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CREEDS OR NO CREEDS?

TO  
MY DEAR WIFE AND SON

# CREEDS OR NO CREEDS?

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE  
BASIS OF MODERNISM

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"THE CREEDS AND MODERN THOUGHT"

WITH FOREWORDS BY

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF LICHFIELD  
AND THE WARDEN OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

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## FOREWORD

BY THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD

SOME of us are sanguine enough to believe that there is a growing agreement on the foundations of the Christian faith among men whose outlook is widely different. 'Catholic,' 'Evangelical,' 'Liberal,' need not be party labels; the man who lays stress on apostolic order and loyalty to sound tradition has no cause to quarrel with his brother who is jealous to maintain the personal access of the individual soul to God in Christ; neither need either of them resist the call for real freedom of thought. Indeed, we may claim all three titles—catholic, evangelical, liberal—without lacking clearness of intellect or strength of will.

But there are differences which cut deep, and this book renders good service by its vigorous challenge to clear thinking on fundamental questions of Christian belief. The vital question is surely this: are we groping after a partial truth, always admixed with error? or has God indeed visited and redeemed His people? Has He spoken to us in His Son, and is that Son as divine as the Father and as human as ourselves? In a word—are the truths set forth in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds valid for all time? That is the question with which this book essays to deal; and it handles its great subject (I venture to say) ably and decisively.

Dr. Harris would be the first to admit that human language can never give a perfectly adequate expression to divine truth. "We see through a glass darkly."

But it is obvious that a great part of the Creeds deals with alleged historical facts. The Virgin Birth of our Lord (for example), and His Resurrection in the completeness of our human nature, are true or not true. If they are true, they are true for all time. Doubtless new light may be thrown on the evidence ; and the investigation of the evidence cannot be too thorough or too searching ; but it is clear enough that recent reluctance to accept the evidence arises, not from new knowledge, but from certain presuppositions and prejudices which cry aloud for searching criticism. Such criticism is supplied by this book faithfully and effectively.

As to the statements made in the Nicene Creed on the mystery of our Lord's Person, it must be strongly emphasized that the Creed simply guards the truth that our Lord is really God and really man. It does not attempt to define the relation of His humanity to His Deity : that is a subject for investigation by reverent students. But we must protest against the unintelligent repetition of the statement that the Nicene Creed is expressed in terms of an obsolete metaphysic. The only metaphysical term is *homoousios* ; and, after all, any metaphysical system requires some word to express 'being.' No doubt the Church may give fresh expression, if it can, to the old truths. But the attempts recently made at formulating new Creeds are not encouraging !

It is, indeed, obvious that the Creeds must be interpreted to meet the needs of each generation. There is, as Dr. Harris shows, a true doctrine of 'development.' He has no quarrel with a sane 'modernism.' We must be modern, if we are to speak to the men of our own time : Christian teachers are bound to show how the truths of the Creeds are related to modern ideals and aspirations, and (above all) how they provide the only solution to the ethical and social problems of modern life. But 'modern' is not a synonym for 'true' ; and

there are elements in the modern thought of to-day which are likely to be the laughing-stock of the modern thought of to-morrow. I believe that the author of this book is right in maintaining that the vagaries of certain Modernists are the result of a false philosophy. Dr. Harris himself evidently has leanings towards the 'New Realism'; but, as an obstinate Platonist, I am sure that his position is consistent with Idealism—i.e. the belief that all reality must be expressed in terms of mind. Our two enemies are Subjective Idealism, which cuts at the root of natural science as well as of theology, and the Pantheism which finds no place for the transcendence of God: it is a commonplace of theology that man is akin to God ("made in the image of God"), but we have to be on our guard against theories which blur the distinction between the creature and the Creator.

There are other points to which I am tempted to refer. But a preface should not be a full recapitulation. I will content myself with expressing heartfelt satisfaction that this book is an appeal, not to authority, but to sound and accurate thought. No doubt there is a place for authority. It represents the concentrated experience of the Christian Society; and age-long tradition requires the bishops of the Church to be its mouthpiece: they are called on to say what the Church has always believed and held. But it is not very reasonable to call on the bishops, every six months or so, to reaffirm their belief in the Creeds; and it is more than doubtful whether the use of force is likely to free the Church from alien elements. Authority, as Dr. Figgis used to say, is not to be confounded with the policeman! The right way to deal with any who seem to deny or pervert the truth is to prove their error. The 'Modernists' can lay claim to some good scholars and thinkers; but they have no monopoly of sound philosophy or of accurate scholarship. The only effective method is to criticize the critics, to meet learning with learning and scholarship

*1. Where criticism?*

with scholarship. That is what this book endeavours to do. It does not profess to be the last word on the truth and value of the Christian Creed. But I believe it to be a strong and valuable contribution to the right apprehension of a profoundly important subject. I hope that it will be widely read, and (seeing that the author is the last to fear criticism) acutely criticized. Its purpose is to find and to establish the Truth as it is in Jesus. To be sure of the Truth about Him is the first step to knowing Him, 'quem nosse est vivere.'

J. A. LICHFIELD.

## FOREWORD

BY THE WARDEN OF WADHAM COLLEGE, OXFORD

MY old friend and pupil, Dr. Harris, meets the Modernist views, of which we now hear so much, from a new point of view. Usually the question raised is—can they be reconciled with the Faith? He rightly raises the preliminary question—can they be justified by the principles of philosophic and historic criticism on which they profess to be based?

On his philosophic discussions I do not pretend to express an opinion; I only know that he was considered, when a scholar here, to have one of the most acute and original philosophic minds of his time, and also that for thirty years he has continued to study the great problems of thought.

For myself, I can only judge at all of the historical and critical methods of Modernism, as I have had occasion to study them when applied to Ancient History; there I have often found a marked tendency to confuse the merely possible with the probable, and to refuse to accept the obvious meaning of evidence because it does not square with the *a priori* conclusions of the 'critic.'

Dr. Harris shows with a vigorous pen the same weaknesses in argument in many of the critics of the New Testament narrative; his work deserves careful consideration, both elsewhere and especially in the Universities, where there is a natural tendency to adopt new views, even without sufficient evidence, because the old

views are known to everybody, and therefore it shows no ingenuity or learning to accept them. Dr. Harris's work appeals to University men as a piece of criticism ; I feel sure that it will repay careful examination.

J. WELLS.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

EARLY in the present year (1921) I was invited by the Society of 'Free Catholics' to meet the Rev. F. E. Hutchinson (author of *Christian Freedom*) at their Annual Conference at Birmingham, and to debate with him the important subject of 'Creeds or no Creeds?' with special reference to the Nicene Creed, regarded as the necessary and sufficient doctrinal basis for the Reunion of Christendom. After a long general discussion, in which an admirable temper prevailed, opinion seemed so evenly divided that a definite decision was wisely postponed.

My first intention was merely to publish my speech as delivered, together with replies to objections; but upon reflection the subject seemed so vitally important that I decided in the end to write a full book, discussing in considerable detail the philosophical and critical principles which underlie the Modernist Movement. This seemed all the more necessary, because since 1899, when Professor Percy Gardner published his important pioneer work, *Exploratio Evangelica, a Survey of the Foundations of Christianity* (2nd edition, 1907), there has not been, in England at least, any adequate discussion on either side of fundamentals as distinguished from details.<sup>1</sup>

At the Birmingham debate it came out clearly that the difference between the Orthodox and the advanced

<sup>1</sup> There has been a war of pamphlets, small books, and review articles, but no important work which has gone, like Gardner's treatise, to the root of the matter.

Modernist positions is a difference, not so much of attitude towards particular doctrines, as of incompatible philosophies, and indeed of entire *Weltanschauung*. Mr. Hutchinson and myself were at issue, not merely as to what particular doctrines a Christian ought to believe, but as to whether the Christian Church ought to have any *credenda* at all. Nay, more: we were not even agreed as to what kind of knowledge (if any) it is possible for the human mind to possess, or what is meant when it is affirmed that a proposition—even a secular proposition—is ‘true.’ The fundamental problem of philosophy since the days of Kant has been Pilate’s, *What is truth?* and we were not even agreed about that. When divergence has reached so extreme a point, the only thing to be done is to put details aside for a time and discuss first principles.

There are certain Modernists—a few on the Continent and more in England—who consider that Modernism has *no* first principles, or at least none of a philosophical or theological kind. Thus the Rev. H. D. A. Major contends that Modernism is a ‘method,’ not a ‘system,’ or at any rate not a philosophical or theological system.

It is obvious, however, that every ‘method’ must be based upon some underlying principles or other, otherwise it would lack justification. It is not, of course, necessary for everyone who uses a ‘method’ to know the theory of it. It is not necessary, for instance, for everyone who works a multiplication sum or extracts a square root to know the somewhat recondite principles which underlie these operations. It is sufficient for him to know and apply the ‘methods.’ Nevertheless, these underlying principles (which are metaphysical as well as mathematical) exist, and unless they can be justified, the ‘methods’ cannot be justified either.

Or to take a more apposite instance: a new ‘method’ of dealing with the text of the New Testament was introduced by Westcott and Hort in their famous edition

of 1881. But their 'method' was also a 'system'—it was, in fact, an imposing body of critical doctrine based upon certain first principles expounded by Hort in the second volume of *Introduction*. In this case, so close is the coherence of 'method' and 'system,' that it is commonly impossible for a critic to attack any particular reading approved by Hort, without also delivering an assault upon his whole *Introduction*.

The extremely negative character of Modernism by no means prevents it from being a 'system.' There are systems of negation as well as of affirmation; such, for instance, as the Kantianism of the *First Critique*, the extremely negative character of which does not prevent it from being one of the most elaborate 'systems' in the whole history of philosophy.

By general consent, the main philosophic basis of Modernism is the Kantian doctrine of 'Immanence,' or (to use the more intelligible term) the Relativity of Human Knowledge; nor do I think it possible to resist the contention of Professor Gardner, and indeed of most philosophic Modernists, that, given Kantianism, Modernism necessarily follows. Accordingly, the main object of this book is to refute the doctrine of Immanence, whether in its original Kantian form, or in the slightly modified forms which it has assumed in Hegelianism, Neo-Kantianism, Euckenism, Bergsonism, and Pragmatism. Only three chapters are expressly devoted to this subject, but from cover to cover the book is an attempt to discredit Immanence both as a theoretical and a practical principle, and it must stand or fall by its success or failure in this direction.

Christianity is not inseparably allied with any one system of philosophy, but there are some systems which are incompatible with it, and of these Kantianism is one. If Kant is right in holding that the human mind is incapable of knowing 'things-in-themselves,' i.e. of knowing Nature and God and the Eternal Moral Law,

as they really are in their own essential natures ; if human knowledge, even at its best, is purely 'phenomenal,' 'symbolic,' 'provisional,' 'mutable'—in technical language, 'relative' and not 'absolute,' then there is an end, once and for all, of Orthodox Christianity.

Orthodox Christianity is built upon the firm persuasion (which it shares with all philosophical systems earlier than Kant's),<sup>1</sup> that human knowledge, though partial, is in principle (and, at its best, in practice also) *absolute knowledge*, i.e. knowledge which apprehends its object *as it really is*. Truth (even partial truth) was regarded as something fixed and unchangeable, and it was believed that a proposition, once true, is true for evermore.

Under such circumstances it was perfectly natural for the Christian Church, believing that it had *absolute* (if partial) knowledge of God and man and of their mutual relations, to state its beliefs in fixed and unchanging creeds. Belief in absolute and immutable truth led naturally and necessarily to the formulation of immutable dogmas.

If, however, the 'Copernican revolution' of Kant is accepted, this is no longer possible. Man's religious beliefs—even the most fundamental—become 'phenomenal,' provisional, and changeable. Belief is no longer determined by the nature of its object (which according to Kant is essentially unknowable), but by the nature and structure of the human mind, and by its subjective needs and desires. Truth itself becomes a relative, not an absolute thing. It is, in fact, as Pragmatists continually insist, a 'manufactured article'—an instrument forged by the human mind to satisfy its own subjective

<sup>1</sup> With the unimportant exception of Pyrrhonism, which the ancients regarded as mere sophistry. Hume belongs to the Kantian Movement, and it is doubtful whether he really believed his own sceptical doctrines. He speaks of scepticism as a 'malady' and a philosophic 'delirium,' and declares that he only was able to be happy when he forgot his own arguments.

wants, theoretical and (more usually) practical.<sup>1</sup> It follows that doctrines which were 'true' in the fourth century (those of the Nicene Creed, for instance) in the sense that they then exactly suited the average man's outlook upon life, are much less true now, seeing that that outlook has considerably changed. Indeed, so unstable a thing is Kantian and Modernist 'truth,' that in some cases what is 'true' (i.e. suitable) to-day, may be false (because unsuitable) to-morrow.

I should hardly have been able to take up so decided a line against Kantianism (or at least not with so much confidence) had it not been for the remarkable revolution which has taken place during the last few years in the chief centre of English philosophy, Oxford, mainly, I think, owing to the influence of Professor Cook Wilson and Mr. T. Case.<sup>2</sup> Oxford, which since the days of T. H. Green has been the special home of Idealism (mainly of the Kantian and Hegelian, but partly also of the Berkeleian type), has now gone over to Realism, which if not precisely the Realism of Aristotle, is at least the kind of doctrine which he would probably have taught had he been alive to-day. The Hegelian and Pragmatist assaults upon the Aristotelian logic seem also definitely to have failed, and such able works as Mr. H. W. B. Joseph's *Introduction to Logic* mark a welcome return to the genuine Aristotelian tradition.

The connexion between the Aristotelian logic (which is the logic of common-sense) and orthodox Christian theology is, of course, most intimate; and a successful attempt to replace it by the Logic of Hegel or of Pragmatism would have inflicted a most damaging blow

<sup>1</sup> Of all Pragmatists Bergson undervalues the human intellect most. He ranks it below instinct, and sees in it only a practical instrument for dealing with matter.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Case laid the foundations of the Realist Movement in a powerful, original, and still valuable book, *Physical Realism*, published as far back as 1888. The influence of Professor Cook Wilson was exercised entirely through his lectures.

upon the latter. A fundamental principle of Hegel's Logic is that all partial truth involves *error*; and since all human truth is partial, it follows that even the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion—even those defined in the Catholic Creeds—are *partly false*, and are consequently liable to revision, alteration, and change of meaning, as knowledge advances. I am glad to notice that one of the greatest English authorities on the Hegelian Logic, Mr. McTaggart, has recently declared that this feature of Hegel's doctrine is indefensible, and that he has abandoned it.<sup>1</sup> He has also abandoned the doctrine of 'degrees of reality' which Bradley has done so much to popularize in England. He has only now to give up the equally indefensible doctrine of 'degrees of truth,' in order to cease altogether to be an Hegelian logician.

The Modernist will not be able to object to the philosophical basis of this book, that it is behind the times. It represents, at any rate, the type of philosophy now dominant in England. The Immanentism advocated by Modernism may be true—the most recent doctrine is not always the truest; but at any rate, whether true or not, Immanentism is not the latest thing: it is no longer in the philosophic fashion.

The sceptical philosophy of Kant, and its sequel the philosophy of Hegel, who, though he retired from some of Kant's more extreme positions, was faithful to the doctrine of Immanence, led naturally to a sceptical movement in historical and textual criticism, both in the theological and in the classical fields. It became the fashion to deny the authenticity of all ancient works, the evidence for whose authenticity was not demonstrative,

<sup>1</sup> "In this point we shall depart from what was Hegel's principle. . . . Each characteristic demonstrated in the course of our [dialectical] process will remain at the end of the process. None of them, of course, will be the whole truth, but that will not prevent all of them from being quite true" (*The Nature of Existence* (1921), vol. i, p. 46).

to assign to them as late a date as possible, to suppose their contents to be as unhistorical and legendary as possible, and to assume that their texts are grossly corrupt, full of perverse emendations, deliberate falsifications, and extensive interpolations of copyists. These views, and the methods of criticism based upon them, have been out of fashion among classical scholars for nearly two generations, but they are still retained, with a conservatism almost pathetic, by Liberal Protestants and Modernists. The 'vigour and rigour' with which such eminent exponents of Modernism as M. Le Roy, M. Loisy, Canon Charles, and Dean Rashdall deal with the text of the New Testament, moulding it to suit their private views, and deleting all passages which contradict them, recalls the days of the last century, when out of thirty-five dialogues of Plato only two still remained unquestioned by scholars of weight and authority; when the Platonic Epistles had not a defender in Europe but Grote; when it was maintained by most scholars that the *Dialogue on Oratory* could not possibly have proceeded from the pen that wrote the *Histories* and *Annals* of Tacitus, and by some that the *Annals* were forged by Poggio in the fifteenth century; when practically all scholars rejected as spurious Cicero's speeches *Post Reditum* and the *Pro Marcello*, some also the *Pro Archia*, and Orelli even the obviously genuine orations ii-iv *Against Catiline*; and when a morbid suspicion of interpolation was so prevalent, that Madvig and Halm (the former more confidently than the latter) excised from the *Pro Cælio*, upon the evidence of the first hand of a single manuscript, a large number of passages, some of which were absolutely necessary to the sense.

Such arbitrary methods of criticism have become obsolete in the classical field, partly owing to papyrus discoveries, which since 1875 and especially since 1895 have been numerous and important, and partly owing to the development of more refined instruments of

research, particularly the study of prose-rhythm. In almost all cases the effect of the new discoveries and the new methods has been to confirm tradition. It is not now considered safe, except in the rarest and most peculiar circumstances, to reject as spurious any work which was unanimously accepted in antiquity; or even to tamper seriously with its text. Practically the whole of the Platonic Canon endorsed by the Academy is now accepted by modern critics. Even the Platonic Epistles are again coming into favour, and are defended by a majority of scholars. Interpolations in ancient books are now regarded as rare, and for the most part as unimportant. No scholar would now defend the rash excisions of Madvig just mentioned,<sup>1</sup> and lately even the long 'interpolation' in the 7th Epistle of Plato, which even the defenders of its genuineness have hitherto regarded as spurious, has found a brilliant and convincing defender in Mr. A. E. Taylor.<sup>2</sup>

Nor does the nineteenth-century habit of questioning every unconfirmed statement of an ancient historian, and assuming that his work contains a maximum of legend and a minimum of fact, any longer hold the field. So many historical facts, denied or doubted by nineteenth-century critics, have recently been confirmed by papyrus discoveries, that Prof. A. S. Hunt (than whom there is no higher authority) is perfectly justified in writing: "Let us remember, for example, the case of *Anthropus*, the Olympian victor, who has risen from the grave in an Oxyrhyncus papyrus to confute the modern critics who, refusing to accept the evidence of the early commentators on Aristotle, denied his existence. . . . It is a grave mistake . . . to treat such reports of ancient historians cavalierly. . . . To neglect their affirmations,

<sup>1</sup> Recent papyrus discoveries have shown that the omitted passages are genuine.

<sup>2</sup> See *Mind*, 1912, pp. 347 ff. Even the Christian 'interpolations' in Josephus are now defended, not only by Professor Burkitt, but also by Harnack and Zahn. Personally I am not yet convinced.

or to dismiss them without strong conflicting evidence, is not consistent with the principles of sound criticism. At any rate, those who are minded to flout early testimony will do well to wait until the period of papyrus discovery is safely over." <sup>1</sup>

Modernists and Liberal Protestants are most unwisely perpetuating in the theological field a type of arbitrary and subjective criticism which the *consensus* of scholars has long condemned in the classical. They may of course be right—majorities are often wrong; nevertheless it is important to realize that the textual and historical criticism of Modernism is behind the times, not merely by one, but by two generations. No classical scholar with a reputation to lose would *dare* to deal with the text and subject-matter of an ancient historian as even the more moderate Modernists deal with the Gospels—even the Synoptics.

With regard to the theology and Christology of Modernism, it seemed until quite lately—until the Girton Conference, in fact—not only to the ordinary churchman, but even to most Modernists, that they had not yet lost touch with historical Christianity, and that in spite of their denial of miracles, and their extreme kenoticism, which seemed to reduce the power and knowledge of the Incarnate One almost to an ordinary human level, they still accepted the fundamental doctrine of the Incarnation in something like its orthodox sense. Doubtless many Modernists do so still; certainly Bishop Henson does,<sup>2</sup> and as for Dean Rashdall, in spite of the difficulty created by his Cambridge paper, I for one unreservedly

<sup>1</sup> *Papyri and Papyrology* (1914).

<sup>2</sup> "There must be a true and apparent identity between the oldest Christology and the youngest. In both alike the plenary Lordship of Jesus Christ, *His unique and incommunicable Godhead*, must be correlated with His Perfect Manhood, affirmed and justified. If this character of any proposed Christology be absent, the Church can have no use for it. *It is a formula of apostasy, not of faith*" (Sermon at the Church Congress, 1921).

accept his published assurance that he believes the Incarnation in the very sense of the Catholic Creeds and Ecumenical Councils. Accordingly I have felt justified, in all the chapters of this book, except the last, which deals with the latest extreme developments, in regarding Modernism as sharing important Christian principles with Orthodoxy, and as still belonging in some measure to the household of faith.

There is no denying, however, that the Girton Conference has created a grave change in the situation, and that if the utterances of some of its leading spirits represent the real line of development of coming Modernism, the parting of the ways will soon be reached. I hesitate to accept Mr. Major's summary as adequately expressing the views of the Conference as a whole (I have heard other estimates of a more encouraging character), nevertheless if Mr. Major's and Professor Bethune-Baker's teaching represents any considerable section of Modernist opinion, it is plain that trouble is ahead.

