerning inward truth and the immutable principles of right? It was one of the many ways in which Jesus taught that the kingdom of truth is within the soul. This doctrine is a pillar of Ethical Christianity and consequently Anglo-Catholic and Roman Catholic Churchmen make great

efforts to show that it rests on a shaky foundation.

In a clear and concise statement of 'Anglo-Catholicism' in the *People's Books* the Rev. A. E. Manning Foster makes this doctrine the first object of his attack. He says: 'And first as to private judgment. This is a frequent stumbling-block. As one has well said: "No one talks of private judgment in anything but religion: no one but a fool insists on his right to his own opinion with his lawyer or his doctor. Able men who have given their time to special subjects are authorities upon those subjects to be listened to with deference, and the ultimate authority at any given time is a collective general sense of the wisest men living in the department to which they belong." Of course private judgment comes in to a certain extent. A man who is not a Churchman must use his private judgment in becoming a Churchman, just as a man uses his private judgment in the choice of a doctor or a lawyer. If we accept the Christian religion at all, we must accept it upon some sort of authority. We may accept it on the authority of our parents, or on the authority of the Bible or on the authority of the body or Church to which we belong. In

any case, when we come down to bed-rock, we must believe in *something outside ourselves*, either persons, documents, or corporations, as the first principles of our belief at all.'

This is an able statement of the reasons advanced for refusing to judge of ourselves what is right. It reduces every individual to a nonentity in religion and is subversive of the plain teaching of Jesus. Only a few of the fallacies involved can be mentioned.

First, it is by no means certain that a man must be a fool, if he does not on every occasion take the advice of his doctor or lawyer. The doctor gives his opinion, but he leaves the final decision with the patient. It is just this which every authoritative Church refuses to the individual. The liberty which the doctor or the lawyer permits, the Church disallows. But in a vital point the analogy fails. If you doubt the advice of the doctor, then, though it may not be good 'etiquette,' yet it is open to you to consult another. But the rules of the Church have been laid down and its creeds have been formulated, so that all bishops and priests are assumed to say exactly the same thing, unless they are guilty of heresy.

Again, it cannot be proved that 'the

ultimate authority at any given time is a collective general sense of the wisest men living in the department to which they belong.' It has generally happened, when a new truth of great significance has been discovered, that one man has found himself face to face with the men who were supposed to be wisest in their department. Nearly all the astronomers, and the dignitaries of the Church, were against Galileo, when he asserted that the earth moved round the sun. Columbus had to endure the derision of navigators, when he believed he could discover a new way by the West to India. The opposition with which Darwin was met is too fresh in our knowledge to need detailing. Thus we might go through various departments of knowledge and of life, and we should accumulate proofs that a consensus of opinion among the accredited wise persons is not a guarantee of truth. The same discovery is made in religion. Amos found himself condemned to silence by the duly ordained and properly inducted priests of Bethel. Mohammed had to fight for his life against similar authorities, and Jesus lost his life in the same struggle. The Church may be unanimous, its councils may not have one dissentient—a rare event

—and yet we lack the ultimate authority. Always some men—it may be and probably will be the majority of men if they are earnest in their search for truth—will have gleams of truth in their souls brighter than the message of this or that Church.

But the chief fallacy, which underlies this statement is that 'when we come down to bed-rock, we must believe in *something outside ourselves*.' The great difference between religion and the profession of a doctor, a lawyer, or anyone else, is that it is not a department. A doctor who devotes himself exclusively to his work in life will become an authority on medical subjects, but his opinion on other subjects, such as astronomy or botany, may be worth nothing. His work belongs to a department. But to what department does religion or Christianity belong? Is it exclusively the concern of the priest as medicine is of the doctor? We can do without a knowledge of medicine, if we have confidence in our adviser. But can we in the same way do without religion, if we have confidence in a priest? Is religion so alien to us, that somebody else can look after our souls, somebody else worship God for us, and somebody

else do right for us? A man who devotes himself to the study of religion may suggest thoughts to us and may awaken our noblest powers, but he is no help to us, unless we accept by an act of will the ideal he makes known to us. We need not analyse the medicine before we take it, but we must understand and give our assent to an idea before it can exert its full influence over us. If a man accept the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, it is by an act of his own reason and will, though his attitude afterwards may be that of unquestioning submission. The *onus* finally rests with him.