It is not easy for a Christian living in the twentieth century to appreciate or regard seriously the Christology of Mr. Major, which, so far from being modern, reproduces both in principle, and almost in every detail, the doctrine of Paul of Samosata, who lived in the third. Like Mr. Major, the Samosatene taught that Jesus of Nazareth began His career as a mere man, and that He had no personal existence before He was conceived by Mary. He was, however, sinless, and the Logos and Holy Spirit (neither of which Paul regarded as personal) dwelt in Him more fully than in other men. By a gradual process of spiritual and moral development, and as a reward of merit, He was finally completely deified—"from among men He has become God." There is just one difference between the teaching of Paul and the teaching of Mr. Major, and that is rather in favour of the heresiarch than otherwise. For whereas the latter,

according to St. Athanasius, believed in the Virgin Birth, Mr. Major denies it.

From the apostolic age, the early Church regarded the doctrine of apotheosis with especial horror, as a heathen abomination involving blasphemy against the Majesty of God and idolatrous worship of creatures. Accordingly a Council held at Antioch excommunicated Paul for the sin of introducing heathen doctrine into the Church, and the Fathers of Nicæa declined even to recognize his baptism.

In the abstract, no doubt, everything not self-contradictory is possible, and therefore it is possible that Paul and the heathen were right about the doctrine of apotheosis, and the Church wrong, and that one day the Church will acknowledge its error. In the last chapter I have admitted this possibility, and have seriously discussed (though with great reluctance) the theology of apotheosis and the ethics of creature-worship. In the concrete, however, I find it impossible to regard it even as conceivable that Christendom, whose martyrs have died in multitudes rather than burn incense to deified mortals, will ever place the halo of sainthood round the head of Paul of Samosata, and recognize in him a doctor—the greatest doctor—of the Universal Church.

I seldom have the pleasure of agreeing, at any rate on a point of theology, with Professor Lake, but he seems to me to express the exact truth when he writes: "Adoptionism [i.e. Apotheosis] seems to me to have no part or lot in any intelligent modern theology, though it is unfortunately often promulgated, especially in pulpits which are regarded as Liberal. We cannot believe that at any time a human being, in consequence of his virtue, became God, which he was not before; or that any human being ever will do so. No doctrine of Christology, and no doctrine of salvation which is Adoptionist in essence, can come to terms with modern thought."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Landmarks of Early Christianity*, p. 131.

I am specially grateful to the Warden of Wadham College for endorsing, from the point of view of a recognized authority on ancient history, the general attitude towards historical and literary criticism taken up in this volume; and not less to the Bishop of Lichfield, who, writing as an Idealist, finds himself able to accept—and even powerfully to reinforce—the main philosophical arguments of a Realist like myself.

One can only criticize a system effectively from one's own philosophical standpoint, and mine is Realism; nevertheless, my aim throughout has been, not to prove Realism true as against Idealism, but simply and solely to establish the full objectivity, immutability, and 'absoluteness' of human knowledge at its best against all agnostic theories on the subject based on the Relativity and Subjectivism of Kant's *First Critique*. With this general aim all Berkeleians and many English Hegelians and other Idealists will find themselves in sympathy. Accordingly, I have been careful, in the philosophical discussions which follow, to lay the chief stress upon arguments which Idealists as well as Realists are able to accept. I should be the last to advocate the policy (popular in some quarters) of attaching Christianity irrevocably to a single philosophical system, even that of the Angelical Doctor, good in general as I believe it to be. Philosophy is a progressive science, and to put the clock back to the thirteenth century, as if nothing important had been discovered since, seems to me a mistaken—even a fatal—policy.

CHARLES HARRIS.

*Christmas 1921.*

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# CREEDS OR NO CREEDS?

## CHAPTER I

### THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND CRITICAL ANTECEDENTS OF MODERNISM

#### CONSERVATIVE MODERNISM

THE term Modernism is used in two entirely different senses. Sometimes it denotes the attitude of that important body of orthodox Churchmen who maintain that the outlook of the modern Church ought to be modern (not medieval or ancient), and that accordingly it is the duty of the theologians and teachers of the Church to study modern science and philosophy with appreciative sympathy, to assimilate into the Church's current teaching such modern ideas as are sound and helpful, to use modern methods of criticism and exegesis in their study of the Bible, the Fathers, and Ecclesiastical History, and (above all) to commend the Church's essential message to our age, by translating it, where needful, from the little understood forms of thought of the Creeds, and Councils, and Schoolmen into the better understood categories employed by modern thinkers.

To this useful and well-understood programme of Conservative Modernism there can be no possible objection, even from the point of view of the strictest orthodoxy, provided always (1) that the meaning of the Church's message is faithfully preserved, and not altered, in the process of translation, and (2) that the Creeds and the

definitions of the Ecumenical Councils are still regarded as authoritative.

Many of those who are popularly classed as Modernists do not really aim at more than this. The Abbé Duchesne, for instance, whom many French Modernists regard as the real founder of their movement, and whose able and candid work, *L'histoire ancienne de l'église*, was placed on the Index in 1912 for its supposed dangerous tendencies, seems to have said and written nothing inconsistent with the strictest orthodoxy. He gave offence because he was the prime mover in introducing modern methods of criticism, and popularizing them in the French Church, but he also showed by his brilliant example that these methods can be as effectively used in defence of orthodoxy as against it.

Nor does it appear that M. Fonsegrive, who is known throughout Europe as a Christian philosopher and apologist, has had any other end in view, in all that he has said and written, than the reconciliation of orthodox Catholicism with the thought of our age. It is true that he has criticized with some asperity the extremely sweeping condemnations of the Encyclical *Pascendi* ("the deed which Pius X has done," he wrote, "is the rupture of the diplomatic relations between the Church and the age"), and that he has deeply offended the ultra-traditionalists by claiming that it is possible to be a good Catholic without altogether accepting the official philosophy of St. Thomas, but nowhere has he put forward opinions which can fairly be called unorthodox.

Something similar may be said of M. Maurice Blondel, who in the minds of many contests with M. Le Roy the claim to be 'the Philosopher of Modernism.' His ingenious but obscure work, *L'Action* (1893), which French readers seem to find as difficult to understand as English, is considered by the ecclesiastical authorities to be unsound and dangerous; but I am unable, even with the

help of M. de Tonquédec's elaborate refutation,<sup>1</sup> to find either in it or in its successor, *Histoire et Dogme* (1904), anything definitely unorthodox even from the strictly Roman standpoint. M. Blondel, like nearly all French Modernists, is something of a Pragmatist, and looks for the proof of the Christian verities rather to the evidence of two thousand years of Christian life and experience, than to purely intellectual arguments. He may merit in some measure M. de Tonquédec's rebuke for his undervaluing of logic and objective fact in the sphere of religion, but undoubtedly in *L'Action* he declares his adhesion to the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation in most orthodox language,<sup>2</sup> and in *Histoire et Dogme* his belief in at least the leading Gospel miracles, both as facts, and as possessing apologetic value.<sup>3</sup>

Few ecclesiastics in France have given deeper offence to the ultra-orthodox party than the Abbé Laberthonnière, and it must be candidly confessed that he has been extremely unwise in appropriating, as he has, the entire vocabulary of extreme Modernism, and speaking, for example, of 'the Christ of history,' and 'the Christ of faith,' as if there was a radical difference between them. Nevertheless, so far as I can understand the matter, he seems substantially orthodox, not merely with regard to doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, but

<sup>1</sup> Joseph de Tonquédec, *Immanence, Essai critique sur la doctrine de M. Maurice Blondel*, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> "Initiating us into the secret of His intimate life, the hidden God reveals to us the divine processions—the generation of the Word by the Father, the spiration of the Spirit by the Father and the Son. Then, by love, He invites all men to the participation of His Nature and of His Beatitude. Adopted by the Father, regenerated by the Son, anointed by the Spirit, man is by grace what God is by nature, etc." (p. 407).

<sup>3</sup> After deprecating the almost exclusive stress laid by orthodox apologists upon the argument from miracles, he proceeds: "It ought to be superfluous to note that I do not deny altogether the reality or the probative force of signs and miracles; I criticize only the imperfect use which certain apologists make of them."

even with regard to the Gospel miracles. He speaks frequently of the 'symbolical' interpretation of certain articles of the Creed, but, unlike our English Modernists, he insists that the literal sense must first be accepted before the 'symbolical' interpretation is built upon it. Speaking of the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of our Lord, he says expressly: "We could never, without completely misunderstanding the nature of Christian doctrine, affirm that the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection are *only* symbols, because in that case Christ would lose His character, and would cease to appear as the life of God inserting itself into the life of humanity. The dogmas would be nothing but myth in place of realities."<sup>1</sup>

Many other contemporary French theologians might be mentioned who unite progressive views, and an enlightened appreciation of the principles of modern science and criticism, with substantial orthodoxy—e.g. Messieurs d'Hulst, Le Camus, and Mignot, and the Abbés Batiffol and Birot.

In England this type of Modernism, which is more usually called Liberal Catholicism, is not only well known, but has actually been the predominant type of theology in the Anglican Church for more than a generation. It found classical expression as far back as 1890 in *Lux Mundi*, a courageous and yet cautious work of outstanding merit, which has profoundly influenced all subsequent religious thought. Even the essays in *Foundations* (1912) represent chiefly this type of Modernism, for though the editor, Canon Streeter, belongs to the more advanced (but not most extreme) school, and argues in his essay against the historic truth of Christ's bodily resurrection, yet most of the other contributors seem to accept both this and the other leading Gospel miracles as literal facts.

To prophecy is always dangerous, but it seems probable that it is this, rather than the more extreme type of

<sup>1</sup> *Le réalisme chrétien*, p. 63.

Modernism, which has the future before it in England. England and the English Church are averse from extremes, whether of Traditionalism or of Liberalism. Conservative Modernism seems best calculated to effect the desired reconciliation of the old with the new. It desires, by assimilating the most assured results of modern philosophy and science, to effect a well-balanced synthesis of Christian faith with sound learning. It fully accepts the methods of modern Biblical criticism so far as they are really sound and objective, but rejects with good reason the purely subjective assumptions of the more extreme Continental criticism, which rules out the entire miraculous element of Christianity as beyond the sphere of profitable discussion. Moderate Modernism of this type does justice both to the permanent and to the developing elements in Christian belief. While fully orthodox, it recognizes that the Holy Ghost has still much to teach the Church, and that the Church must not be slow to learn it. It admits development, and yet maintains that the fundamental meaning of the Church's doctrines has never altered. It admits the utility and even the need of 're-statement,' but by this it means merely the translation of the Church's message into terms of modern thought, not in any degree the alteration of its meaning, still less its supersession by a message entirely new. It holds firmly to the principle of the supernatural and the miraculous, maintaining quite reasonably that inasmuch as the Incarnation is a unique and miraculous event, having no historical or scientific parallel, its circumstances must not be measured by analogies drawn from ordinary human lives, but that on the contrary there is a presumption in favour of, and not against, such lesser miracles as are asserted on good evidence to have accompanied it, and which have certainly helped to win credit for it, both in the first and in all subsequent ages.

In contrast with mere Traditionalism, such a position may be suitably described as Progressive Orthodoxy, and

it is from this point of view that the more advanced types of Modernism will be criticized in the following pages.

### ADVANCED MODERNISM

More usually, however, the term Modernism is used to describe the views of a much more advanced school of theologians, who, while agreeing with orthodox Churchmen in accepting the doctrine of the Incarnation (usually in a somewhat minimizing sense), and also in many cases (but by no means in all) the doctrine of the Personal Trinity, have so far diverged from orthodoxy, as to have accepted from the Liberal Protestantism of the Continent at least the two following theological positions :

(1) That all the doctrines of the Church, even those formulated in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, so far from being absolutely true and immutable (as has always hitherto been assumed), are subject to correction and even rejection, as human knowledge advances.<sup>1</sup>

(2) That miracles, if not absolutely impossible, are at least in practice incredible, and that therefore even the great miracles connected with the Person of Christ, and defined as vital in the Creeds—viz. the Virgin Birth, the Bodily Resurrection, and the Bodily Ascension of Jesus Christ—are not historic facts.

These are the two most important principles upon which the distinctive system of Modernist theology (for system it is, in spite of all denials) is reared. As the discussion proceeds, it will become manifest that both these principles are based ultimately upon the metaphysical system of Kant, especially upon the doctrine of 'Immanence,' or the 'Relativity of Knowledge,' which a large number of later schools, which in other

<sup>1</sup> "Where [the Modernist] differs from the Traditionalist," says the Rev. H. D. A. Major, "is in claiming the right . . . to reinterpret and even reject any statement of the Creed which may become incredible as the result of reverent research." (See the full discussion of this position in ch. xii.)

respects diverge widely from his type of teaching (e.g. Hegelianism, Euckenism, Pragmatism, and Bergsonism) have derived from him. This fundamental doctrine of Immanence takes Protean forms, and ramifies in all directions. We shall be concerned with its developments in almost every chapter, but the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh are especially devoted to it.

The first subject that requires discussion is *the Permanence of Dogma*, a principle to which orthodox Christianity is absolutely pledged.

### THE DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION

Modernists argue that no truly enlightened mind can any longer believe in the permanence of religious dogma, because the establishment of the Doctrine of Evolution, first as a philosophical and later as a scientific principle, has rendered incredible the permanence of any human beliefs whatsoever. To imagine that even the most fundamental human beliefs are fixed and unchangeable is to reject the dynamic view of truth, characteristic of all modern thinking, and to return to the static view, characteristic of ancient and medieval thought, but rendered impossible for all truly modern minds, first by the philosophy of Kant, and secondly by the establishment of Evolution as a cosmic principle by Hegel and Darwin.

Evolution, it is urged, means change—radical and far-reaching change, both in the universe as a whole, and in all its parts, and since human beliefs form part of the universe, it is impossible but that they should change with it. "There is no fixed truth," says what is perhaps the most authoritative document of Italian Modernism,<sup>1</sup> "no unalterable precept. Everything in the history of Christianity has changed—doctrine, hierarchy, worship. . . . Such a criticism [as ours] of the substance of Christ's

<sup>1</sup> The anonymous *Il Programma dei Modernisti* (Rome, 1908), a reply to the Encyclical *Pascendi* of Pius X; English translation by A. L. Lilley.

teaching does away with the very possibility of finding in it even the embryonic form of the Church's theological teaching. . . . The conclusions of such a method, applied to the history of Catholicism, are simply disastrous to the old theological positions. Instead of finding from the first at least the germs of those dogmatic affirmations formulated by Church authority in the course of ages, we have found a sort of religion which was originally formless and undogmatic, and which came gradually to develop in the direction of definite forms of thought and ritual owing to the requirements of general intercourse. . . . Christianity felt free in the early ages to give expression to its faith in the language of any speculative system current among the faithful for the time being. . . . Explanations and theories had but a relative value in its eyes. . . . The Church, which lay beyond the horizon of Christ's outlook, bounded as it was by the Second Coming [which He regarded as imminent], grew up by a natural process among His followers. . . . Criticism has made us see how Catholic dogma has sprung entirely from the need of setting experience in harmony with the mind of the age."

The authors (who appear from the account they give of their education to be priests) consider that the only permanent thing about Christianity is "its Spirit, which," they say, "has remained unchanged through the ages"; though how even this can have resisted change, if the entire universe is in a state of flux, is not clear to me, nor (I venture to think) to them.

Another Italian manifesto states even more clearly than *Il Programma*, that all human truth whatsoever—scientific and mathematical, equally with religious truth—is of the same relative, provisional, and 'symbolic' character.<sup>1</sup> The agnosticism of Kant, radical as it was,

<sup>1</sup> Anon., *Quello che vogliamo* (Milan, 1907), translated by A. L. Lilley as "What we want. An open letter to Pius X by a group of priests."

did not deny the objective existence of external things. It only declared them unknowable. The authors of *What we want* out-Kant Kant himself, by denying even the *existence* of external things, and maintaining that the human mind *creates its own objects of knowledge*.<sup>1</sup> "It is our mind," they say, "which by its operations creates the things, whose appearances only at a given moment we can register, whose relations only we can seek to establish by means of categories, which are themselves fashioned by our mind for the practical needs of life. Verifications, registrations, and categories make up our science, which is therefore *not an objective knowledge of reality*, but only its mental representation elaborated by us at a given moment, and so subjective, relative, and capable of transformation and variation in accordance with the evolution of the human spirit, which is in a continual state of becoming" (i.e. flux or change).

#### MODERNISM AND PHILOSOPHY

The authors of *Il Programma* naïvely complain that they are accused in the Encyclical *Pascendi* of holding certain philosophical doctrines of an agnostic kind, from which, as from first principles, they deduce all their peculiar historical and theological conclusions.

This accusation, they protest, is most unjust. They disclaim altogether the character of philosophers, and profess only to be critics. Starting without any philosophical principles at all, and devoting themselves entirely to Biblical and historical criticism—criticism, moreover, not biassed like that of the Catholic Church, but of a purely neutral and 'objective' kind, they have arrived, only at the end of their studies and as a result of them, at those philosophical principles of a Neo-Kantian type, which the Encyclical so severely condemns. They do

<sup>1</sup> M. Blondel has been accused of teaching the same doctrine in *L'Action*, but he energetically denies it.

not deny that they hold these principles<sup>1</sup>; they only insist that they are rather the result, than the source, of their critical methods.

The question, however, arises, from whom did they learn these critical methods? and they give their whole case away, when they admit that they learnt them from the Liberal Protestants, the great majority of whom, they further admit, are complete rationalists in religion. But then, "their conclusions are not founded on their rationalism, but on their reasons, on their vast knowledge, above all on their conscientious investigations of texts and facts." Moreover, a certain number of them are Christian believers, notably "Dr. Charles Briggs, the illustrious critic and philologist, well known for his Catholic tendencies."

As examples of the purely 'objective' character of this Liberal Protestant criticism, they instance the discrimination of the component documents of the Pentateuch by such objective tests as style, and varying phraseology, especially with regard to the titles of God; and the attempts to solve the Synoptic problem by a careful study of the vocabulary, style, order, and contents of the first three Gospels. In these cases, of course, the methods used are really 'objective,' and for this reason are employed equally by all critics, orthodox and unorthodox. There is nothing distinctively Liberal or Modernist about them.

### THE INFLUENCE OF HEGELIANISM

The authors, however, are entirely mistaken in imagining that objective principles of this kind are the *only* ones accepted by Liberal Protestantism. Liberal Protes-

<sup>1</sup> "It cannot be denied that our postulates are inspired by the principles of Immanentism. . . . We accept the criticism of pure reason which Kant and Spencer have made. . . . We find ourselves undoubtedly in harmony with one of the fundamental tendencies of contemporary philosophy, one which is considered the very condition of the possibility of philosophy, viz. the immanent tendency."

tantism itself is a creation of Kant, who sketched its entire programme (including the unessential character of miracles and of the Incarnation) as far back as 1793 in *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, and once more emphasized his Rationalism in *Der Streit der Facultäten* (1798). Its second founder is Hegel (the Hegel of the unorthodox Left and Left-Centre, not of the more orthodox Right), whose influence upon Liberal theology and criticism has been profound both in Germany and England.

To pass by the earlier critical movement inspired directly by Kant, the modern era of Liberal Protestant criticism of the New Testament (with which we are chiefly concerned) dates from the appointment of F. C. Baur as professor of theology at Tübingen in 1826. At the time of his appointment, he had recently abandoned the teaching of Fichte and Schelling for that of Hegel, whose enthusiastic disciple he soon became. As a thoroughgoing adherent of the Hegelian School, his aim was to show that the history of the Church both in the Apostolic and in subsequent ages conformed to the stages of Hegel's philosophy of history. One of his sayings was: "Without philosophy, history is always for me dead and dumb." Starting with an *a priori* theory of a radical and irreconcilable contradiction between Petrine and Pauline Christianity, lasting until at least the middle of the second century, he did not hesitate to condemn as spurious all the New Testament documents that seemed inconsistent with it—that is to say, all but 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Galatians, and the Apocalypse.

Another of the founders of the Liberal School, D. F. Strauss, was also a prominent Hegelian, and his two chief works, the *Leben Jesu* (1835) and *Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (1840-1), are entirely dominated by Hegelian principles interpreted in a pantheistic sense. The latter work in particular is full, not only of Hegel's ideas, but also of his technical terms.

German Liberalism has modified or abandoned not a few of Baur's and Strauss's original positions, but it still retains the fundamental character which Baur impressed upon it of 'tendency' criticism. No criticism can altogether dispense with presuppositions, but no important critical school has ever carried subjectivism and apriorism to such extreme lengths as Baur and his Liberal Protestant successors. In spite of a reaction in certain quarters (notably among the followers of Harnack), the Liberal School is still unduly dominated by subjective ideas, and many of its present-day representatives (particularly those of the Eschatological Group of J. Weiss and Schweitzer) are guilty of extravagances hardly less than Baur's own.

From Hegelianism Liberal Protestantism has derived (among others) the four following important principles :

(1) A theory of Radical Evolutionism which denies the permanence of all (human) truth ;

(2) A peculiar theory of error, according to which all partial (and therefore all human) truth is partially erroneous and false ;

(3) A denial of the credibility (or at least of the importance) of miracles (a principle which Hegel shared with Kant) ; and

(4) A distinction between the non-miraculous ' Christ of history ' and the miraculous and largely mythical ' Christ of faith.' This distinction, already clearly drawn by Baur, was developed to extreme lengths by Strauss, who dissolved a great part of the Gospel narratives into myths and legends. Practically everything that the most recent Modernism has to say upon this subject is already anticipated in his *Der Christus des Glaubens und der Jesus der Geschichte* (1865), a reply to Schleiermacher's comparatively conservative *Life of Christ*.

From Liberal Protestantism, Modernism has derived these four principles, together with the fundamental one

of Philosophic Immanence, which is common to Hegel and Kant. Since all these principles existed in philosophy before they existed in Biblical criticism, and since those who first introduced them into the latter acknowledged that they derived them from philosophy, it is impossible to accept the Modernist contention that Liberal and Modernist criticism is not based upon philosophy. It is as plain a fact of history that the metaphysics of Kant and Hegel lie at the root of Liberal Protestant (and therefore of Modernist) Biblical criticism, as that Napoleon was defeated by Wellington at Waterloo.

Of course, very few Modernists derive their critical principles *directly* from the works of Kant and Hegel. Usually they derive them indirectly and unconsciously from the study of critical works of the German Protestant School, in which they are not stated explicitly as philosophical principles, but are *implied in the methods used*. But though only implied, they influence and often dictate the results reached ; and unless they can be proved to be true by metaphysical arguments, the critical methods characteristic of Modernism have no basis in reason.

#### THE RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE OF KANT AND HEGEL

It is impossible to decide peremptorily whether Kant or Hegel has exerted the greater influence upon Liberal Protestantism, and (by consequence) upon Modernism. In many things the two philosophers were in agreement. Both laid great stress upon the doctrine of Immanence, though Hegel amended Kant's doctrine by abolishing 'things-in-themselves.' Both adopted the same attitude towards miracles, which was one of disparagement, and of denial that the miraculous element in religion is of the slightest importance. "Whether at the marriage at Cana," says Hegel, "the guests got a little more wine or a little less, is a matter of absolutely no importance ; not is it any more essential to determine whether or not the man who had the withered hand was healed. . . .

Curiosity of this sort really has its origin in unbelief." "The spiritual, as such, cannot be directly verified or authenticated by what is unspiritual and connected with sense [i.e. miracle]. The chief thing to be noticed in connexion with this view of miracles is that in this way *they are put on one side.*"<sup>1</sup> Neither Kant nor Hegel absolutely denied them as *facts*, but without determining whether they were facts or not, they considered them as beneath the serious notice of a philosopher. Most of their followers (the Hegelian Left in a particularly aggressive manner) took up the position that miracles are incredible or impossible, and it is fairly clear that this result was contemplated by the philosophers themselves.

Kant regarded the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Holy Trinity as entirely unimportant, and probably disbelieved them both. Hegel, on the other hand, regarded them as vital, not only to Christianity, but also to philosophy. It is exceedingly difficult and probably impossible (in spite of Hegel's own opinion upon the subject) to bring his doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation into even tolerable harmony with those of orthodox Christianity; but the fact that he thought the two most distinctive Christian dogmas to be of metaphysical as well as religious value is significant, and may lead to important results in time to come.

The system of Hegel is a pantheistic one, and, as such, in strict logic excludes the very possibility of an Incarnation. If God and the world are identical to start with, then God *is* man,<sup>2</sup> and it is difficult to see how at any particular time and place He can *become* man. It is usual, and perhaps correct, to say that, according to Hegelian principles, God is imperfectly incarnate in matter, more perfectly in plant and animal life, still more perfectly in the human race, and most perfectly of all in man's best representative, Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy of Religion*, English translation, i, p. 219; ii, p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> He is also animal, and plant, and stock, and stone.

If this is Hegel's meaning, then Incarnation is a matter of *degree*, and God's Incarnation in Jesus differs only in degree, not in kind, from His Incarnation in all other men. Such a doctrine has obvious affinities with the semi-pantheistic view of the Incarnation advocated by several leading Modernists at the recent Cambridge Conference.<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, one important difference between Hegel and these Cambridge Modernists. The latter (or most of them) agree with Kant and orthodox Christianity in regarding the distinction between moral good and evil as fundamental. Some of them lay the utmost stress upon the sinlessness of Jesus, and will not admit that any being can be consubstantial with God, unless or until he is sinless.

This was not Hegel's point of view by any means. In his philosophy, both good and evil are in God Himself, and the distinction between them is only one of degree. Evil is only a lesser kind of good, and a necessary means to its attainment. In Hegel's triadic system, sin is the second member of a triad of which innocence is the first and virtue the third. Innocence can only raise itself to the higher stage of virtue by passing through the stage of sin. Sin is, therefore, a necessary part of the structure of the universe, and in its own place, and for its own purpose, good. It is actually superior to innocence, though inferior to virtue. Reverence, and respect for Christian feeling, prevented Hegel from expressly applying this principle to the case of Jesus, but the logic of his philosophy requires it. Obviously a system which requires evil to be in God as a necessary part of His perfection, cannot exclude it from the Person of the Redeemer. As long as Modernism refuses to allow that evil can be in God or in the Redeemer, it is perhaps fairer to call it semi-pantheism than pantheism.

Kantianism, in contrast with Hegelianism, emphasizes the transcendence and absolute holiness of God. To

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion in ch. xii.

Kant the distinction between good and evil is irreducible, and the Moral Law immutable.

It has often been pointed out that such 'absolute' doctrines as these are entirely irreconcilable with the pure relativity and subjective agnosticism of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and are in fact illogical survivals from the earlier philosophic tradition, and from orthodox Christianity.

Kant, however, was convinced that these doctrines (together with the Freedom of the Will, and the Substantiality and Immortality of the Soul) are both important and true. Accordingly, rather than abandon them, he invented a new faculty for man, the 'Practical Reason,' endowed with the strange power of knowing several vital truths, which in the earlier Critique had been pronounced unknowable. Incoherences and contradictions were thus introduced into the very heart of the Kantian system. A far better course would have been to withdraw the first Critique from circulation, and rewrite it upon less agnostic principles.

#### DOCTRINAL POSITION OF LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM

Of late years the Christology of Continental Protestantism has been influenced considerably more by Kant than by Hegel. For nearly a generation the doctrine of the Incarnation, as well as of the Trinity, has been abandoned by nearly all who have a right to speak in the name of Liberalism.

We may roughly date the completion of this momentous change of view, in France by the publication of Sabatier's *Esquisse d'une philosophie de la religion* in 1897, and in Germany by the delivery of Harnack's famous lectures, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, in 1900. A small number of German Liberals, particularly of the 'Modern Positive' School (e.g. Th. Kaftan, R. Seeberg, R. H. Grützmacher, K. Beth, and F. Loofs), still profess to adhere to the

doctrine of the Incarnation, usually in a much attenuated sense. A few of them, notably Beth, have attempted to rehabilitate certain of the Gospel miracles.<sup>1</sup> Even these, however, regard themselves as having broken definitely with orthodox Christianity, and Loofs informs us, "there is hardly a single learned theologian—I know of none in Germany—who defends orthodox Christology in its unaltered form." The great majority of Liberals have definitely lapsed into Unitarianism, or in some cases into Pantheism.

Such a typical book as Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums* represents the completion of the Liberal programme sketched by Kant over a century before in his fiercely assailed *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*. As Harnack finds the whole essence of Christ's message in His moral teaching concerning the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, so Kant reduces Christianity to ethics; as Harnack dismisses miracles as incredible and meaningless to the modern mind, so Kant writes, "Moral religion tends eventually to displace and dispense with all miraculous beliefs whatsoever, for men betray a culpable state of moral unbelief when they refuse to acknowledge the paramount authority of those claims of duty which from the beginning have been inscribed in their hearts, unless they see them accredited and enforced by miracles—'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe'"; and as Harnack rejects the Incarnation as being inconsistent with the modern non-miraculous view of Christianity, so Kant, while admitting that this doctrine may have been of some use in the primitive period, when the ethical system of Christianity had to struggle for existence against other systems having strong prestige, regards it as having now ceased to be vital or important. "We may concede," he says, "to such alleged facts [as the Incarnation, the

<sup>1</sup> Beth's *Die Wunder Jesu* aims at being a general defence of the Gospel miracles, but it leaves the physical miracles open questions.

Resurrection, and the Ascension] whatever worth they claim, and even venerate them as *the vehicle which has popularized a doctrine which now needs neither sign nor wonder for its credentials, being inscribed indefaceably on every human soul . . .* provided that these historic documents [i.e. the Gospels] are not perverted into elements of religion, and mankind taught that the knowing, believing, and professing their contents is in itself something wherewith we can render ourselves acceptable to God."

It will be noticed that the repudiation of the Incarnation and its associated miracles is not quite absolute; but those who realize how difficult it was for a man holding Kant's position to deny explicitly doctrines held to be vital both by his own university and by the government, will not make the mistake of attributing his indefiniteness of expression to orthodox faith rather than to its true cause, a prudent 'economy.'

#### MODERNISM AND LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM

Attempts have occasionally been made to find for Modernism a basis in the tradition of the Historic Church, but without the least plausibility. In all cases its origin is due to the influence of the Kantian and Liberal Protestant tradition. This is true even of its earliest definite form, Güntherianism, which, while professing to combat Hegelianism, adopted almost entire its doctrine of the Trinity, certain features of its doctrine of the Incarnation, and almost without change its theory of the relative, changing, and provisional character of religious dogma.

It is true also of recent French Modernism, of which the most representative document, Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église*, is not so much a reply to Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, as a surrender at discretion to the critical principles of German Liberalism, which Loisy is

prepared to carry much further in a negative direction than Harnack, whom he professes to repute.

The Italian Modernists also, as we have seen, openly declare themselves disciples of German Protestantism in their criticism, and of Kant and his successors in their philosophy.

It is hardly necessary to prove at length that English Modernism does not derive any of its principles from the traditions of the English Church or of English scholarship. It confessedly leans almost entirely upon German Liberal criticism, and many of its representative works, such as Dr. Latimer Jackson's *The Eschatology of Jesus* (1913) and *The Problem of the Fourth Gospel* (1918), are little more than centos of the dicta of recent German critics and theologians.

It might be argued that the acceptance by the bulk of Roman and Anglican Modernists of the doctrine of the Incarnation constitutes a fundamental difference between their religious position and that of Liberal Protestantism, and so for the time being it does. In spite of what I have said elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> I do not now (after carefully re-reading a large part of his writings) question that even Loisy, in spite of his dangerously minimizing language, accepts this doctrine in a more than nominal sense.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pro Fide*, p. xxx, and in a recent speech referred to in ch. xii.

<sup>2</sup> Loisy in his *L'Évangile et l'Église* rejects as unauthentic the leading Christological passages of the Synoptic Gospels such as Matt. xi. 27, Luke x. 22 (see pp. 79 ff.), and in *L'Évangile selon Marc* (1912) he deletes even Mark xiii. 30; nevertheless he says distinctly (*Autour d'un Petit Livre*, pp. 116 ff.) that Jesus, though true man, differed from other men, not only in being sinless, but also in virtue of "the intimate and indefinable mystery of His relation to God. This relation expressed itself in the Messianic idea; and this idea, in the Gospel, was like a secret which was to be manifested through the manifestation of the celestial kingdom. *The disciples believed this mystery.* Jesus, by virtue of His Resurrection, became for them 'the Lord.' . . . The divinity of Christ is a dogma which has grown (*grandi*) in the Christian consciousness, and was not expressly formulated in the Gospel. It existed only in germ in the notion of the Messiah, the Son of God."

Nor do I question, in spite of many disquieting utterances at Cambridge, which are discussed in the last chapter, that the majority of English Modernists still hold this doctrine firmly. What I do question is, whether such an attitude can possibly be permanent. It seems not only to orthodox Christians like myself, but even to prominent members of the Churchmen's Union (Dr. Lake and Dr. Foakes-Jackson, for instance, and even Prof. Bethune-Baker) that the ordinary Modernist position, so far from being stable and secure, is "only a bridge from the past to the present," which the more active spirits have already passed over, and are "exploring the country beyond."

These words of Dr. Bethune-Baker express the situation admirably. Modernism is a mere temporary phase in the transition from Orthodoxy to Liberal Protestantism. Modernism has taken the grave step of adopting the Liberal Protestant premisses (including the all-important one of the incredibility of miracles), and having done so cannot avoid carrying them to their logical conclusion.

The statement that Jesus is the consubstantial Son of God (unless denuded of meaning by Mr. Major's strange theory that all men are or may become consubstantial sons of God in the same sense) affirms a unique and miraculous fact about Jesus, viz. that He is the God-man. Obviously a personality at once human and divine is a miracle—a miracle both psychical and physical, and as such a contradiction of non-miraculous Modernism.

At the present moment Modernists are upon the horns of a dilemma, from which they can only escape by ceasing to be Modernists. In the near future a momentous option will be forced—it is even now being forced—upon them. Either they will have to take their belief in the Incarnation seriously, in which case they will have to give up their principle that miracles are incredible; or else they will have to take their principle of the incredibility of miracles seriously, in which case they will

have to deny the Incarnation, and sever the last link that still binds them to Historic Christianity.

Already the Liberal Protestantism of the Continent has made its choice. *It has rejected the Incarnation.* A generation ago the movement in Germany passed through precisely the same phase that it is now passing through in England. In the late eighties, and with more insistence in the nineties, the German Liberals demanded permission to understand the clauses of the Apostles' Creed, which affirm the Virgin Birth and Resurrection of Jesus, in the 'symbolic' sense advocated by English Modernists. Many of the German leaders maintained, in the same manner as their English followers, that the granting of this demand would strengthen, not weaken, the Church's hold upon the doctrine of the Incarnation. The permission was granted, and we now see the result. *To-day in the Prussian State Church Unitarianism is the dominant creed.* Can any reasonable person doubt that, the attitude toward the miraculous of German Protestantism and English Modernism being the same, the granting of this permission in England would have the same deplorable result that it has already had in Germany?

The real difficulty is, not to believe in the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection (as so many Modernists allege), but to believe in the Incarnation. It is a great venture of faith, possible only by the help of grace, to believe that the Almighty Ruler of the universe has humbled Himself to become man in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, and to die upon the cross. If this belief is once accepted, the accessory miracles, which are its outward signs and tokens, become in comparison almost natural events.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

No Christian in our day denies the development of doctrine, perhaps no Christian who has reflected upon the subject has ever denied it.

In the Fourth Gospel, the Doctrine of Development is taught explicitly by Christ Himself ("I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all [the] Truth," xvi. 12). The context shows that the guidance of the Spirit is promised to the Apostles and their successors *collectively*, so that here Christ definitely contemplates development, not merely in the teaching of individual theologians, but in the official and authoritative teaching of the Christian Church.

In the Synoptic Gospels, Christ teaches the same doctrine implicitly, as when He compares Christian teaching to a seed planted by a Sower (i.e. Himself), which grows and matures and brings forth fruit, and to a grain of mustard-seed, which becomes a great tree which overshadows the earth.

On the other hand the teaching of Christ is represented as absolutely true, and therefore unchangeable ("heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away," Mark xiii. 31).

Accordingly, Christian truth is a treasure to be guarded, a tradition to be faithfully kept, a 'deposit of faith' for which an account must be rendered ("O Timothy, guard *the deposit*, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge falsely so called," 1 Tim.

vi. 20, cf. 2 Tim. i. 12-14). Neither St. Paul nor St. John can possibly have been unaware that their own teaching represents a *development* of the explicit teaching of the Master, nevertheless each regards his own teaching as *identical* with the original Gospel preached by Christ. St. Paul even insists that the meaning of the original Gospel cannot be changed without apostasy (" Though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. i. 8).

The Scriptural idea of development is, therefore, *development without change*. This is undoubtedly a paradox, but by no means a contradiction, as will appear later.

### TRADITIONAL VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT

The traditional view of development, still held by the majority of Christians, may be stated somewhat as follows :

Christ and His Apostles committed to the Church a definite body of doctrine, 'the Deposit of Faith,' to be faithfully guarded. This Deposit, as being a revelation from the Truth Himself, is absolutely true, and therefore immutable and irreformable. To depart from the original meaning of this Deposit is to depart from the Christian Faith, and to incur the anathema of the Apostle (Gal. i. 8).

Nevertheless this Deposit, though its fundamental meaning cannot change, is a living, moving, and dynamic thing, developing through the ages in accordance with its original specific nature, somewhat as a seed develops into a plant, or an infant into a grown man. It develops partly through individual and corporate experience, which causes its true significance gradually to become more fully understood ; partly through logical inferences being drawn from it ; partly through controversy, the effect of which commonly is to define truth more clearly

in contrast to error ; partly by the assimilation from age to age of philosophical and scientific principles, which are in harmony with it and serve to illuminate it ; partly by the practical application of its principles in every age to new problems, whereby new light is often thrown upon the principles themselves ; lastly, by the systematization of the faith in the form of scientific theology, the object of which is to exhibit every article of Christian belief in its rational and organic connexion with every other article, and to determine the true relation of the Christian religion as a whole to secular science and philosophy.

The classical exponents in early times of this comprehensive view of development were the Alexandrian theologians, Clement and Origen. The Alexandrian School preached Christianity to the educated classes of antiquity as the perfect gnosis or philosophy. They claimed for it the possession (actual or potential) of all truth, and formed the ambitious design of converting the entire Roman Empire by absorbing into the New Faith all that was valuable in the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. Of all Christians, before or since, Clement and Origen were probably the most convinced believers in the progressive character of Christianity, and in its unlimited power of absorbing new ideas.

But with all their liberal and progressive ideas, Clement and Origen were as convinced as Irenæus and Tertullian that the Faith itself cannot change. They tell us, not once or twice, but many times, that all new developments must be tested by their agreement or disagreement with the original Deposit of Faith, and that this Deposit is inviolable. As some attempt has recently been made to claim the great name of Origen for the more extreme Modernist view of development, it may be worth while here to transcribe a passage from the preface to the *De Principiis*, in which he expressly disclaims it. Although in the work itself he indulges in some very venturesome

speculations, as even the Bowdlerized Latin version of Rufinus sufficiently testifies, he fully recognizes (even if he does not fully practise) the duty of testing them by the unerring touchstone of a postolic tradition. "Since many," writes Origen, "of those who profess to believe Christ differ from one another, not in small or trifling matters, but also on subjects of the highest moment, . . . it seems necessary on this account first of all to fix a definite limit, and to lay down an unmistakable rule. . . . Seeing, then, that there are many who think that they hold the doctrines of Christ, and yet some of them think differently from their predecessors, while yet the teaching of the Church, transmitted in orderly succession from the Apostles, and still remaining in the churches to the present day, is still preserved, *let that alone be accepted as truth which differs in no respect from the ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition* (illa sola credenda est veritas, quæ in nullo ab ecclesiastica et apostolica, discordat traditione)."

Neither the Alexandrian Fathers nor any of the ancients regarded the development of doctrine as inconsistent with its substantial identity. Clement and Origen were at once thorough-going progressives and thorough-going traditionalists; and the fact that they saw no inconsistency between these two standpoints, is evidence, not of lack of logic, but of profound philosophic insight into the nature of truth and its development,<sup>1</sup> quite remarkable for that age.

A similar view of development (though less fully expressed) is found in other ancient theologians of a more conservative temper, notably in Vincent of Lerins, whose *Commonitorium* is the classical expression of the view that the Deposit of Faith is absolutely unchangeable.

He is careful to explain that his doctrine of the Immutability of Truth in no way interferes with its due growth

<sup>1</sup> See Origen's profound and all too brief remarks on Development in *De Principiis*, i. 3. I have discussed the Alexandrian view more fully in *The Creeds and Modern Thought*, pp. 26 ff.

and development. He speaks of development with approval, and compares it with the growth of a seed into a plant, and of a child into a man.<sup>1</sup> He expresses with the utmost clearness the principle, supposed by many to be entirely modern, that Christian doctrines may become explicit in the course of development which at first were only implicit. He says, for example, "The limbs of infants are small, those of young men large, yet they are the same. Young children have as many joints as men, and *if there are any parts of the body which are not actually formed until more mature years are reached, yet even these were virtually planted from the beginning in the manner of seed, so that no new thing is ever produced subsequently in old men, which was not already latent in them as children.*" In this profound conception of development, Vincent already anticipates the main point of Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845).

This famous essay, composed just before, and published shortly after Newman's reception into the Roman Church, will always remain a classic, not only for the perfection of its style, but also for the value and originality of the ideas which it contains. It is hardly possible to realize, in reading it, that Newman wrote fourteen years before

<sup>1</sup> "But perhaps someone will say, Shall there then be no development (profectus) of religion in the Church of Christ? Assuredly there should be development, and as much as possible. For who is so malicious towards men and hateful to God as to attempt to hinder it? But let it take place in such sort that the faith develops indeed, but is not radically changed; for the nature of development is this, that each thing grows while remaining in its own nature, whereas the nature of change is that a thing is transmuted into something else. Let therefore the intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom both of individuals and of the Church at large continually grow and develop to the utmost possible extent through the ages, but always according to its kind, i.e. preserving the same dogma in the same sense and meaning. Let the religion of our souls imitate the growth of our bodies, which, although in the progress of years they develop and evolve their due proportions, yet always remain identically the same with what they previously were" (xxii).

the publication of the *Origin of Species*, and in entire ignorance of the evolutionary theories of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.