For these reasons the Ethical Christian turns back to the source of the Gospel and reads the words of the founder of the Christian faith. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' 'The heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.' 'Seek, and ye shall find.' 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' 'If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God.'

The late Auguste Sabatier in an inspired

chapter in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion*, to which the present writer has often turned as one of the noblest examples of devotional literature, says: 'The search for God cannot be fruitless: for the moment I set out to seek Him, He finds me and lays hold of me. . . . Two things are equally impossible: for an irreligious man to discover a divine revelation in a faith he does not share or for a truly pious man not to find one in the religion he has espoused and which lives in his heart. . . . Whatever your authorities in earth or heaven, you are not in the truth, because you are not in piety. . . . In all piety there is some positive manifestation of God. . . . What worker in a lofty cause has not perceived within his own personal activity and saluted with a feeling of veneration, the mysterious activity of a universal and eternal power?' (pp. 33f.)

Ethical Christianity lays stress on human responsibility, personal, social and national, and is the only form of faith which possesses a rational and satisfactory explanation of such evils as sin, poverty, and war. 'The Ethical Theist,' says Professor C. B. Upton in his Hibbert Lectures, 'does not believe that the highest aim of God in the case of human

spirits is the mere development of reproductions of Himself under temporal limiting conditions, but rather that His own infinite love can only find adequate expression and response in giving existence to rational beings with some real power of free self-determination; and that in order to bring about the infinitely precious result that human minds and hearts should freely respond to the divine appeal, God vacates in the case of man's moral decisions, to some real extent the exercise of His own determining causality.' Mr. Upton quotes Browning's words :—

> God, whose pleasure brought
> Man into being, stands away,
> As it were, a hand-breadth off, to give
> Room for the newly made to live,
> And look at Him from a place apart,
> And use his gifts of brain and heart.

In times of war, we recall the message of the prophets Isaiah and Micah : 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' We utter the cry 'O Lord, how long!' Two thousand five hundred years have passed, and still the prophet's vision is a dream, but the Ethical

Christian, confident in the power of the message with which the Gospel was heralded, believes that the dream will be realized. He differs from the prophets, who believed peace would be brought about by the direct intervention of God, for he sees that the task is both human and divine. He holds that the work of removing evil is so divided that God is the inspirer and man is the agent, and when man does his part human redemption will be won.

God is ever present in the world, present in the world without, controlling the forces of nature, and present in the world within the soul of man. He moves in the receptive heart, giving it holier intuitions, nobler hopes and higher aspirations. Man is, therefore, not the creator of morals, for God gives him impulses towards the right and inspires his ideals. Within a limited sphere man has power to act, but there are divine laws which he cannot alter, though he may disobey them. The existence of those laws serves to distinguish the world in which he is a free agent, and the kingdom which has been committed to his charge. This human kingdom is entirely under his care. He governs it and though he makes mistakes or wilfully goes

astray, God does not intervene save by way of warning when laws are broken or by inspiration when man responds to his call.

Within this world God has granted to man as great a supremacy as that which he himself enjoys in the government of the universe, and to make clear the Brotherhood of the Race, he has ordained that the iniquity of one man shall be felt by all whom he reaches and the goodness of another man shall uplift all whom he influences. The Ethical Christian sees that man is God's vicegerent on earth, and he does not ask concerning the evil of the world, 'Why does God permit this to happen? Why does he not put forth his hand to save?' He knows that God is not the cause of the social wrong, the vice which walks the streets, the oppression of the industrial system, and the cruel strife of armies. God has set his decrees against them and allotted penalties to every infringement of his laws. It is man who allows these iniquities and who thus fails in his own world. That is why in times of war the faith of the Ethical Christian remains unshaken, and why he does not ask whether God exists when horrors are perpetrated. The evil has occurred in that human world which is not divine, because

for the education of the race God has given the government into human hands. Yet God is present in the world, for when through human folly, wilfulness or ignorance, evil, even tragic and calamitous evil is wrought, still the light of Love can shine and the beauty of self-sacrifice be made manifest.