In discussing development, Newman lays the chief stress, not on logical development, though he admits its importance, especially as a test of true development,<sup>1</sup> but on what may be called organic or vital development. Though a religious dogma is an intellectual proposition intellectually apprehended, it is also, he contends, far more. It is something which is lived even more than thought, and by being lived both itself grows and transforms the characters of individuals and of peoples. "When," says Newman, "some great enunciation, whether true or false, . . . is carried forward into the public throng of men, and draws attention, then it is not merely received passively in this or that form into many minds, but it becomes an active principle within them, leading them to an ever new contemplation of itself, to an application of it in various directions, and a propagation of it on every side. . . . At first men will not fully realize what it is that moves them, and will express and explain themselves inadequately. . . . After a while some definite teaching emerges. . . . It will, in proportion to its native vigour and subtlety, introduce itself into the framework and details of social life, changing public opinion, and strengthening or undermining the foundations of established order. Thus in time it will have grown into an ethical code, or into a system of government, or into a theology, or into a ritual according to its capabilities."

Newman emphasizes the point, which has sometimes

<sup>1</sup> "A doctrine professed in its mature years by a philosophy or religion, is likely to be a true development, not a corruption, in proportion as it seems to be the logical issue of its original teaching" (p. 195). "Minds develop step by step, without looking behind them, or anticipating their goal, and without either intention or promise of forming a system. Afterwards, however, the logical character which the whole wears becomes a test that the process has been a true development" (p. 190).

been denied, that a doctrine develops not only from within, but also from without, feeding upon and incorporating into itself the substance of other doctrines which have affinities with it. " It grows when it incorporates, and its identity is found, not in isolation, but in continuity and sovereignty. . . . Whatever be the risk of corruption from intercourse with the world around, such a risk must be encountered if a great idea is duly to be understood and much more if it is to be fully exhibited. It is elicited and expanded by trial and battles into perfection and supremacy " (ch. i.).

Much of the essay is taken up with a discussion (vital to Newman's special purpose in writing, viz. the justification of modern Roman developments) of the difference between true and false developments. He enumerates seven tests of true doctrinal development, all of considerable value : (1) Preservation of its type ; (2) Continuity of its principles ; (3) Its power of assimilation ; (4) Its logical sequence ; (5) Anticipation of its future ; (6) Conservative action on its past ; (7) Its chronic vigour.

Newman's doctrine of development is of a much more radical type than has usually found favour in the Roman Church, of which the typical representatives (Franzelin, for instance) usually admit only *logical* development. Nevertheless, since Newman admits that the original dogmas do not change their *meaning* in the process of development, his doctrine is clearly of the orthodox, not of the Modernist type. It does not differ essentially from Vincent's, who also admits organic development and uses some of the same illustrations.

#### MODERNIST VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT

The essential difference between the traditional view of development and that of Modernism, is that whereas the former assumes development from first principles which have never changed, and have controlled the process throughout, the latter assumes that the first principles

themselves have changed, are changing, and will change yet more, the only permanent thing about Christianity being its 'spirit,' or 'idea,' or 'orientation.' Indeed, Modernists usually hold, not merely that dogmas may change, but that they may even be transmuted, in Hegelian fashion, into their opposites, as when the article of the Creed which affirms Christ's birth of a Virgin is 'developed' in the Modernist system into an express denial of His Mother's virginity, and the article which affirms His Resurrection into an express denial that His buried body ever rose.

Common to all forms of Modernism is the denial of the fact (and in most cases also of the possibility) of a fixed Deposit of Faith retaining an absolutely identical meaning throughout the process of its development. "The history of the creeds teaches us," says Canon Glazebrook, "how modern Christians ought to regard them. They are not a 'deposit' given to be guarded, but a plant whose growth is to be fostered. So long as the Catholic Church was vigorous and intelligent, the creeds were being continually modified to suit new conditions of thought and life. What brought their development to an end was not a conviction that they were perfected, but the invasion of the barbarians, which reduced thought to impotence, and life to a struggle against mere brutality. . . . So the words of the two creeds remain unchanged to this day, *yet their meaning is not unchanged.*"<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Tyrrell, following Loisy, teaches that what has remained identical throughout development has not been any "intellectual concept" or belief, but simply a non-intellectual "*idea as a spiritual force or impetus.*" "To find our present theological system in the first century," he says, "is as hopeless as to find our present civilization there. No one attempts it any longer. It was possible only for those early generations whose divergencies from the Apostolic age were comparatively slight, or

<sup>1</sup> *The Faith of a Modern Churchman*, p. 76.

for these later generations, from whom their palpable divergencies from Apostolicity were hidden by their ignorance of the past." He admits that those who hold the traditional doctrine of the Deposit of Faith must necessarily agree with Pius X in condemning Modernism as "the compendium of all heresies," for where as "former heresies have questioned this or that dogma, this or that ecclesiastical institution, Modernism criticizes the very idea of dogma, of ecclesiasticism, of revelation, of faith, of heresy, of theology, of sacramentalism." He defines his theory of development as being "one of biological rather than of dialectical [i.e. logical] development, organic rather than architectural."<sup>1</sup>

This denial of the permanence of dogma goes back to the earliest form of Modernism known as Güntherianism, which had a large and influential following in the Roman Communion (especially in Germany and Austria) from 1826, the date of Günther's first important treatise, till 1857, when the system was condemned at Rome<sup>2</sup>; and even later, for Güntherianism retained important adherents till 1870, when the Vatican Council formally declared the meaning of Catholic dogma to be immutable, though it admitted development in the orthodox or Vincentian sense (*De Fide Cath.*, ch. iv, can. 3).

Anton Günther (1785-1865), like Loisy, came forward as a champion of Catholicism against Liberal Protestantism. He did good work in asserting the Transcendence and true Personality of God against the Pantheism of Schelling and Hegel.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, he adopted as correct

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, pp. 33, 28, 30.

<sup>2</sup> The reasons for the condemnation may be seen in Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (extract from the brief 'Eximiam tuam,' addressed to Cardinal de Geissel).

<sup>3</sup> Günther's first important work, in which he laid the foundations of his philosophic system, was *Vorschule zur speculativen Theologie des positiven Christenthums* (Vienna, 1826, 2nd edition, 1846). From 1849 to 1859 the organ of the school was *Lydia*, edited by Günther himself and J. E. Veith.

many of the leading principles of Hegel. Thus in the Güntherian system God creates the world by 'contraposition'; the Trinity is evolved after the manner of an Hegelian Triad, the Father being the 'thesis,' the Son the 'antithesis,' and the Holy Ghost the 'synthesis.' Above all, he adopted the Hegelian principle that all partial truth contains some error, and from this he deduced the characteristically Modernist doctrine that there is no fixed and unchanging truth (at least for man), and that accordingly even the most fundamental doctrines of Christianity change their meaning from age to age, as human thought progresses. The Church is indeed infallible, but this only means that it is infallibly guided to state the truth in the form most suited to the age in which the definition is made. In a later age the Church may not only expand or explain its definitions, but may even have to *correct* them, because all human dogmatic definitions, being partial and inadequate statements of truth, contain necessarily *some error*. Dogma, in its passage through history, not merely changes its meaning (in Günther's opinion, changes it for the better), but even receives positive increments of *new truth* by incorporating and assimilating the progressive results of philosophy and science.<sup>1</sup> The Apostles' knowledge of the Christian dogmas was rudimentary, that of the Fathers and Schoolmen, though more developed, was far inferior to ours, because we have the advantage of modern philosophy and science. In his exposition of Christian doctrine, Günther started, not from revelation, but from reason, maintaining that such dogmas as the Trinity and the Incarnation, which earlier generations accepted entirely upon faith, can now (owing to the progress of philosophy) be demonstrated by reason. The primacy which he

<sup>1</sup> Günther here confuses dogma with theology. It is of course true that *theology* receives such positive increments. Not, however, *dogma*, which is the unchanging basis upon which theology is built up.

gave to philosophy over theology was one of the chief causes of the condemnation of his system.<sup>1</sup>

### THE ORIENTATION OF DOGMA

The Güntherian doctrine of an infallibility of *tendency*, in virtue of which the doctrine of the Church, though never absolutely true, tends always towards the truth, and is always truer than any rival doctrine, is now generally expressed by saying that Christian doctrine has preserved from the beginning an identical 'orientation' or 'direction,' in virtue of which it has achieved an ever-increasing 'penetration into the real.' This is the point of view of some of those whose general theological standpoint is quite orthodox—that of Mr. Will Spens, for instance, who writes: "Christian Theism is a system which does not claim to be a complete metaphysic, but merely the expression of a growing insight into ultimate reality" (*Belief and Practice*, p. 62).

Nevertheless, this theory of the identical 'direction' of Christian doctrine involves a contradiction, unless it is held in connexion with the orthodox view that this identical direction is maintained by the continuous operation of *identical first principles*. Just as in dynamics identical direction is only maintained so long as the operating forces remain identical, so it is also in theology and in every science. Besides, there must be in theology, as in dynamics, certain *fixed points*, by reference to

<sup>1</sup> Güntherianism was preceded by, and in part prepared for, by the earlier rationalistic system of Georg Hermes (1775-1831), who drew his philosophic principles mainly from Kant and Fichte, and (like Günther) aimed at a synthesis of Catholicism with modern philosophical thought. Hermesianism had a considerable following until its condemnation in 1835 by Gregory XVI, and even for some time later.

Neither Hermes nor Günther denied the possibility of miracles, or the truth of the miracles ascribed to Christ in the Gospels.

A useful criticism of Günther's view of dogma and tradition will be found in Franzelin's *Tractatus de Divina Traditione*, pp. 240 ff.

which direction is determined. If *everything* is moving, there can be no determination of direction at all.

The 'direction' of any growing system of doctrine, religious, philosophic, or scientific, remains the same *so long as the fundamental dogmas on which it is based remain unchanged*. For instance, the 'direction' or 'orientation' of the science of astronomy remained the same from Ptolemy to Copernicus, because, although new facts were always being discovered, and new hypotheses invented to explain them, all the new hypotheses were subordinated to and consistent with the fundamental dogma of the Ptolemaic system, that the sun revolves round the earth.

When, however, Copernicus established the rival doctrine that the earth revolves round the sun, the 'orientation' of the science was fundamentally changed. With the disproof of the fundamental dogma, the subordinate hypotheses of 'cycles,' 'epicycles,' and 'eccentrics' disappeared also. The science was reconstructed from its foundations, and assumed the new 'direction,' from which it has never since been deflected, even by the epoch-making discoveries of Kepler, Galileo, and Newton.

Similarly European philosophy preserved a uniform 'direction' from its earliest days until those of Kant, because before him practically all philosophers, even the most sceptical,<sup>1</sup> assumed that, the world being rationally constituted, the human mind corresponds in a rational way with external things, and is therefore capable of *knowing things as they really are*, or (to use Kantian language) of knowing 'things-in-themselves.'

Kant's 'Copernican revolution' consisted in his limitation of human knowledge to 'phenomena,' or sub-

<sup>1</sup> We may except Hume, who, according to Kant's own admission, "awoke him from his dogmatic slumber," and also Berkeley, whom Kant used without completely understanding. These philosophers, however, did not really belong to the old era. They were the fore-runners and in part the anticipators of Kantian agnosticism.

jective appearances, and his denial that the human mind has power to know external things as they really are.

Whatever may be thought of the correctness of the Kantian system, of its effect there can be only one opinion. It has deflected from its path and given a new orientation to the main stream of European philosophy, and if that philosophy is ever to recover its original orientation, as the present reaction against Kant suggests that it may, it can only be by returning to the pre-Kantian view that the human mind is capable of true objective knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

The same principle may be illustrated from the history of most of the sciences. Darwin's epoch-making theory has given a new 'orientation' to all the biological sciences, and has necessitated the entire reconstruction of some of them. Even Einstein's Theory of Relativity, should it prove true, will alter appreciably (though to a less extent than is sometimes supposed) the 'orientation' which the discoveries of Newton gave to physics.

It seems, then, a universal law, applicable to all sciences, that while the fundamental principles of a science remain unchanged, its 'orientation' remains unchanged. On the other hand, every change of fundamental doctrine brings about a change of 'orientation' proportional to the amount of that change.

In the case of Christianity, the 'orientation' is admitted—even by many Modernists—to have remained unchanged from the beginning. It follows that the fundamental doctrines of Christianity have also remained unchanged from the beginning, and are professed now by modern Christians, in spite of much development, in the *identical sense* in which the first Christians professed them.

<sup>1</sup> Modern Oxford, under the influence of Professor Cook Wilson and Mr. Thomas Case, has become predominantly anti-Kantian and anti-idealist. For a destructive and most penetrating criticism of Kant's principal positions (with which I am in general agreement), I would refer to Mr. H. A. Pritchard's *Kant's Theory of Knowledge* (1909).

## THE IDENTITY OF THE CHRISTIAN 'IDEA'

We have seen that an important section of Modernists (including Loisy, Le Roy, and Tyrrell) regard the identity of Christianity from age to age as consisting not so much in its doctrine, or even in the 'direction' of its doctrine, as in the identity of its 'idea.' By 'idea' they mean not an intellectual idea or 'concept,' still less a doctrine, but a 'vital impulse,' operating very often blindly and instinctively, urging men to perform certain acts and to seek certain ends, the nature of which they hardly or not at all understand. It is not in any way necessary that this 'vital impulse' should find intellectual expression in a doctrine though it *may* do so. "The 'idea,'" says Tyrrell, "is akin to the Augustinian 'seminal notion,' with which every living germ seems to be animated, and which works itself out to full expression through a process of growth and development. It does not change in itself, but is the cause of change in its embodiment. . . . It is rather a volition than a concept. Every volition, however blind and instinctive, is directed by the idea of an end to be reached. That idea is implied in the volition, but it is not necessarily given to the clear consciousness of the person who wills. Animals obey instincts without any knowledge of the ends with which they are pregnant. The meaning of many of man's spiritual and rational instincts is revealed to him only gradually, as he follows them step by step. In most cases their full meaning will never be clear to him."<sup>1</sup>

Tyrrell's and Loisy's theory of a 'vital impulse' is a useful supplement and corrective to the purely logical view of development which still largely prevails in orthodox quarters, particularly in the Roman Church. It is derived, of course, from Newman's *Essay*, of which it is one of the most original and valuable features.

It is perfectly true that both men and animals are often

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity at the Cross Roads*, p. 62.

swayed by instincts and impulses which they do not in the least understand, and of whose results they have not the least prevision.

It is also true that Christian doctrine is far more than a number of intellectual propositions, like the axioms of geometry, which have undergone a process of purely intellectual development in the course of Christian history. Christianity is far more than a doctrine; it is a *life*—"The words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life" (John vi. 63). To be a Christian is primarily to have the Spirit of Christ, not merely to have His doctrine. Christianity develops both in the individual and in the history of the Christian society, not primarily as the thirteen books of Euclid develop logically from their axioms, but rather as a seed develops into a plant, as an infant develops into man, and as leaven (which is a living thing) propagates itself through a mass of dough. The immanent impulse by which the life of Christ expands itself in the soul and in the Church is something different from the intellectual impulse to argue correctly from given premisses. Loisy has done a real service to religious thought by maintaining that the development of Christian theology is to a large extent the outward expression of the development of Christian experience, which it strives to interpret, and upon which it is dependent.

Loisy, however, in his recoil from mere intellectualism, forgets the correlative truth, that just as religious experience sometimes generates dogma, so dogma sometimes generates religious experience. A man may obviously come to believe the existence of God in two distinct ways. He may either believe it in Loisy's way, as the result of some vivid religious experience which he has had (in which case the experience generates the doctrine), or else he may come to believe it in a purely intellectual way, as, for instance, by reading Aristotle's *Metaphysics* or Flint's *Theism*, and becoming convinced

that the arguments of these writers are sound. As a result of his intellectual conviction he may begin to pray and worship, to receive the sacraments, and to practise works of piety and charity, with the result that he may attain to vivid forms of religious experience, which may greatly confirm his faith.

In such a case the doctrine generates, or at least mediates the experiences, for unless he had first had the doctrine, he would not have had the experiences. Accordingly we must supplement Loisy's formula that Experience generates Dogma by adding the complementary truth that Dogma generates (or mediates) Experience.

A more serious error is involved in Loisy's assumption that the same vital 'idea' or impulse may be clothed indifferently in a number of distinct intellectual expressions or formulated doctrines. As a rule the relation between an idea and its expression is unique and organic, like that between a soul and its body. As Aristotle taught long ago, it is impossible to put a soul into a new body ("like a passenger into a boat"), for the simple reason that a body is the unique outward expression of a unique individual soul. In a similar way each 'idea' or 'vital impulse' has usually its own individual character, which can be correctly expressed, in terms of the intellect, *in one way only*.

This is the case even with the irrational instincts of animals. For example, the instinct of the hen to hatch out her chicks and protect them from enemies until they can take care of themselves, can only be intellectually expressed in terms that imply that Nature provides not only for the welfare of individuals, but also for the propagation and welfare of the race. Any intellectual formulation of the nature of the instinct which denied, or did not recognize this, would be false.

Similarly, the blind instinct which leads even animals and young children to learn from experience, and to expect similar events to recur under similar circumstances,

can only be intellectually expressed in some such phrase as the following, ' Like causes produce like effects.' Any other expression of it would be false or inadequate.

Or to take a more important instance: both M. Loisy and M. Le Roy admit that " the idea of Christ " has remained unchanged from the beginning of Christianity until now. " All Catholics," says M. Le Roy, " whether ignorant men or philosophers, whether men of the first or of the twentieth century, have always had, and will always have, the same practical attitude towards Jesus " —he means, of course, that they have always worshipped Him and prayed to Him.<sup>1</sup>

But when they inform us that this unchanging devotional attitude towards Jesus Christ does not rest upon a single unchanging belief about His nature, but can be equally well justified by an indefinite number of alternative beliefs, it is hard to yield assent. Surely for all genuine theists, whether of the first or of the twentieth or of the ten thousandth century, there can be one and only one intellectual theory which can justify the worship of Jesus, and that is the theory that He is very and eternal God. Any theory which makes Him less or other than this, makes Him a *creature*, and for a theist to worship a creature is the greatest of all imaginable sins.

#### EXAGGERATIONS OF THE AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

Another capital error of Loisy, and of Modernists in general, is their exaggerated estimate of the amount of development of doctrine which has actually taken place. If we set aside such late developments as the Immaculate Conception of Mary and Papal Infallibility, and confine ourselves to the doctrines which the whole of Catholic Christendom accepts, those namely of the Creeds and the Ecumenical Councils, it is difficult to find a single one which is not taught *explicitly*, as well as *implicitly*, in the New Testament itself.

<sup>1</sup> See *Dogme et Critique*, pp. 33-34, also 263-273.

If the Apostle Paul were presented with a copy of the Nicene Creed, and asked whether the doctrine of the Homousion, or Consubstantiality of the Son, therein contained, had ever been taught by himself, he would probably reply (when he had learnt the meaning of the term): "You will not indeed find the precise word *ὁμοούσιος* in my Epistles, but you will find repeated statements of the doctrine which it is intended to express, viz. that the Son is not of an inferior nature to the Father, but of the self-same nature and therefore divine. For example, I expressly state in my Epistle to the Philippians that before His Incarnation He was in the essential form (*μορφῆ*) of God, and equal with God (ii. 6 ff.), and in my Epistle to the Romans I even assert that He is 'above all, God blessed for ever'" (ix. 5).<sup>1</sup>

If St. Paul were asked whether he agreed with the Chalcedonian doctrine that Christ is perfect God and perfect man, and that in Him two distinct natures, the human and the divine, are indissolubly conjoined in one person he would probably reply, not only that he believed it, but that evidence in support of it might be found in almost every page of his Epistles.

Nor is it likely that he would consider even the doctrine of the Trinity, so far as it is defined dogma and not theology or philosophy, as going in any way beyond even his explicit teaching. "It is true," he would say, "that I have nowhere used the actual word Trinity, but all through my writings there are statements which affirm or imply the distinct personality, not only of the Father and of the Son, but also of the Holy Spirit; and also that these persons are only one God. What else does the doctrine of the Trinity mean than this? Those who doubt or deny that I taught the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost seem to have forgotten those passages in my Epistles in which I speak of the Holy Ghost as grieved by human

<sup>1</sup> For proof that this, the only natural meaning of the passage, is the true one, see Sanday and Headlam's Commentary *in loco*.

sin, and as making intercession for man with groanings which cannot be uttered.<sup>1</sup> They seem also to have forgotten those numerous passages in the *Acts of the Apostles*, written by my faithful disciple Luke, in which both the personality<sup>2</sup> and also the divinity<sup>3</sup> of the Spirit are affirmed in terms, if possible, even stronger. It is true that later generations have systematized my doctrine and reduced it to a compendious formula, but I see no objection to this. You will find a Trinitarian formula of my own at the end of the second Epistle to the Corinthians which contains the clearest proof that I taught both the doctrine of the Trinity and also that of the Consubstantiality of the Son. In it I place the name of the Son before the name of the Father, a clear indication that in my belief the Son is not inferior in nature to the Father."

Or, to take a more disputable point: it might easily be imagined that the Monothelite heresy raises so subtle a point that the decision of the Sixth Ecumenical Council that there are in Christ two distinct wills, one human and one divine, is necessarily a 'development,' not to be found in the simpler teaching of Scripture. Nevertheless, the orthodox dogma of Dyothelitism is taught—and taught explicitly—in the Gospels, even in the Synoptic Gospels. For instance, in the account of the Agony the Synoptists represent Jesus as saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this from me; nevertheless not my will (*θέλημα*), but thine be done" (Luke xxii. 42, and parallels). This can *only* mean that Jesus has a human will distinct from His divine will, which is necessarily at all times one with God's will. Similar doctrine is found in the Fourth Gospel ("I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me," v. 30, cf. vi. 38).

The truth is, that the doctrine of the Creeds and the Ecumenical Councils (which alone is indisputably Catholic)

<sup>1</sup> Ephes. iv. 30; Rom. viii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> viii. 29; x. 19; xi. 12; xiii. 2; xvi. 6, 7; xix. 1.

<sup>3</sup> v. 3 compared with v. 4.

is so absolutely and rigorously scriptural that it is difficult to find in it any development at all, except in phraseology and scientific arrangement. I do not deny the *possibility* of a development from the implicit to the explicit even in the sphere of fundamental dogma, but as a matter of actual fact I am not aware of any dogma of the Undivided Church which is not *explicitly* as well as implicitly taught in Scripture. It seems rather for the purpose of justifying certain modern developments of dogma in particular Churches, than of justifying the dogmatic decisions of the Undivided Church, that the doctrine of the development of dogma has been stretched in our day beyond its ancient limits. According to ancient ideas, 'development' belongs rather to theology and philosophy than to 'dogma,' which was regarded as the fixed basis upon which the fabric of theology and religious philosophy is reared. Origen and Vincent do not entirely deny the development of dogma, but their far-reaching theories of development are intended chiefly to account for and to justify the continuous progress of Christian theology and philosophy which everyone admits. Their view of dogma proper is mainly static, its development being regarded chiefly as a matter of terminology and arrangement.

#### THE CHASM BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES

There are times when Loisy admits that the doctrine of the Creeds and the Councils is not after all so very different from that of the later New Testament books, and that in particular nearly all the Christological statements of the Creeds can be paralleled in the Pauline and Johannine writings.

He falls back, however, upon a theory which he derives from Liberal Protestantism, of an absolute chasm between the Christology of Christ Himself and the Christology of the Apostles and the later Church.

Here he becomes particularly difficult to follow, partly because it seems unlikely (to say the least) that our Lord's most intimate and most trusted followers should have departed so quickly and so completely from His teaching, and partly because he admits the damaging fact that the existing Gospels (even the Synoptics) *and also their sources*, teach practically the same doctrine about Christ's Person as the Pauline Epistles. He admits, for example, that the great Christological utterance of Christ (Matt. xi. 27; Luke x. 22) which nearly all critics assign to a primitive Gospel source supposed to have been written by the Apostle Matthew, implies the Johannine and Nicene doctrine of the Consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. But instead of drawing the natural inference that Jesus Himself taught this doctrine and communicated it to the Apostles, he prefers to suppose that it is an unauthentic utterance of some mystically minded Christian prophet.<sup>1</sup> Again he fully admits that if Jesus really taught the doctrine of the Atonement, as the existing Gospels represent Him to have done, His own belief concerning His Person must have closely resembled that of St. Paul and orthodox Christians generally. But since Loisy regards this as incredible, he proceeds to reject as un-historical our Lord's statement at the institution of the Eucharist that His blood atones for human sin and is the basis of a new covenant between God and the human race, although this is attested by three of the four evangelists and by St. Paul.<sup>2</sup> He also rejects as un-

<sup>1</sup> "It is fairly probable, that notwithstanding its occurrence in two Gospels, the portion including the text cited by Herr Harnack is, at any rate in its actual form, a product of the Christian tradition of the earlier time" (*L'Évangile et l'Église*, sect. iii). In *Autour d'un Petit Livre* (p. 130) he attributes it to a Christian prophet. He repeatedly denies that Jesus taught any Christology whatever.

<sup>2</sup> See especially *Les Mystères païens et le Mystère chrétien* (p. 284): "The pretended words of the Eucharistic institution have no meaning, except in the theology of Paul which Jesus did not teach, and in the economy of the Christian mystery, which Jesus did not institute." In

historical our Lord's saying that He came to give His life a ransom for many, though both St. Matthew and St. Mark record it (Matt. xx. 28 ; Mark x. 45).<sup>1</sup> For similar reasons Mark xiv. 32 (a saying which even Schmiedel accepts) disappears from Loisy's attenuated version of our Lord's authentic utterances.<sup>2</sup>

We see, therefore, how much (or rather how little) substance there is in the claim of *Il Programma dei Modernisti* that the critical methods of Modernism are purely 'objective.' Loisy's method of Gospel criticism is to make up his mind beforehand what Christ must have taught, and then to delete from the Gospel narrative, or pronounce unauthentic, every saying of Christ which does not agree with his own preconceived theories. By such procedure it is possible to make the New Testament teach almost anything.

this work he denies that the Eucharist had originally any reference at all to Christ's death, and even speaks of "the myth of the institution of the Eucharist."

<sup>1</sup> This verse is ascribed to a redactor (*L'Évangile selon Marc*, p. 310).

<sup>2</sup> "The absolute employment of the word 'Son' does not belong to the language of Jesus or to that of primitive apostolic tradition" (p. 384).

## CHAPTER III

### EVOLUTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

#### THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

THE modern doctrine of Evolution dates back, not as many suppose to Darwin and Spencer, or even to Fichte, but to Kant, who as long ago as 1755 published what must always rank as one of the greatest and most original contributions to the philosophy of science in the whole history of human thought, his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*,<sup>1</sup> in which he not only suggested the derivation of the present forms of ponderable matter from some simpler and more uniform material, but also laid the foundations of the modern Nebular Hypothesis, and even anticipated Darwin and Spencer in suggesting that the entire evolutionary process from the Nebula to Man is a *natural* one, and that accordingly the production by gradual evolution of plants and animals and even of man is in nowise miraculous.

Kant's watchword has become that of modern Naturalism, "Give me matter only, and I will construct a world out of it." He admitted that there are difficulties in the way of accounting for the origin of life and mind by evolution from matter, and that in the present state of science and philosophy we are not in a position to say,

<sup>1</sup> *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels*, Zeitz, 1st edition 1755, 4th (augmented) edition 1808. The sub-title was especially significant: "An Essay on the Constitution and *Mechanical Origin* of the whole Universe, treated according to the principles of Newton." A large portion of it has been translated by Professor W. Hastie in his *Kant's Cosmogony*, 1900.

“ Give me matter, and I will show you how a caterpillar can be produced,” much less a man. He admits also, “ The origin of the whole present constitution of the universe will become intelligible before the production of a single herb or a caterpillar by mechanical causes will become distinctly and completely understood.” Nevertheless, Kant implies throughout the book that since the original creation of the raw material out of which the world has been gradually built up (the only miracle which he admits), the entire process of evolution, including the transition from the inorganic to the organic, and from the organic to the rational and spiritual, has been a *natural*, and indeed (if his statements are construed literally) even a *mechanical* one.

Kant's views as to the origin of man by natural evolution (like Darwin's in his earlier work, *The Origin of Species*) were discreetly veiled, and insinuated rather than directly stated; nevertheless the discerning reader of the *Allgemeine Naturgeschichte* can no more doubt that Kant believed in man's *natural* origin than the discerning reader of the *Origin* can doubt Darwin's opinion upon this subject.<sup>1</sup> Even as it was, Kant's earlier work gave hardly less offence to orthodoxy than his later and more outspoken *Religion within the Boundary of Pure Reason* (1793).

Kant made little or no use of the theory of Evolution in his three great Critiques (that of *Pure Reason*, 1781, of *Practical Reason*, 1788, and of *Judgment*, 1790), but it was brought into great prominence by Fichte, Schelling, and especially by Hegel, whose philosophy for a considerable time was dominant, not only on the Continent, but also (largely through the influence of T. H. Green) in England and Scotland. In the radical evolutionism of these

<sup>1</sup> To conciliate opposition, Kant lays great stress on his personal belief (1) in God, (2) in the miracle of an *original* creation, (3) in human immortality. He also uses language implying belief in the inspiration of Scripture, even of the Old Testament.

philosophers, and particularly in that of Hegel, the principle of Evolution is applied, not only to the Universe, but to God Himself, as must necessarily be the case in all pantheistic systems which are logical; for obviously, if God is identical with the Universe, and the Universe evolves, God must evolve with it, and gradually become more perfect as the Universe becomes more perfect. This theory of the Evolution of God, however consonant with certain heathen systems of antiquity, which regarded not merely nature, but even gods and men, as produced gradually by development from some primitive germ or egg, seems quite inconsistent with Christianity, which from the first has regarded God as immutable, and as having been from all eternity the absolutely Perfect Being.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE THEORY OF A UNIVERSAL FLUX

At first sight it seems involved in the theory of Cosmic Evolution that the entire universe is in a constant state of flux, and that accordingly no element in it whatsoever can be stable. It follows that no human beliefs of any kind, not even the most fundamental dogmas of religion, can possibly be immune from change. If even the everlasting hills are slowly crumbling away, and matter itself and its laws (as modern scientists are beginning to suspect) have not always been precisely what they are now, but have come into existence gradually, and will one day cease to be, or at least will be fundamentally transformed, it seems almost ridiculous to suppose that such fragile things as human beliefs, the fickleness of which is a byword, and whose actual changes are written large in anthropology, comparative religion, and the history of doctrine, can in any cases whatever be permanent.

<sup>1</sup> In Mr. McTaggart's opinion, Hegel's view is, that though God evolves from a less to a more perfect condition *in time*, He also exists *out of time* in a condition of absolute perfection.

Accordingly, nearly all philosophical Modernists regard the establishment of the doctrine of Cosmic Evolution as constituting *in itself*, independently of all other arguments, a disproof of the orthodox position that the dogmas of Christianity are immutable. "To exist is to change," say the authors of *Il Programma*. "Truth is subjective, relative, and capable of transformation and variation, in accordance with the evolution of the human spirit, which is in a continual process of becoming," say the authors of *What we want*.

Loisy will not admit that even the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, which Harnack himself holds to be permanent, is really so. "Seeing that from the beginning all the mass of Christian conceptions have been continually changing, it is neither possible, nor is it true, that this one idea of God the Father [i.e. the Fatherhood of God] should have stood unshaken, and should be the absolute kernel of the Gospel teaching. Every development of the idea of God has exercised, and will exercise, an influence on the way of representing His Fatherhood. . . . It cannot be said that faith in God the Father, any more than hope in the reign of justice, is 'without an epoch, like man.' Man is not without an epoch. He is of all epochs, and changes with them. The Gospel was not addressed to the abstract man, without an epoch, unchangeable—a man who never existed, save in the mind of theorizers. . . . It is a pitiful (chétive) philosophy which pretends to fix the absolute in any scrap of human activity, intellectual or moral" (*L'Évangile et l'Église*, pp. 97, 100, 101).

#### IDENTITY IN CHANGE

When we look at the matter more carefully, however, we perceive that even the most extreme theories of Evolution necessarily imply the permanent existence of *something*, viz. of the thing which is being evolved or

developed. Evolution involves continuity, and continuity involves at least *partial identity*. If at every successive moment the universe were annihilated, and a new one slightly different from it created to fill its place, there would be no real evolution, though there might be the *appearance* of it to an outside observer, to whom the continual acts of annihilation and creation were imperceptible. In a similar way the entirely distinct and discontinuous pictures of the cinematograph seem to the observer to melt into one another and to be continuous, though in reality they are not. The cinematograph is, in fact, a very good example of the appearance of evolution without the reality.

It might be maintained that there would be evolution even if the entire universe were replaced by another, provided that the substitution was gradual, a small piece at a time. But this is an illusion. Evolution is entirely distinct in idea from the substitution of one thing for another. Just as the school-boy's knife, whose blades and finally the handle were replaced by others, became *another knife*, so a universe, whose parts were even gradually replaced by others, would become *another universe*, and between two universes thus distinct there could be no real continuity or evolution.

The doctrine of the Evolution of the Universe thus necessarily implies at least the *partial identity* of the Universe in all its stages, and this, when further reflected upon, will be found to imply that the Universe has a *permanent self-identical substratum*.

If we are asked to define this permanent element in the Universe, it would not be difficult to state in brief outline what we understand it to be. In affirming the Universe to be permanent and identical, we affirm at very least :

- (1) That the *Ultimate Cause* of the Universe has persisted ;
- (2) That the *material substratum* of the Universe (what-

ever its most ultimate form may be found to be) has persisted ;

(3) That the *same energy* (at any rate in its most fundamental form) has persisted ;

(4) That the *same space* has persisted ;

(5) That the *same time* has persisted (for obviously all particular times are portions of the *one time*) ;

(6) That, if not all the present laws of nature, at any rate *all the most fundamental laws of the most ultimate forms of matter and energy* have persisted ;

(7) That *the laws of reason* implied in the rational ordering of the world have persisted (e.g. the principles of contradiction, of causation, and of sufficient reason).

The doctrine of a Universal Flux is, therefore, not implied in, but is contradicted by the doctrine of Evolution, and, if the latter is true, must be false.

### ORGANIC EVOLUTION

Organic Evolution is more closely connected with our subject than Inorganic, and if we direct our attention to this, it becomes still more evident that Evolution implies persistence and identity.

In the development of every living organism there is *a factor that does not change*, as well as a factor that changes. In the development of an acorn into an oak, for example, there is in all probability something which persists throughout the whole process, giving it its unity and continuous direction.

In the case of animal organisms this is still more evident. Recent research has established that *a continuous organic memory*, which implies psychic continuity and probably psychic identity, is found in very low forms of life. Even a limpet, it is said, remembers its home, and if detached from its favourite place on a rock will return to it.

In the case of human development, the proof of

identity persisting through change is complete. In spite of the enormous changes, physical, psychical, moral, and intellectual, which have taken place in each of us since birth, and still more since conception, our memory assures us that at any rate from early childhood *our personal identity* has persisted unchanged. It was certainly I myself, and not someone else—it was I myself, and not some supposed psychic predecessor of mine whose spiritual possessions I have inherited, who played with my toys in my nursery, who believed in fairies, and in the foolishness of youth was guilty of many extravagances. It should be specially noted that development in this its typical case—the only case in which we have any first-hand knowledge of it on its inner side—involves a factor not merely of *continuity*, or even of continuous orientation or *direction*, but a factor of *absolute identity*. At the core and centre of the process of growth is found a principle of *changeless self-identity*. Thus the process of development combines in a most paradoxical way change with changelessness—a factor that endures with a factor that evolves unceasingly. We ought also to notice that the factor which endures is *much more important* than the factor which changes. It is not the process of development which gives rise to the thing that develops, but the thing that develops which gives rise to the process of development. First in order of thought and of nature comes *the thing*, secondly its development. *The nature of the thing* explains the nature of the development, not *vice versâ*.

#### THE PERMANENT FACTOR IN HUMAN BELIEF

Thus, if we argue logically from the analogy of organic evolution or development, we shall certainly not reach the Modernist conclusion that everything in human belief changes, but rather the traditional one, that only the more superficial human beliefs change, the more fundamental ones remaining constant. Of course, an

analogical argument like this can only yield *probability*, not certainty; but still, so far as it proves anything at all, it proves the very opposite of what the Modernists are desirous of establishing.

The truth is that the unchanging factor in human belief is both extensive and fundamental. To write down all the permanent human beliefs would be an unending task. All that can be done here is to indicate a few of the most significant.

One of the most important of all beliefs is *belief in the existence of other persons*. It occupies in the secular domain the same unique position that belief in the existence of God occupies in the religious domain. Our whole practical life—our desires and ambitions, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, all hinge absolutely upon our firm belief in the real existence of our wife and children, our friends and neighbours, our fellow-citizens and the citizens of other countries. Deprived of this belief our life would lose its mainspring and become vanity.

Of the antiquity of this belief there can be no doubt whatever. All the higher animals recognize the objectivity of other animals (the leading species of which they distinguish), and also of man, towards whom they adopt a unique attitude. Assuming man's animal ancestry, it can be confidently affirmed that this belief is coeval with the origin of the human race, and that it has not changed its meaning in the slightest degree since that remote date.

It is worth noting that this belief is far from being necessary or self-evident. Nearly all philosophers believe it, but they have not yet succeeded in discovering conclusive arguments to prove it true. It is impossible to refute *logically* the Solipsist who maintains that his waking like his sleeping life, is a delusive dream, and that he himself is the only being that exists.

Another equally immutable belief is belief in *the real*

*objective existence of physical objects.* In spite of the objections of Berkeley and other Idealist philosophers, mankind still persist in believing in matter, and this belief, in a more instinctive form, is shared by animals, which obviously regard physical objects as objective, for they avoid them, and as different from living beings, towards which their attitude is quite different.

Among other human beliefs equally unchanging we may mention—in philosophy, the belief that the universe is rational; in logic, that two contradictory propositions cannot both be true; in geometry, that two finite straight lines cannot enclose a space; in arithmetic, that the operations of addition and multiplication can be performed in any order with the same result; in history, that Julius Cæsar once lived; in politics, that just government is better than unjust; in ethics, that a man ought always to do his duty; in science, that the laws of nature are practically uniform; in æsthetics, that a waterfall, and the colours of the rainbow, and the song of a nightingale are beautiful; in art, that Shakspeare is a supremely great dramatic poet. Very few men will be found to deny any of these propositions, and those who do so, deny them *in the same sense in which the majority of mankind affirm them.* A general belief does not change its meaning because it is occasionally denied.

#### CONCLUSION AS TO RELIGIOUS DOGMA

It seems, therefore, that there is nothing in the doctrine of Evolution to force us to conclude that no human beliefs are permanent, but much to suggest the contrary. As a matter of fact, many secular beliefs are absolutely permanent, and, if so, why not many religious beliefs? At any rate, the argument against the permanence of dogma drawn from Evolution breaks down entirely, and if the Modernist position in this matter is to be sustained it must be by other arguments.

## NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

Development without change seems a paradox and even an impossibility, not only to Modernists, but even to some whose sympathies are mainly with tradition ; nevertheless, so far from being impossible, it is actually the *normal* type of development not only in theology, but even in philosophy and science. For example, the laws of thought are not changed in the development of the science of logic : they are only applied. The axioms and postulates with which the *Elements* of Euclid opens, remain unchanged through the whole of his thirteen books. Others are occasionally added to suit the subject-matter of special books, but none of the original principles laid down in Book I are ever modified. Similarly, the initial assumptions of arithmetic and algebra undergo no change of meaning as these sciences develop. From Ptolemy to Copernicus, a period of fourteen centuries, astronomy made considerable advances without any change of fundamental doctrine ; from Copernicus to the present day, a period of four hundred years, still greater progress has been made, without any alteration of the new heliocentric principle successfully established by him. The main principles of physics remained unaltered (though certain additions were made to them) from Newton to Einstein, nor does it appear that even the latter's theories, if adopted, will entail any considerable modifications. Chemistry has made enormous advances for over a century with practically no modification of the basic doctrines laid down by Dalton in his *New System of Chemical Philosophy* (1808). His leading principle, the combination of the chemical elements in exact multiple proportions by weight, remains entirely unshaken, and no exceptions to it are known to occur even at the extremes of temperature and pressure. Modern surgery has made vast progress during the last generation without any disturbance of the theoretical foundations so well

and truly laid by Pasteur and Lister in their doctrine of the microbic origin of *sepsis*. Philosophy developed from Socrates to Kant with practically no modification of its most fundamental assumptions, and it seems on the whole unlikely that the attempted Kantian revolution will be permanent. Some of the special schools of philosophy exhibit an exceedingly long line of development with little or no essential change. Aristotelianism, for example, is one and the same philosophy in Aristotle himself, in his successors in the Lyceum, in Thomas Aquinas, and in Cardinal Mercier's up-to-date version of it. Similarly the English 'Association' school of psychology is one system both in its earlier and in its later exponents.

In such cases the school of thought holds tenaciously to its own first principles. When it adopts new ideas, it takes care that they are strictly in harmony with those which it already possesses. It checks even its own spontaneous developments by continual reference to the standard of its original doctrines. In normal development there is real growth and progress, but there is no essential change. No original doctrine is altered, and no new doctrine is added, which is not either a logical consequence of the original doctrines or at least in full harmony with them. From first to last, through the whole process of development, the system of thought remains identical with itself. It is one and the same system, not merely by virtue of its *continuity*, or even by virtue of its persistent 'tendency,' 'direction,' or 'orientation,' but by virtue of *the absolute identity* of its original doctrines from first to last, and of the *logical coherence* of all the added doctrines with them.

Such, it seems to me, has been in the main the development of Christian doctrine, at any rate in the principal historic Churches. There have, of course, been abnormal developments which were false to type—false, because they subverted some of the original ideas of the Founder

—for instance, Docetism, Gnosticism, the Humanitarian Adoptionism of Paul of Samosata (which is now being revived, without acknowledgment of its source, by distinguished Modernists), Arianism, and Monophysitism. But the leading Churches in all ages have guarded, as something sacred and inviolable, the *Deposit of Faith*, and have admitted no new ideas which are fundamentally inconsistent with it. In the few cases where development started on wrong lines (we may instance certain tentative theories of the Atonement) the process was presently checked by the obvious incompatibility of the results likely to be obtained with doctrines already accepted.