The Ethical Christian is convinced that if the City of God is to be built, God must be the architect and man the builder, and that when man seeks the kingdom first and finds salvation in goodness and godliness of life, then all things will be added unto him.

We must be impressed as we look at life to-day, by the fact that great insistence is laid on rights. And the idea of right or rights is essentially Greek. It comes down to us from the great thinkers of Athens and their successors. It is a lofty ideal and the kingdom of God would be nearer if all men lived up to it. It is this conception which is guiding the affairs of Europe—so at least the combatants assert. The nations maintain that they are contending for their rights, and in so doing are under the impression that they are following the highest possible ideal. The first of all rights is ' the right to live,' and all the

belligerents believe they are fighting for their national existence. Germany has said that as well as France; Russia felt she was the responsible guardian of the rights of Serbia; and England was convinced that she would be dishonoured in the eyes of the world if she allowed the rights of Belgium to be trodden under foot. We say that Germany had no grounds for assuming that any other nation threatened her national existence, and that this is a weak excuse for her aggression. It is to Germany's application of the philosophy of right that we object, and not to the philosophy itself.

Look at this question from the point of view of the individual. Some one may ask, many people do ask, 'Have I not a right to do what I like with my own?' That is not Greek morality. It is considerably lower. If Greek thinkers dwelt upon one thing more than another, it was on the responsibility of the individual to the State, and a man who asks such a question would have great difficulty in finding a moral teacher, worthy of the name, who would justify such a position. The State, however, allows considerable latitude to the individual, and some men think they need make no en-

spheres of life we fix our attention on the right and in others on the obligation. Rarely do we hear men speak of their rights in relation to their families. A good husband feels the obligation to make the lot of his companion in life, bright and happy. A good father finds duty lightened by his consciousness of his obligation to gladden the lives of his children and to prepare them for their work in the world. This is Christian morality, and the added burden makes the yoke lighter. There is inspiration and power in this message which can call forth the fullest self-sacrifice. The present war has furnished an illustration of the fact that when once a powerful appeal is made to the sense of obligation, millions will readily respond. War is not Christian: to fight for one's rights may not be Christian: but there can be no doubt that to respond to what one honestly believes is an obligation is Christian. The New Testament dwells on the idea of stewardship. Israel is rejected because it has failed in its stewardship. Life is a stewardship, wealth is a stewardship, and the Gospel itself is a stewardship. 'Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful'

spheres of life we fix our attention on the right and in others on the obligation. Rarely do we hear men speak of their rights in relation to their families. A good husband feels the obligation to make the lot of his companion in life, bright and happy. A good father finds duty lightened by his consciousness of his obligation to gladden the lives of his children and to prepare them for their work in the world. This is Christian morality, and the added burden makes the yoke lighter. There is inspiration and power in this message which can call forth the fullest self-sacrifice. The present war has furnished an illustration of the fact that when once a powerful appeal is made to the sense of obligation, millions will readily respond. War is not Christian: to fight for one's rights may not be Christian: but there can be no doubt that to respond to what one honestly believes is an obligation is Christian. The New Testament dwells on the idea of stewardship. Israel is rejected because it has failed in its stewardship. Life is a stewardship, wealth is a stewardship, and the Gospel itself is a stewardship. 'Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful'

(1 Cor. 4^2). The world has a long way to travel before it attains this ideal; but men who devote life and strength to the well-being of the community are to be found, and they are not all in the garb of poverty. Whatever they have and wherever they are, those who think more about their obligations than their rights are not far from the kingdom of God. On this earth the love of one's neighbour is the Christian ideal, and it is the Christian's obligation. To the Ethical Christian the ritual of religion is observed in deeds of love. He is convinced that the kingdom of God cannot come until moral duty is esteemed higher than ecclesiastical practice and theological dogmas, and the Christian doctrine of *obligations* is by choice accepted in preference to the Greek conception of rights.

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