Development of this kind is a good thing. It is the glory not the shame of Christianity, that it assimilated in antiquity so much of the best philosophy and culture of ancient Greece and Rome (the Logos doctrine, for instance, many of the most valuable ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, and not a few of the critical principles of Aristarchus<sup>1</sup>), and in our own day is assimilating so many of the best results of modern thought. There is hardly an important modern system of philosophy, hardly a serious movement of thought in the scientific world which has not left its mark upon current theology. In fact, some modern theologians are *too* sensitive to movements of thought among philosophers and scientists, and too easily induced to abandon doctrines of real spiritual value because of their supposed incompatibility with the latest scientific or philosophic theory. Thus to some unstable people the doctrine of Original Sin seems incredible one year because Weismannism is in the

<sup>1</sup> I have long held that the New Testament text preferred by Westcott and Hort is an *Alexandrian recension* made in the school of Origen, mainly upon the critical principles of Aristarchus, who, like Hort, carried the principle of preferring the shorter reading to excess. I am glad to notice that both Professor A. Clarke and Professor C. H. Turner now adopt this view, which is so obvious that it is surprising that it has hardly even been suggested until quite recently.

ascendant, and quite credible the next because the Neo-Lamarckians seemed to have proved that acquired characters can be inherited; and there are others who demand that the Church's traditional scheme of ethics should be continually revised in order to bring it into harmony with the latest psychological fashion—at present the theories of Freud and the Psycho-analysts.

Within the Historic Church, however, such vagaries are usually soon checked, with the result that the Church absorbs into its permanent teaching only such ideas as are in harmony with its original principles.

#### ABNORMAL DEVELOPMENT

Development is *abnormal* when the original principles of a science or system of thought are *changed* either partially or entirely in the course of development. *Complete* change is rare, but it has occurred in the case of Buddhism, which from being a system of philosophic atheism has developed in several countries, notably in Thibet and India, into a gross system of polytheistic idolatry.<sup>1</sup> Such a case is rather one of substitution than of development in the strict sense.<sup>2</sup>

In all ordinary cases of abnormal or discontinuous development, the change of principles is not complete. Thus there is *some* identity of principle between alchemy and chemistry, and much more between pre-Copernican and post-Copernican astronomy. There is also *some* identity of principle (though but little) between the Kantianism of the First Critique and the earlier philosophic tradition.

The essential thing to notice in this connexion is, that if only the original principles of a science or system of thought are *quite true* (however partial their truth may be)

<sup>1</sup> Hinduism has transformed and absorbed Buddhism by the ingenious device of making Buddha the ninth incarnation of Vishnu.

<sup>2</sup> Another possible case is the development of magic into science, but not all anthropologists admit this affiliation of science.

they will never require to be altered in the course of subsequent development. Thus, if it is *quite true* that the solar system was once a nebula, or that the Battle of Hastings was fought in the year A.D. 1066, or that man has been evolved from an 'arboreal animal,' the truth of these truths would not be affected even by the discovery of the fullest possible details about the constitution of the nebula, or about the strategy and tactics of the Battle of Hastings, or about the problematical pedigree of man. Discovery eliminates *error* from accepted principles, but leaves *truth* untouched.

A very important result follows, viz. that if the fundamental doctrines taught by Christ and His Apostles, though not the whole truth, were yet wholly true, no amount of subsequent development and discovery—not even a second and more complete revelation—could invalidate or change them. In the course of development it is possible for them to be supplemented, for inferences to be drawn from them, and for their organic connexion with one another and with other truths to be better understood, but it is not possible for them to be changed. If they were true in the beginning, they are true now and evermore.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE NATURE OF TRUTH

THE Theory of Truth which justifies—and alone can justify—the use of fixed and unchanging creeds, may be conveniently expressed in the three following propositions :

(1) Truth is an accurate correspondence between belief and the object of belief ;

(2) A partial truth (provided it is recognized as only partial) may be absolutely and completely true ;

(3) A truth—even a partial truth—can never be altered *in respect of its being true* by any advance of knowledge, however great. It is an inalienable property of all truth (complete, partial, and even trivial) to be *absolutely immutable*. A truth, once true, is true for evermore, and not even the omnipotence of God can alter it.

This theory of truth is that of common-sense, of the compilers of the Catholic Creeds, and of every philosophic school, with the insignificant exception of the ancient Pyrrhonists, until the Kantian era.<sup>1</sup>

### THE CORRESPONDENCE THEORY OF TRUTH

The above theory, which is generally called 'the Correspondence Theory of Truth,' may be briefly expounded as follows :

There are two kinds of truth—(1) *Truth of Things*, (2) *Truth of Belief about Things*.

(1) As to *Truth of Things*, things are absolutely what

<sup>1</sup> Hume, who "awoke Kant from his dogmatic slumber," belongs to the beginning of the Kantian period, and has no affinities with the earlier philosophic tradition.

they are, and never under any circumstances what they are not. No truly existent thing can contain within its nature any contradiction whatsoever. For example, a square field cannot also be round, nor a place situated east of Paris be also west of it, nor a man be alive and also dead at the same time. Truth is always self-consistent, and harmonious with itself. A self-contradictory thing such as a square triangle, or a white object not really white, cannot even exist.

(2) As to the *Truth of Belief about Things*, this consists in a unique and special kind of 'correspondence' (quite unlike any other correspondence) between the believing mind and the object of its belief. If the object believed in is actually such as it is believed to be, then the belief is true. If, on the other hand, it is not such as it is believed to be, or non-existent, then the belief is *false*.

Opponents of the Correspondence Theory are in the habit of describing it as a theory of 'copying,' but this is an entire misdescription. Advocates of 'correspondence' may be wrong in their views, but they are not so foolish as to imagine that an object can be copied unless it is first *known*. If an object is *known*, truth is already attained, and to copy the object is superfluous.

Even supposing that the Correspondence Theory implies that correct copying is a necessary *preliminary stage* in the process of attaining truth (which is not the case), it certainly does not identify truth with the copying, but with *the true belief which ensues upon the copying*.

The whole conception of 'copying,' however, is an absurdity, because it implies that the apprehension of truth is not a rational, but a sensational process. All truth of belief is expressed in 'judgments,' and judgments are apprehended by reason, not sense. This is the case even with judgments about material things which are apprehended *by means of sense (or sensation)*. For example, the judgment 'a bat is a flying mammal' is based upon materials furnished by sense, but it is not a sensa-

tion or even a combination of sensations. Neither 'bat,' nor 'flying,' nor 'mammal,' nor the meaning represented by the word 'is' are sensations. All are intellectual conceptions of a general character, applicable to an indefinite number of things, and therefore (in principle) 'imageless.' We may or we may not have before our minds when we think of 'bat' a mental image or 'copy' (or 'phantasm,' to use the technical term) of an individual bat, but this is not the *meaning* of the word bat. 'Bat' means, not a particular individual, but any creature whatsoever to which the *definition* of the word bat applies. There can thus be no mental 'image' of the meaning of the word 'bat,' nor of 'flying,' nor of 'mammal,' much less of 'is-ness' or existence, of which not even in an individual case is it possible to frame an image.

All non-sensuous thinking is in principle 'imageless.' If images occur in the course of it they are only 'symbols,' and do not form part of its substance. In many cases thinking dispenses even with 'symbols.' For example, what possible 'symbols' or 'images' can express any part of the meaning of such propositions as these: 'Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another,' and 'Like causes produce like effects'?

It follows that the Correspondence Theory of Truth neither identifies truth with copying, nor even involves copying as a means to its attainment. It involves *intellectual apprehension* (for a proposition must be understood before it can be believed); but intellectual apprehension bears no resemblance to copying. What is believed is in all cases a *proposition*, and a proposition is not an image, or picture, or copy of the fact to which it relates.

It has been necessary to make this point clear, because the whole Hegelian onslaught upon the Correspondence Theory is based upon the assumption that it identifies truth with copying, which is not the case. The 'correspondence' which it alleges to exist between the believing

mind and its object of belief is *sui generis*, and all attempts to reduce it to copying, or imitation, or the identification of thought with things, or any other relation or process whatever, lead only to error and confusion.<sup>1</sup>

(3) With regard to the *Permanence of Truth*, adherents of the Correspondence Theory hold that both truth in general, and also all particular truths, are *absolutely immutable and indestructible*. Not even the omnipotence of God can change one of them. God could indeed annihilate the universe, but not the fact that there had been a universe. If the universe were annihilated, all the facts, even the most insignificant, which constitute its history, would remain eternally true, and not even almighty power could alter even one of them. The Immutability of Truth, even of human and partial truth, is one of the most important metaphysical doctrines which Orthodox Christianity unites with traditional philosophy in maintaining against Kantianism, Hegelianism, Pragmatism, and Modernism.

### KANT'S DOCTRINE OF TRUTH

Kant shattered the Correspondence Theory of Truth for those who accepted his teaching, in his first and most famous Critique, that of *Pure Reason* (1781), one of the most sceptical works that has ever proceeded from the pen of a great philosopher. Before Kant even the most sceptically minded thinkers had usually been content to question the truth of this or that particular received doctrine (such as the existence of God, or the Freedom of the Will, or Human Immortality) without questioning the possibility of knowledge altogether. Kant, however, questioned the power of the human mind to know anything whatever except its own thoughts and subjective

<sup>1</sup> Professor Cook Wilson in his unpublished lectures, which I have had the advantage of consulting, lays great stress upon the absurdity of all attempts to explain 'knowing' in terms of anything but itself.

categories of thinking. He denied the possibility of all objective knowledge.

The leading doctrine of the First Critique is called indifferently 'Immanence' or the 'Relativity of Human Knowledge.' It is called 'Immanence' because, according to Kant's teaching, the mind only knows what is immanent within itself, i.e. its own thoughts, ideas, categories, sensations, desires, aversions, etc. In Kant's system the object of knowledge is always something mental, never anything beyond or distinct from the mind. His doctrine is also frequently called 'the Relativity of Human Knowledge,' because it implies that all knowledge is 'relative to the knowing mind,' and accordingly not 'absolute' knowledge. By 'absolute' knowledge is meant knowledge of external things *as they actually are in their own nature*, and the possibility of this Kant emphatically denied.

Kant admitted that external things exist independently of our minds, but taught that we can know nothing about them except their bare existence. These external things ('things-in-themselves' or 'noumena') produce in our minds certain 'phenomena' or subjective appearances, but these 'phenomena' do not in the least resemble the external things that produce them, nor do they give any clue to their real nature. External things ('things-in-themselves') are absolutely unknowable. An impenetrable barrier shuts off the human mind from the objective world which it seeks to know. The human mind can know only itself, and not very much even about itself, for its true nature (or 'substance') is as unknowable as the true nature of external things. The thoughts, ideas, categories, feelings, and impulses of the human mind (the only objects of knowledge) are all 'phenomena,' and as such do not reveal the true nature of the mind or that of external things. It follows that all human knowledge, whether of external things or of the mind itself, is purely 'phenomenal,' 'symbolic,' and 'relative'—in other words it is ignorance. It is

absolutely impossible for it to attain to the true nature of things.

Kant is not perfectly consistent in his use of the word 'phenomena.' Sometimes he speaks of the unknowable external things as producing or causing 'phenomena' in our minds; sometimes (without seeming to realize how different the two positions are) of these external things as 'appearing' to our minds in the guise (or disguise) of 'phenomena.' But the former is the only manner of speaking which is consistent with the main principle of his philosophy. If external things do really 'appear,' in however imperfect a form, to the human mind, *then the human mind has some real objective knowledge*, and the whole principle of 'Immanence' or Subjectivism falls to the ground. Unless complete nonsense is to be made of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, it is necessary to adhere firmly to the interpretation (which is also favoured by Kant's usual manner of speaking) that 'phenomena' are not external things 'appearing' to the mind in however imperfect a way, but simply *mental affections* produced by these external things. Unless the object of knowledge is in all cases *something purely mental*, there is an end of the doctrine of Immanence, and therefore of Kantianism.

#### CRITICISM OF IMMANENTISM

As the doctrine of Immanence in its original form, or in one of its numerous later developments, is the basal principle of nearly all Modernism, English<sup>1</sup> as well as Continental, it is desirable, before dealing with its applications in detail (which will occupy our attention for the rest of the book), to state at once in a clear and succinct form our chief objections to the theory as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P. Gardner, *Exploratio Evangelica*, "In the field of psychology I am Kantian, or Neo-Kantian," p. xix. The book is written, he says, "in accordance with that principle of relativity which is recognized as the basis of all our knowledge." See especially ch. v (Doctrine and Metaphysics), and ch. vi (Relative Religion). Nearly all Modernists who discuss the subject use similar language.

## I

The main objection to Kantianism is that it postulates an *irrational universe*.

The fundamental postulate of philosophy, science, religion, and common-sense, is that *the universe is rational*. Philosophy lays the chief stress on its intellectual rationality, science on its physical rationality, religion on its moral rationality, and common-sense on its practical rationality, but all agree that it is rational through and through.

Now, if the universe is rational, it follows that the mind of man is so adjusted to the universe of which it forms part, that the chief categories of human thinking (e.g. the laws of logic, time, space, causality, substance and attribute, good and evil, beauty and its reverse, matter, living organism, person) correspond in a rational way with external things, and express their essential nature. Even according to Kant, the human mind *belongs* to the rest of the universe, and proceeds from the same source. Consequently, an *intolerable contradiction* arises, if it is supposed (as in his theory it is) that the thoughts and beliefs of the microcosm, man, give entirely false information or no information at all about the macrocosm or larger universe to which he belongs.

It is not possible to *prove* that the universe is rational, it is an assumption of faith rather than a demonstration of reason ; nevertheless, unless we are allowed to assume it, the pursuit of truth is hopeless, and the result is universal scepticism. The choice between the metaphysics of Kant and those of philosophic tradition (or what amounts to the same thing, between the metaphysics of Modernism and those of orthodox Christianity) is not like an ordinary choice between philosophies. It is in effect *a choice between Rationality and Irrationality as world-principles*. Irrationality has at present a certain philosophic vogue. It is professed by systems as different

in detail as Euckenism, Bergsonism, Anglo-Saxon Pragmatism, Croceism, and Mysticism. Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that mankind as a whole—least of all philosophers—will permanently acquiesce in a theory of the universe which robs human reason of its birthright—the right to know (in principle at least) the Universe, the Eternal Moral Law, and God Himself *in their true natures*.

## II

On grounds of logic, strong objection may be raised against Kant's strange procedure in criticizing the instrument of knowledge, viz. reason, by means of itself. If reason is faulty, then certainly reason cannot be properly employed to detect and remove its own blemishes, for before this can be done it must be assumed to be trustworthy, which is a contradiction.

As I propose to quote later from Hegel a striking and most convincing refutation of this absurdity, I will say no more about it in this place, but will merely remark that Kant's modern successors, the Pragmatists and Bergsonists, follow their master's bad example in their persistent attempts to discredit reason and prove it fallacious *by argument*, i.e. by means of itself.

## III

Kant may also be fairly asked the embarrassing question, *how he knows, as positively as he professes, that men's ordinary beliefs about external things are so entirely fallacious.*

He can only know this by getting to know these external things, and comparing them with our ideas of them. But inasmuch as they are *unknowable*, this is impossible. It seems, therefore, that, whatever may be the truth about the matter, at any rate *no evidence* is forthcoming in support of Kant's position.

## IV

The statement that the object of thought is necessarily something mental, because it is impossible for the mind to know anything outside itself, sounds plausible ; but, so far from being self-evident, is rejected by practically the universal opinion of mankind.

All mankind (except a negligible number of Solipsists) are firmly persuaded that the physical universe exists objectively with approximately the same qualities which human thought ascribes to it. They are also persuaded that their friends and neighbours and other men exist objectively, having their own thoughts and feelings and aims in life. Common-sense regards the attempt of Immanentism to reduce matter and other minds to mere subjective states of consciousness as an absurdity too great to be seriously entertained.

There are certain philosophers (Hegel was one) whose maxim is, the further from common-sense the nearer to philosophic truth. Nevertheless, no great philosophic system which has departed widely from common-sense has proved enduring. The reason is that common-sense is the *real basis* of philosophy, the business of the latter being merely to correct in detail, to refine, and to carry further its conclusions. In the end, philosophies are judged by their agreement with common-sense. As has already been mentioned, common-sense has recently asserted itself in Oxford. Philosophic Oxford, which for three generations has been the very Mecca of Idealism, has now at last reverted to Realism, i.e. to common-sense.

## V

Kant believed in the existence of external things ('things-in-themselves'), but this belief, though true, is in complete contradiction to the main principle of his philosophy.

It contradicts it in two ways. In the first place, Kant taught that external things *cause* or produce 'phenomena' or appearances in our minds. But *causation*, in his system, is a purely subjective form of thought, not applicable to 'things-in-themselves.' It follows that external things cannot cause 'phenomena' in our minds, which latter must therefore have some other origin. The result is, that there is no reason whatever for supposing that external things exist.

In the second place, it is obviously impossible to know the existence of anything, *unless we know something more about it than its mere existence*. In the process of manifesting itself to us, a thing necessarily appears *in some character or other*—either as being something or doing something; and this character must be something over and above its bare existence.

But, according to Kant, the only thing that we know about external things is their bare existence, which involves a contradiction. Unless we have some positive knowledge of a thing, we cannot even know that it exists; but if we have such positive knowledge, the whole principle of Relativity goes by the board, and *The Critique of Pure Reason* is reduced to waste paper.

#### PYRRHO AND KANT

It may be doubted whether Kant's famous theory of knowledge is quite so original as is usually supposed. The doctrine that all human knowledge is fallacious was taught of old by Pyrrho of Elis, and the Sceptical School which he founded.

Ancient Pyrrhonism was quite as sceptical as the Kantian agnosticism. It was also much more logical and subtle. For whereas Kant's agnosticism was dogmatic, Pyrrhonism was sceptical enough to be sceptical about its own doubts, and not to erect them into dogmas.

If Kant had only been sceptical enough *to doubt his*

*own doubts* (as it was the duty of so sceptical a philosopher to do) he might have perceived how empty they were, and have returned (by way of scepticism) to faith.

A comparison of the ancient treatment of Pyrrho with the modern treatment of Kant, suggests reflections not altogether flattering to the modern world. Both Pyrrhonism and Kantianism are irrational systems, and therefore absurd ; but whereas the ancient world treated Pyrrho and his followers with studied neglect, modern Europe—or at least Continental Europe—has elevated Kant to the position of a new Copernicus and a philosophic oracle. He has succeeded in deflecting the main stream of Continental philosophy from its traditional and (as orthodox Christians believe) its true course for over a century. Many distinct systems of recent philosophy (e.g. Hegelianism, Activism, Pragmatism, Bergsonism, besides Neo-Kantianism) owe their origin to his teaching and inspiration. He is the creator, not merely in principle, but even to a large extent in detail, of both Liberal Protestantism and Modernism ; and even to-day his influence, not merely in the religious and philosophic field, but also in the fields of science and historical criticism, though waning, is powerful.

#### THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF KANTIANISM

The religious and moral consequences of Kantianism (with which we are mainly concerned in this book) are extremely serious.

If the Immanent Principle that the human mind knows only its own thoughts, and not external things, is true, it follows :

(1) That man cannot know God. This Kant not only admits, but attempts to prove at length in his First Critique.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See particularly Bk. II, ch. 3, sect. 5 (Of the impossibility of a cosmological proof of the existence of God) ; sect. 6 (Of the impossi-

(2) That man cannot know the existence of the Eternal Moral Law, much less its true nature. All morality thus becomes subjective.

(3) That the Immortality of the Soul can no longer be proved. For since, according to Kant as well as other philosophers, the soul is a ' substance ' or ' thing-in-itself,' and things-in-themselves are unknowable, it follows that it is impossible to prove even the existence of the soul, much less its immortality.

It is perfectly true that in his later works, *The Critique of the Practical Reason* and *The Critique of Judgment*, Kant attempted to find a practical (as distinct from a theoretical) basis for such doctrines as the existence of God, human immortality, moral freedom, and eternal and immutable morality. Much that he says on these subjects is of permanent value, and in full accord with what orthodox Christians believe.

Nevertheless the question arises, whether Kant as a philosopher is justified in believing any of these things. He argues, like other philosophers, that belief in these truths is necessary to practical life, and that if they are denied or doubted the spiritual and moral activities of the soul wither and die. " These postulates," says Kant, " are not theoretical dogmas, but suppositions practically necessary. While they do not extend our speculative knowledge, they give objective reality to the ideas of speculative reason in general (by means of their reference to what is practical), and give it a right to concepts the possibility even of which it could not otherwise venture to affirm. These postulates [of the Practical Reason] are *Immortality, Freedom, and the Existence of God.*"

Kant's argument here and elsewhere is excellently urged, and is quite conclusive *on the assumption that the universe is rational*. If we are allowed to assume the

bility of a physico-theological proof) ; sect. 7 (Critique of all theology based upon speculative principles of reason). Hegel's reply to Kant is worthy of attentive study.

rationality—especially the *moral* rationality—of the universe, then clearly there must be a rational correspondence between theory and practice, and beliefs which are found to be *practically* necessary for the efficiency of man's moral and spiritual life must also be *theoretically* and speculatively true, even though it is impossible to find theoretical arguments to prove them.

On the other hand, if the universe is *not* rational, we are *not* entitled to assume that what is necessary in practice is also objectively true; and since Kant in his *First Critique* has denied the whole principle of the Rationality of the Universe by denying the possibility of objective knowledge, it is impossible for him to invoke it in his two later *Critiques* to give objective validity to the subjective postulates of the Practical Reason. The *Critiques of Practical Reason* and of *Judgment* would be valuable works, if Kant had never written *The Critique of Pure Reason*, or had withdrawn it from circulation; but since both of them contain continual references to the principle of Relativity as still authoritative, there is scarcely a page in them which does not contain confusions and contradictions. *The Critique of Judgment* concludes with a meritorious attempt to rehabilitate the moral and teleological arguments for the existence of God, which Kant himself had undermined in *The Critique of Pure Reason*. He shows in a conclusive way that God's existence is an absolutely *necessary* postulate of the Practical Reason, and yet he lamely concludes with the confession that, if the principles of the *First Critique* are true, it is difficult to see how either of these arguments can yield objective truth. On the moral argument he remarks: "The actuality [i.e. existence] of a highest morally-legislating Author is therefore sufficiently established for the practical use of our reason, *without determining anything theoretically as regards its being.*" And, summing up the teleological argument, he says: "The great purposiveness [present] in the world compels us to

*think* its causality as that of an Understanding ; but we are not therefore entitled to *ascribe* this to it." <sup>1</sup>

The truth is that the principle of Immanence, or 'Relativity,' if logically carried out, leads to complete agnosticism both in theology and ethics. Intellectually Kant was an agnostic ; morally and spiritually he was (or wished to be) a believer. The inward struggle of the two opposing principles of agnosticism and faith for the possession of his soul showed itself outwardly and visibly in the strange incoherencies and inconsistencies of his later works.

To the subject of the Practical Reason we shall have to return in connexion with Pragmatism, of which the root principles, the primacy of the will and of the practical life, and the depreciation of the intellect or pure theoretical reason, are already to be discerned in the Critiques of *The Practical Reason* and of *Judgment*.

#### EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

From Kant Modernism has derived two important principles besides that of Immanence :

(1) That theology and ethics should be based upon psychology, not upon metaphysics and intellectual arguments ;

(2) That all knowledge is derived from experience.

With regard to the first, it is obvious that if reason cannot attain to objective truth there is nothing to base theology and ethics upon, *except* psychology, i.e. (as we shall presently prove) upon subjective thoughts and feelings.

Many of those who speak approvingly of the proposal to base religion and morality upon psychology have little idea of the nature of the revolution which is advocated. It *implies a change from objective truth to subjective opinion*. Psychology studies human thought *as subjective*,

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Judgment* (Bernard's translation), pp. 388, 427.

and does not concern itself with the external objects about which thought thinks. It follows that psychological theology is knowledge, not of God, but of *man's religious feelings*, and that psychological ethics is knowledge, not of the objective and eternal Moral Law, which (according to the older philosophic tradition and orthodox Christianity) binds all rational natures, including God's, with an absolute obligation, but merely of *man's subjective moral sentiments and beliefs*. Religion and morality, if based upon psychology instead of reason, become simply matters of taste, convenience, and utility, and may be expected to vary indefinitely not merely according to race and individual idiosyncrasy, but even to no inconsiderable extent according to latitude and longitude, for undoubtedly climate affects human psychology. Advocates of psychological religion and ethics hardly expect any ordinary religious or moral doctrine to remain permanent for more than a generation. "Doctrines which are based upon religious experiences, real and solid," says Professor Gardner, "may be received as true." Nevertheless, he adds, "their truth may not be for all time, since the intellectual and moral conditions of human life are continually changing, but they are *true for our age at least*."<sup>1</sup> It is evident that to build any doctrine whatever, religious or secular, upon psychology, is to build it upon a quicksand.

With regard to the second principle, the limiting of all knowledge to that which is gained by *experience*, an exposition of the practical consequences to which it leads will probably be considered by most minds an absolute *reductio ad absurdum* of it.

If by experience is meant *Kantian* experience, i.e. experience of subjective 'phenomena,' not of objective things, then the principle implies that we know only our own thoughts and feelings, and nothing at all of external

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 46. Less fundamental doctrines, according to Professor Gardner, change much more quickly.

things or persons, "which," as Euclid would say, "is absurd."

Even if the Kantian doctrine of Immanence is abandoned, and it is admitted that 'experience' of external things is possible, the number of such things that can be known by direct experience is almost infinitesimally small.

In the first place, only *the present moment* is an object of direct experience. The past is known only by memory verified by reason, and the future only by rational anticipation, neither of which things is experience.

In the second place, the experience of other persons is not *my* experience, and therefore is not experience at all to me. If another person tells me of his experience, I have to ascertain (not by experience, but by rational thinking), (1) whether he exists (which I can only believe by rejecting the doctrine of Immanence), (2) whether he is a reliable observer, (3) whether he is a truthful person, (4) what is the nature and value of his experience. *It is impossible to appropriate the results of any other experience than one's own without the use of reason, i.e. without going beyond experience.*

Thirdly, 'experience' requires to be interpreted by reason before it can become the basis of any knowledge or belief whatever. The particular 'experience' to be cognized must be marked off and distinguished from the general stream of consciousness of which it forms part, its nature must be determined, and its implications recognized, before there can be apprehension or belief of any kind about it. All these processes are intellectual, none of them are 'experience.' 'Pure' experience, uninterpreted by intelligence or reason, may possibly be found in such undeveloped organisms as molluscs, and in forms of life still lower; not, however, in man. Experience alone is never the basis of *any* human belief. All beliefs which are not *a priori* in origin are due to *reasoning from experience*. Many of the things that are known

with certainty (e.g. the approximate length of the diameter of the earth) can never be the objects of *anyone's* experience except God's.

Lastly, no *a priori* truths of any kind are derived from experience, and since these form the most important part of our knowledge, and are absolutely necessary for the performance of all intellectual operations,<sup>1</sup> the reduction of all human knowledge to that gained by experience would amount in practice to a *prohibition to think*, and would degrade man below the intellectual level of the more intelligent brutes.

### KANT'S ANTI-NOMIES

Kant attempted to disprove the reality of our knowledge of external things (such as space, time, matter, causation) by discovering 'antinomies' or logical contradictions involved in our ideas of them. The principle was sound, but its application was vitiated by a fundamental *ignoratio elenchi*.

What Kant had to make out in order to prove his case, was that time, space, matter, etc., contain contradictions *in their own intrinsic nature*, apart altogether from their amount. All that he really showed, or even tried to show, was that we are involved in difficulties, perhaps in contradictions, when we attempt to fix the *exact amounts* of these things which exist or may exist—a very different matter.

It is obviously possible to have a very clear idea of what cheese is, without knowing how many tons of it there are in England; and of what a whole number is, without knowing whether the series of whole numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., is finite or infinite; and of what a person is, without knowing whether there is a finite or an infinite number of persons (human and superhuman) in the

<sup>1</sup> This is especially the case with the laws of thought, which are necessary to all logical thinking, and are instinctively used even by those who are ignorant of them as philosophical principles

universe. Similarly it is quite possible to have a perfectly clear and non-contradictory idea of space, without knowing how far it extends ; and of time, without knowing whether it has or has not a beginning and an end ; and of matter, without knowing whether it is infinitely or only finitely divisible.

The contradiction, if contradiction it is, evidently lies, not in the notion of time, space, matter, etc., but in the notion of infinity. To many minds infinity (in Kant's sense) seems to involve a contradiction, and therefore to be an impossible conception.

Everyone, of course, believes in infinity in the sense of *an exceedingly large quantity or number capable of indefinite extension*. Thus the series of whole numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., can always be made larger by adding one more to it, but it does not appear that this process of adding units to a finite number will ever make it strictly infinite. Similarly time can be extended indefinitely by adding moments or hours to it, but there is no reason for supposing that this process will ever make it infinite. So also a projectile moving through space might extend its line of advance indefinitely, but this does not prove that space is absolutely infinite, but only that it extends or is capable of extending indefinitely in all directions.

No reasons whatever are brought forward by Kant to prove that an absolutely infinite, as distinct from an indefinitely extensible, number or quantity exists or can exist ; and since to most minds the idea of an *absolutely* infinite number or quantity involves a contradiction, it is better to avoid the postulation of it if possible. If we confine ourselves to thinking of space and time as indefinitely (but not infinitely) extensible ; and of matter as indefinitely (but not infinitely) divisible—which is the way in which common-sense and most philosophers do actually think of them, we are not involved in contradictions.

Kant would have been better employed if, instead of

using so much diligence in searching for 'antinomies' where they do not exist, he had been more careful in detecting them *where they do exist*, viz. in his own system. Posterity would have been greatly indebted to him, if, for instance, he had condescended to explain on what grounds he justified his firm belief in the existence of other persons, when, according to his own doctrine of Immanence, the human mind is incapable of all objective knowledge, and is limited to the knowledge of 'phenomena,'<sup>1</sup> i.e. of its own subjective states.

### HEGEL'S CRITICISM OF KANT

Although Hegel inherited from Kant the fundamental doctrine of Immanence, and must be regarded as in many ways Kant's successor, nevertheless he retired from certain of Kant's extreme positions, and in particular criticized unsparingly his assumption that the human mind is incapable of knowing Nature and God. As his criticism of Kant in this matter is of great value, and accords with the general standpoint taken up in this book, I propose to quote it at some length.

"In modern times," says Hegel, "a doubt has for the first time been raised . . . as to the correspondence of our thought with things [as they are] in their own nature. . . . *This divorce between thought and thing is mainly the work of the Critical Philosophy [of Kant], and runs counter to the conviction of all previous ages, that their agreement is a matter of course.* This antithesis between them is the hinge on which modern philosophy turns. Meanwhile *the natural belief of men gives the lie to it.* In common

<sup>1</sup> Kant is most clearly wrong in his treatment of time, which he thinks will be generally admitted to be infinite and to have neither beginning nor end. This is the exact reverse of the ordinary opinion, which is that whereas *eternity* (i.e. duration without succession or change) is infinite, time (like all terrestrial things) is finite. Time is usually regarded as beginning at the creation of the world and ending at the consummation of all things, when time will be swallowed up in eternity.

life . . . we think [of a thing] without hesitation, and in the firm belief that thought coincides with thing. And this belief is of the greatest importance. *It marks the diseased state of our age, when we see it adopting the despairing creed that our knowledge is only subjective, and that beyond this subjective knowledge we cannot go. . . .* We have said above that, according to the old belief, it was the characteristic right of the mind to know the truth. If this be so, it also implies that everything we know, both of outward and inward nature—in one word, the objective world, *is in its own self the same as it is in thought, and that to think is to bring out the truth of our object, be it what it may.* The business of philosophy is only to bring into explicit consciousness what the world in all ages has believed about thought. Philosophy therefore advances nothing new, and our present discussion has led us to a conclusion which agrees with the natural belief of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

Hegel also makes merry, with good reason, over Kant's 'criticism of the instrument' of knowledge, viz. reason. Kant, he says, seems to regard reason as a sort of philosophical instrument, a telescope, for instance, which we can direct upon objects when we wish to know them, and the errors of which we can correct from other sources of information at our command. As a matter of fact, we have no other sources of information at our command. Our sole and only means of criticizing reason and its capacities for knowing, is reason itself; and we cannot use it for this purpose *without making the initial assumption that it is trustworthy.* Thus Kant's famous 'criticism of the instrument,' so far from being a miracle of philosophical penetration, involves a fallacy so obvious that it is a marvel that so great a philosopher can have been deceived by it.

Hegel also applied himself to the task of rehabilitating,

<sup>1</sup> *The Logic of Hegel* (translation by W. Wallace), pp. 44-45 (abridged, italics mine).

and defending against Kant's sceptical attack, the traditional arguments for the existence of God, including even Anselm's Ontological Argument. The last argument is rejected by nearly all orthodox Christians as illogical, but as it is an argument from the idea of God to His actual existence, it naturally appealed to a philosopher who identified thought with things.<sup>1</sup>

### HEGEL'S OWN THEORY OF TRUTH

While Hegel did good service to theology in his exposure of the fallacies involved in Kant's attack upon the traditional proofs of God's existence, he fell into a serious error of his own, the very reverse of his predecessor's.

Whereas Kant had separated things from thought to such an extent as to make knowledge of them impossible, Hegel identified them completely with one another in a system of pantheistic idealism. And whereas Kant had attacked the Correspondence Theory of Truth by denying that things can be known, Hegel attacked it in a quite different way, by denying the existence of things. Things, in his philosophy, are nothing but thoughts—thoughts either in human minds, or in God's mind, or rather *in both*, for God and the universe and God's mind and men's minds being identical in Hegelianism, it follows that God thinks in men's thoughts, not completely, of course, as in the universe at large, but partially and in the main finitely. To quote Hegel himself: "In common life truth means the agreement of an object with our conception of it. We thus presuppose an object to which our conception must conform [as in the usual Correspondence Theory of Truth]."

"In the philosophical sense of the word, on the other hand, truth may be described in general terms as *the*

<sup>1</sup> See especially Hegel's treatise on *The Proofs of the Existence of God* appended to his lectures on *The Philosophy of Religion* (English translation, pp. 221-367).

*agreement of a thought-content with itself.* This meaning is quite different from the one given above. . . . The study of Truth, or (as it is here explained to mean) Consistency, constitutes the proper problem of Logic."<sup>1</sup>

### LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS

It is important to notice, before passing to the criticism of Hegel's view of truth, that his identification of thought and things, which is brought about by reducing things to thought, not thought to things, exalts Logic to the position of the Master Science, and identifies it with Metaphysics. If the universe consists entirely of thought, then the laws of thought (i.e. Logic) must be identical with the laws of being (i.e. Metaphysics), and Logic and Metaphysics become *one*.

Hegel was fond of insisting upon this: "Logic is the all-animating spirit of all sciences, and its categories [form] the spiritual hierarchy. They are the heart and centre of things. . . . Logic therefore coincides with Metaphysics."<sup>2</sup>

### TRUTH AS COHERENCE OR CONSISTENCY

We have seen that the 'Correspondence' Theory of Truth was rejected by Hegel because in his system the universe consists entirely of thought, and there are no 'things' or 'objects' for it to correspond with. It follows that Truth must consist in the 'harmony,' or 'consistency,' or 'coherence' of thought, not with things, for there are none, but *with itself*. Truth in the Hegelian system is simply consistent and systematic thinking. Its character as truth resides, not in its parts regarded separately, but in its organic totality as completed thought. Hegel generally spoke of Truth as 'Consistency'; the English Hegelians (Mr. Bradley and Professor Joachim, for instance) prefer the term

<sup>1</sup> *Logic of Hegel*, English translation, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 55, 45.

'Coherence,' but the meaning is the same. For all Hegelians, truth is the coherence or consistency of thought, not with things, but *with itself*.

It is not to be denied that genuine and important aspects of truth are seized and emphasized by the Hegelian theory. Truth does really form a 'coherent' and 'systematic' whole. Moreover, Hegel is right in insisting that no isolated truth can grow to its full dimensions, or be appreciated in its full significance, until it is assigned to its fitting place in the living 'organism' of truth.

No reasonable mind can doubt that consistency is not only an invariable quality of all truth, but that it is also a most valuable criterion of its presence.

It is, however, one thing to maintain that consistency is a quality and criterion of truth, and quite another that it is *identical* with truth. Consistency is a quality of many other things besides truth—sometimes even of *error*. For instance, it sometimes happens that in a criminal case the opposing theories of the prosecution and of the defence are equally consistent and equally explain the whole of the facts; and that in a particular branch of science two incompatible theories, both equally consistent and capable of explaining the facts, divide scientists into opposite camps. In such cases consistency is not even a *test* of truth, much less its substance.

Hegelians usually contend that it is only very limited classes of facts which inconsistent theories will explain, and that *of the universe*, at any rate, in any of its chief aspects, there can be only *one* consistent theory.

Unfortunately for Hegelianism, there is a *considerable number* of theories of the entire universe which contradict one another completely, but which yet are internally coherent.

For example, the theories that the universe is eternal, and that it was created in time, contradict one another, yet neither contains an internal contradiction. Kant's

theory that God and the world are distinct, and Hegel's that they are identical, contradict one another, but not themselves. The Realist doctrine that the universe of things and the universe of thought are distinct, and the Idealist doctrine that they are identical, are incompatible, yet each, taken separately, is coherent. Similarly, the theory of the Illusionist or Solipsist, that the objective world is a mere subjective illusion, and that he himself is the only being that exists, is quite as coherent as the ordinary theory of an objective universe, and equally explains the whole of the facts. Obviously in all such cases 'coherence,' so far from *constituting* truth, is not even a *criterion* of it.

How completely false, in spite of its superficial plausibility, the 'coherence' theory really is, may be shown still more clearly by taking a homely concrete example. We will consider what precisely is meant by the truth of the proposition, 'John and Mary love one another,' on the two opposing theories.

On the 'Correspondence' theory, this proposition is true, if objectively and quite independently of anyone's belief, (1) John exists, (2) Mary exists, (3) John loves Mary, (4) Mary loves John. If all these four assertions are objective facts, the proposition is true; if not, it is false.

On the opposing theory of 'Coherence,' it makes no difference to the truth of this proposition whether or not there are any outward facts to correspond with it. The proposition will be true even if neither John nor Mary loves the other—nay, even if neither of them exists; provided always, (1) that belief in this proposition does not contradict any of the other beliefs of the person who holds it, (2) that it is a logical deduction from them.

It is possible for the Hegelian philosopher, while he is actually reading Hegel's *Logic*, or is lost in metaphysical abstraction, to acquiesce in the 'Coherence' theory as, at any rate, ideally correct; but it is quite

impossible either for him or for anyone else to believe it or act upon it in practice. In other words, the 'Coherence' theory, though not involving an absolute contradiction, violates common-sense to such an extreme degree that it is not in practice believed in by anyone—not even by professed Hegelians.

#### DOES PARTIAL TRUTH INVOLVE ERROR ?

We have now reached a portion of the Hegelian system which is one of the main supports of Modernism, and from which the more philosophic Modernists derive one of their most effective weapons for attacking the principle of the Immutability of Truth.

It is a fundamental principle of the Logic (and therefore of the Metaphysics) of Hegel, that all finite or partial truth (and therefore all human truth) contains errors and contradictions, and that accordingly the progress of knowledge consists, not, as is generally supposed, in adding truth to truth, but also (and that not accidentally but essentially) *in correcting previous errors*.

It follows that the Dogmas of Christianity, even the most essential (as being merely finite statements of truth), *are mixtures in varying degrees of truth and error*. They cannot be 'true as far as they go,' as is generally supposed, because on Hegelian principles all partial truth *as such* is partially false. It may be hoped that as scientific theology and philosophy advance, the erroneous element in these dogmas will become less, but it is impossible even to hope that (at least till the consummation of all things) it will ever be eliminated. Our imperfect creeds, however frequently revised, and our halting dogmas, however frequently 'restated,' can never attain to truth. All that can reasonably be hoped is that they may become progressively less false. No truth is absolutely true, except the entire truth about the entire universe, and this is possessed by God alone, if even by

Him, for Hegel appears to teach (and not a few Hegelians believe that he *does* teach) that God, instead of being perfect from eternity, as Christians suppose, is evolving towards perfection in and with the universe, which is only another name for Himself, and that accordingly *the goal of Absolute Truth still lies before even Him.*

### HEGEL'S LOGIC

Hegel's *Logic* is perhaps the most difficult book ever written. So obscure is it, that its interpreters have always been, and still are, divided into several schools.<sup>1</sup> It seems possible, however, to indicate briefly its general aim and method sufficiently for our present purpose.

The *Logic* is an elaborate attempt to prove that all finite ideas and beliefs contain *internal contradictions*, and are therefore at least *partly false*. Hegel admits that the higher, the more comprehensive, and the more 'concrete' our ideas and beliefs become, the less contradiction (and therefore falsity) they contain; nevertheless he considers that all ideas and beliefs whatsoever contain at least *some* degree of contradiction and falsity, except 'the Absolute Idea,' which is God.

It must be conceded to Hegel, that if all finite ideas and beliefs contain internal contradictions, they must be wholly or partly false. The only question is, *whether they do in fact* contain these alleged internal contradictions. It is impossible to discuss in the space available all the alleged contradictions in ordinary ideas with which the *Logic* abounds; nevertheless it is possible to deal with Hegel's strongest and most plausible instances—those to which he himself attaches the greatest importance. If these can be shown to be imaginary, the whole Hegelian system collapses, for it is so closely articulated—so 'coherent,' to use Hegel's term—that the destruction of

<sup>1</sup> Its difficulty is increased because Hegel published his logical doctrines in two distinct forms, varying considerably, neither of which can be neglected.

a single one of the necessary links by which the ascent is made from ' Being ' to the Absolute Idea, invalidates the whole chain of the argument.

Hegel states his general position somewhat as follows : " All finite things involve an untruth." " It is from conforming to finite categories in thought and action that all deception originates." " Truth is always infinite, and cannot be expressed or represented to consciousness in finite terms." " Probably no one will feel disposed to deny that the phenomenal world presents contradictions to the observing mind." " Every actual thing involves a coexistence of opposed [i.e. contradictory] elements. Consequently to know, or, in other words, to comprehend an object, is equivalent to being conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed [i.e. contradictory] determinations." " Everything finite, instead of being stable and ultimate, is rather changeable and transient . . . the finite, being implicitly other than what it is, is forced beyond its own immediate or natural being to turn suddenly into its opposite."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE CONTRADICTIONS OF ' BEING '

Hegel's *Logic* starts with the most abstract of all conceptions, that of ' Being ' ; and this he declares to be a *contradictory*, and therefore *partly false* idea.

It must be admitted that if he is able to make out his case in this most vital particular, he has destroyed, without further argument, the whole case for Immutable Truth. Practically all propositions assert or deny the ' being ' or ' existence ' of something, and if the very idea of ' being ' or ' existence ' is a contradictory and therefore partly false one, it follows that every proposition which affirms it contains error. Some propositions assert ' being ' directly, as when we affirm that God

<sup>1</sup> *The Logic of Hegel* (English translation), vol. i, pp. 52, 60, 98, 145, 150.

exists, or that there is a king of England. More often 'being' is asserted implicitly, as when we affirm that the earth revolves round the sun, or that a cow is eating the cabbages in the garden. Here we indirectly assert the 'being' or 'existence' of the sun, the earth, the revolving, the cow, the garden, the cabbages, and the eating. Obviously, therefore, if the very idea of 'being' contains error and contradiction, we have been guilty of at least seven errors in these two short sentences. Practically the whole controversy hinges upon whether the idea of 'being' contains error or not.

Hegel attempts to prove that the idea of 'being' contains within itself, and is practically identical with, its contradictory 'nothing'; and that accordingly, as involving a contradiction, it involves error.

"Mere *Being*," says Hegel, "as it is mere abstraction, is therefore *the absolutely negative*, which in a similar immediate aspect is just *Nothing*." "To say that the Absolute is *Being*, and that the Absolute is *Nothing* amounts to the same thing." "It is natural for us to represent *Being* as absolute riches, and *Nothing* as absolute poverty. But if, when we view the whole world, we can only say that everything *is*, and nothing more, we are neglecting all speciality, and, instead of absolute plenitude, we have absolute emptiness. The same stricture applies to those who define God to be mere *Being*, a definition not a whit better than that of the Buddhists, who make God to be *Nothing*, and who from that principle draw the further conclusion that self-annihilation is the means by which man becomes God."<sup>1</sup>

#### HEGEL'S ARGUMENT CRITICIZED

Hegel is here the victim of a very plausible fallacy, which has misled many besides him, and which in several other systems has led to serious metaphysical error.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 158 ff. and p. 163.

Hegel's fundamental mistake lies in two assumptions, both of which are false. (1) He assumes that 'being' or 'existence' is a *quality* (like colour, hardness, shape, size, position) which can be added to or subtracted from a thing, leaving it otherwise unaltered; (2) that it is so insignificant and unimportant a quality that its addition or subtraction makes practically no difference to a thing.

How profoundly erroneous both these assumptions are can best be shown by a concrete example.

When a theist and an atheist enter upon an argument, they mostly find themselves in complete agreement as to the qualities or attributes which ought to be ascribed to God. They both agree, for example, that He is one, and holy, and omniscient, and omnipotent, and eternal, and self-existent, and the Creator of all things—in short, *the Perfect Being*, and further that no being who is less than this has any right to be called God.

What they differ about is not the qualities which ought to be ascribed to God, but about *His actual existence*. The theist says that He *is*, the atheist that He *is not*, and between these positions there is a world of difference. In affirming the being of God, the theist adds no quality to Him, and the atheist in denying it, subtracts none. But the theist who says that He is, adds *existence* to Him, and the atheist who says that He is not, subtracts existence from Him; and so far from these two positions being the same, as Hegel alleges, they are as far as the poles asunder.

Another fallacy to which Hegel succumbed, and which in part contributed to his more serious mistake, is that it is possible to ascribe *bare* existence to anything. This is quite impossible. The proposition 'God is' has no meaning at all unless the word 'God' has some determinate meaning. Whatever definition is given to God—whether, the Perfect Being, or the Absolute, or the First Cause, or Our Father in heaven, or any other—*every character or attribute which is implied by the definition*

*is ascribed to God when it is affirmed that He is.* This illegitimate attempt to attribute bare being to things, which results in nothing being affirmed at all, probably suggested to Hegel in the first instance the fatal blunder of confusing Being with Nothing—a fallacy which vitiates his logic from the very beginning.

#### OTHER ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

It is not logically necessary to pursue the subject further. The validity of every subsequent step in Hegel's *Logic* depends entirely upon the validity of the first; and if that involves a fallacy (as we have shown that it does) the whole system is shattered. Besides, the subsequent contradictions in ordinary ideas alleged by Hegel only affect the truth of particular classes of beliefs, not of all indiscriminately.

It is otherwise with the first, the contradiction alleged in 'being.' 'Being' is affirmed or denied in practically every proposition that can be framed,<sup>1</sup> and certainly in every belief; and consequently if the conception of 'being' is self-contradictory, every human belief, religious and secular, contains error, and is subject to correction, alteration, and 'restatement' in the Modernist sense.

But though not logically necessary, it is desirable, in order to weaken still further the prestige of a system which is still influential in England, to examine certain others of the alleged contradictions upon which Hegel lays the greatest stress.

The first of these is the notion of 'becoming.' "Everyone," says Hegel, "has a mental idea of *becoming*, and will even allow that it is one idea; he will further allow that, when it is analysed, it involves the attribute of *being*, and also what is the very reverse of *being*, viz. *nothing*, and that these two attributes lie undivided in

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps not in such a proposition as 'a dragon is a fire-breathing serpent,' but even here the existence of a legendary world to which dragons belong seems to be affirmed.

the one idea, so that *becoming* is the unity of *being* and *nothing*." He goes on to speak of the "inherent unrest" involved in the idea of *becoming*, which on account of the contradictory elements which it contains is "at war with itself."<sup>1</sup>

The reply is obvious. 'Becoming' is *the transition* from nothing to something, not the contradictory coexistence of nothing with something. Transition involves no contradiction. When a thing that was not, comes to be (i.e. 'becomes'), it is not non-existent and existent at the same time. *First* it is not, and then it is, which is not a contradiction. Similarly, when an heir to the crown 'becomes' king at his father's death, no contradiction arises. He is not king and not king at the same time. First he is not king, then he is king.<sup>2</sup>

Of course Hegel endorses Zeno's contention that motion involves a contradiction—the contradiction of a thing being in more than one place. But motion does not involve a thing being in more than one place at the same time. A moving body is at different places at *different* times.<sup>3</sup>

Hegel argues, somewhat in the manner of Parmenides, that the idea of unity is contradictory, because it involves the idea of plurality, and the idea of plurality contradictory because it involves the idea of unity. "In the thought of the *One* it is implied that it explicitly makes itself *Many*. Hereby the One manifests an utter incompatibility with itself, a self-repulsion, and what it makes itself explicitly to be is the Many. . . . Each of

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 165 ff.

<sup>2</sup> I can by no means agree with Mr. McTaggart, good authority as he is, that Hegel's *becoming* does not involve the idea of change. Hegel's reference to Heraclitus's flux (*πάντα ῥεῖ*) in this connexion, and his assertion that *beginning* (i.e. a change from non-existence to existence) is a species of *becoming*, prove that he did believe change to be involved.

<sup>3</sup> Zeno concludes that belief in motion is *wholly* erroneous, Hegel that it is only *partially* erroneous.

the Many, however, is itself a One, and in virtue of its so behaving, this all-round repulsion is by one stroke converted into its opposite attraction."<sup>1</sup>

The reply is that though most wholes (or *ones*) consist of parts, and are therefore both one and many, they are not one and many *in the same respect*. Thus an army is *one* as being a single organization directed towards a single end, but it is *many* considered as consisting of many regiments or many individual soldiers. Similarly the earth is *one* regarded as a planet, and *many* regarded as an aggregate of material atoms. But no contradiction is involved, because the aspects under which it is one and many are different.

Hegel's contention that *Attraction* implies its contrary *Repulsion*, with which also it is identical,<sup>2</sup> is even less plausible, and we need not delay over it.

Finally, Hegel, like Kant, insists upon the supposed contradictions involved in our ideas of time, space, and number, and endorses (though with considerable variations and reserves) the Kantian 'antinomies,' a subject which we need not pursue further here, as we have already devoted considerable space to it.

#### EFFECT UPON THE CATHOLIC CREEDS

Upon the whole, Hegel has failed to establish his contention that ordinary 'finite' ideas and beliefs involve contradictions and therefore error. Hegel's theories are more systematic and far-reaching than those of Zeno, but they are in principle the same; and the arguments which are generally held to be conclusive against Zeno, avail also, with slight modifications, against the Logic of Hegel. In spite of his many ingenious arguments to prove the contrary, common-sense and ordinary philosophy are absolutely right in maintaining that even 'finite' being is 'something solely positive,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 181.

quietly abiding within its own limits'; that it never negates or denies itself by being at the same time anything 'other than itself,' and that above all the metaphysical conjuring trick by which it is supposed to 'turn suddenly into its opposite' is a fiction.

The Hegelian case against *the Immutability of Finite Truth* accordingly breaks down, and with it one of the most plausible of the Modernist arguments against the immutability of the Catholic Creeds. If finite as well as infinite truth is *immutable in its own nature*, it follows that these Creeds, if true originally, are true now, and true for evermore. They may be *supplemented* by the advance of knowledge, but they can never be *altered* or shown to involve error.

#### MR. MCTAGGART'S VIEWS

I am glad to be able to quote, in support of the general position here taken up, the considered judgment of the well-known Hegelian, Mr. McTaggart. Mr. McTaggart has hitherto shown himself one of the most faithful and consistent of the English followers of Hegel, and his notable works, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* (1896), *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology* (1901), and above all his *Commentary on Hegel's Logic* (1910), are indispensable to every serious student of the Hegelian system.

In his latest work, however (*The Nature of Existence*, vol. i, 1921), he abandons practically every principle of the Hegelian Logic except 'degrees of truth.' He gives up the triadic system, and entirely denies both 'degrees of reality,' and its twin doctrine, the erroneousness of 'finite' truth. He even doubts whether he ought still to call himself an Hegelian. "Reality," he says, "is not a quality which admits of degrees. A thing cannot be more or less real than another which is also real." With regard to the Hegelian doctrine of the falsity of finite truth, he says: "According to the general principles of

Hegel's system, we can be certain, with regard to any category in the system except the Absolute Idea, that the assertion of its validity, though not completely false, *is not completely true*. . . . In this point we shall depart from what was Hegel's principle, and also his usual practice. Each characteristic demonstrated in the course of our process will remain at the end of the process. None of them, of course, will be the whole truth, but that will not prevent all of them from being *quite true*. . . . If we take all these differences together, it must be pronounced, I think, that our method is not characteristically Hegelian. . . . On the other hand, it will stand much closer to Hegel's method than to that of any other philosopher" (pp. 4, 5, 45, 46).

#### PROFESSOR JOACHIM'S VIEWS

I also note with satisfaction that a considerable amount of hesitation marks Professor Joachim's defence of the Hegelian theory of truth in his interesting and candid essay, *The Nature of Truth* (1906). This book contains much acute criticism of other theories, but it ends with what can only be called a confession of failure. "The coherence-notion of truth," he says, "may thus be said to suffer shipwreck at the very entrance of the harbour. It has carried us safely over the dangers and difficulties to which the other two notions succumbed; but the voyage ends in disaster, a disaster which is inevitable. . . . I am ending with a confession of ignorance; but at least I have cleared my mind of much sham knowledge."

Professor Joachim's book has the merit of bringing out clearly one point, which Hegel slurs over, that if the Hegelian view that all 'finite' truth involves error is correct, it follows that even such obvious arithmetical truths as  $2 + 2 = 4$  are *not quite true*. In the infancy of arithmetic they fell considerably short of being true. The advance of mathematics has rendered them truer—

indeed, we may perhaps venture to hope that they are now *nearly* true. In the future they will become truer still. Never, however, as long as knowledge remains finite, will they become *quite* true. This follows necessarily from the fundamental principles of Hegelianism.

To most readers of Mr. Joachim's essay this admission will seem a complete *reductio ad absurdum* of his whole theory of truth; but even if his theory is allowed to stand, perhaps the consequences of its being correct may not be quite so fatal to the permanence of the Catholic Creeds as Modernists usually imagine. For if the adoption of the Hegelian view of truth does not oblige us to believe that the truth of the Nicene Creed has varied more in the time since it was drawn up than the truth of the proposition  $2 + 2 = 4$ , there does not seem much cause for alarm that the amount of its variation during the next few million years will be great enough to be perceptible.

### THE ARISTOTELIAN LOGIC

The correctness of the formulation of Christian doctrine in the Catholic Creeds depends, not only upon the Christian facts and Christian experience, but also upon the correctness of the Aristotelian logic. Catholic theology consists of a system of intellectual propositions deduced from the Christian facts and from Christian experience, *according to the principles of the Aristotelian logic, which are those of common-sense*. It follows that the Catholic dogmas can only be strictly true if the leading principles of the Aristotelian logic are strictly true.

It is obvious, accordingly, that if our discussion is to be complete, we must supplement our disproof of the Hegelian logic by a proof of the truth of the Aristotelian; for it is possible (in the abstract, at least) that *both of them might be false*. In the concrete, however, this will hardly be found to be necessary. *It is absolutely impossible to dispense with logic*, and considering that the

logic of Hegel is the only serious competitor to that of Aristotle, the disproof of the former amounts in practice to a proof of the latter. Those who desire to pursue the subject further will find a sufficient vindication of the Aristotelian system (with some modern improvements) and a criticism of the Neo-Hegelian views on logic of Mr. Bradley and Dr. Bosanquet<sup>1</sup> in Mr. H. W. B. Joseph's useful *Introduction to Logic* (1906, second edition, revised, 1916).

The Pragmatist attack on the Aristotelian logic in such works as Mr. F. C. S. Schiller's *Formal Logic* (1912) cannot be taken very seriously. It will be discussed incidentally in the next chapter.

<sup>1</sup> See F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic* (1883); B. Bosanquet, *Logic, the Morphology of Knowledge* (1888, second edition, 1911), and other works by these authors.

## CHAPTER V

### PRAGMATIST VIEWS OF TRUTH

ONE of the most popular philosophies at the present time with Modernists, especially those of the French and Italian schools, is Pragmatism.

In most respects Pragmatism is in complete contrast and indeed conflict with Hegelianism and all forms of Absolute Idealism, nevertheless in the end (though by an entirely different route) it comes to the same practical conclusion with regard to 'finite' or 'human' truth, viz. that it is variable, provisional, symbolic, always partly false, and, though capable of improvement, never capable of becoming absolutely true. According to Pragmatism, truth is not imposed on the human mind by the nature of external things with which it 'corresponds,' but is manufactured by the activity of the human mind itself, to satisfy its own subjective desires and needs.

As laying stress upon the *will*, and the *practical* rather than the theoretical activities of human nature, Pragmatism may be appropriately described as *Activism*, though this name is generally applied only to the French and German movements, which slightly antedated the rise of American and English Pragmatism.

Bergsonism is also a form of Pragmatism, though it has original features which make it desirable to place it in a class by itself. The same may be said of the Italian movement of Croce, which has greatly influenced Italian Modernism. Croce is a thorough-going Pragmatist, though not all Pragmatists would accept the peculiar system of non-metaphysical idealism which he advocates.

Pragmatists reject the theory of universal necessity, both in its application to the physical universe and to the human will. The founder of American Pragmatism goes so far in his opposition to necessity as to call himself a 'Tychist.' They accept 'contingency' as a world-principle, and emphasize the freedom and 'autonomy' of the will. Most Pragmatists would accept the general metaphysical standpoint of M. Boutroux, as expounded in his influential book *La Contingence des Lois de la Nature* (1874), which has passed through many editions. The 'Radical Contingency' of M. Boutroux denies that even the laws of nature are 'necessary,' or (strictly speaking) uniform and permanent.

#### RELATION TO KANT

Pragmatism is a development of Kantianism, but rather of the Critiques of *The Practical Reason* and of *Judgment* than of that of *Pure Reason*.

It accepts, however, and strongly emphasizes the principle of *Immanence*, either in its original form that external things ('things-in-themselves') exist but are unknowable, or in its later form that they do not exist.

It agrees with *The Critique of the Practical Reason* in making truth a postulate of the practical rather than of the theoretical reason. It regards all human beliefs (including religious beliefs) as suggested entirely by men's practical needs, and as finding their sole justification in the fact that they succeed in satisfying them.

A true theory, according to Pragmatism, is not one which corresponds with the real nature of external things (which either do not exist or are unknowable), but one which *works well in practice*. Similarly, a false theory is not one which misrepresents external things, but one which *works badly in practice*. Truth is reduced to Utility, and no proposition is regarded as true which has not its 'cash-value' in terms of the useful.

## PRAGMATIC TRUTH

The founder of the Anglo-Saxon movement, Mr. C. S. Peirce, the American, first expounded the Pragmatist 'method' (he did not call it doctrine) in *The Popular Science Monthly* for January 1878. His article was next year translated into French in the January number of the *Revue Philosophique*, with the result that French philosophers became aware for the first time that a movement similar to their own 'new' philosophy of Radical Contingency had arisen in America.

Mr. Peirce did not share the strong hostility to logic which soon developed itself among his followers. Indeed, some years later he referred to their position as "characterized by an angry hatred of strict logic, and even some disposition to rate any exact thought . . . as all humbug."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that already in his earliest article he clearly defined three of the most characteristic principles of Pragmatism, viz. (1) that human beliefs are merely rules for practical action; (2) that two beliefs are not really distinct unless they lead to different practical action; (3) that all we can know of any object is its practical action upon us, especially in response to our practical action upon it.

Pragmatism was popularized in America by Professor Wm. James and Professor J. Dewey; in England by Mr. F. C. S. Schiller, who already in the first edition of his *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1891) had shown certain Pragmatist tendencies; in France (where the movement had an independent origin) by Blondel, Milhaud, Le Roy, Poincaré, and Bergson; and in Italy by Croce and Papini. In Germany cognate views are represented by Ostwald, Simmel, Mach, and Avenarius.

According to James, "'The true' . . . is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as 'the right' is only the expedient in the way of our behaving. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, October 1908.

Our account of truth is an account of truths in the plural, realized *in rebus*, and having only this quality in common, that they *pay*. . . . Truth is *made*, just as health, wealth, and strength are made, in the course of experience. . . . The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, it is *made* true by events. Its verity *is* in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its *verification*." "Pragmatism is not interested in 'absolute' or metaphysical truth. It asks, 'What is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?' and answers that this cash-value is some practical human advantage which the true belief secures, but the false belief fails to secure. To put the whole matter in a nutshell, the 'true' is just the useful, and a true belief is one upon which it is advantageous to act, at any rate 'upon the whole' and 'in the long run'" (*Pragmatism*, pp. 222, 218, 200, etc.).

Although all Pragmatists are agreed as to the phenomenal, relative, symbolical, and merely practical nature of truth, they are not agreed as to whether 'things' or 'objects' external to the mind really exist. Italian Pragmatists mostly deny it. Croce, for example, says: "In the ordinary view, the existence of the object becomes a *datum*, something as it were placed before the mind, something given to the mind, extraneous to it, and which the mind would never make its own did it not, summoning force and courage, swallow the bitter morsel by an irrational act of faith. And yet all philosophy, as we go on unfolding it, shows that *there is nothing outside mind, and that there are no data confronting it*. The very conceptions we form of this something, which is external, mechanical, natural, show themselves to be not conceptions of data which already are external, but *data furnished by the mind itself*. Mind fashions this so-called external something because it enjoys fashioning it, and escapes by reannulling it when it has no more joy in

it." <sup>1</sup> Consistently with this standpoint, Croce denies the existence of matter, of God, and of all transcendental things. Philosophy is to him a mere 'methodology,' and metaphysics an impossibility.

The majority of English and French Pragmatists, however, seem to believe that external things exist, though in their opinion practically nothing can be known about them.

#### SCHILLER'S THEORY OF 'HYLE'

So far as I am aware, Mr. Schiller is the only Pragmatist who has attempted to give a definite theory of the 'thing-in-itself,' which he assumes to exist objectively. He first outlined his views in *Riddles of the Sphinx*, but a more precise and detailed statement will be found in his essay 'Axioms as Postulates' in *Personal Idealism* (1902). There he propounds a theory of a primitive, vague, formless, plastic substratum, or 'hyle,' which all through human history the mind of man has been laboriously moulding and shaping to suit its own desires and needs, and so has generated 'truth.' The only two definite qualities which this 'hyle' seems to have are 'plasticity' and some slight degree of 'resistance' to the mind that attempts to mould it.

"The truest account," says Mr. Schiller, "it would seem possible to give of this resisting factor in our experience is to revive, for the purpose of its description, the old Aristotelian conception of 'Matter' as ὕλη δεκτικὴ τοῦ εἶδους, as potentiality [of receiving] whatever form we succeed in imposing on it. It may be regarded as the raw material of the cosmos (never indeed wholly raw and unworked upon) out of which can be hewn the forms of life in which our spirit can take satisfaction. . . . The world then is essentially ὕλη [i.e. pure indeterminateness]: it is what we make of it. It is fruitless to define it by what it originally was, or by what it is apart from

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by H. Wildon Carr, in *The Philosophy of Croce*, pp. 12 ff.

us (ἡ ὕλη ἀγνωστος καθ' αὐτήν): it is what is made of it. Hence my . . . most important point is that the world is *plastic*, and may be moulded by our wishes, if only we are determined to give effect to them, and not too conceited to learn from experience, i.e. by trying *by what means* we may do so. . . . It is a *methodological necessity* to assume that the world is *wholly plastic*, i.e. to *act as though* we believed this, and will yield us what we want if we persevere in wanting it" (pp. 60, 61).

### PRAGMATISM AND REASON

Pragmatism carries to extreme lengths the 'Alogism,' or revolt against the authority of reason and logic, which characterizes a considerable section of contemporary philosophy. Bergson, in particular, ranks reason lower than perhaps any other philosopher, subordinating it to what he calls 'intuition,' a faculty more akin to direct mystical apprehension or spiritual sympathy than to intellect in the logical sense. In his system, Reason or Intelligence is entirely dethroned from its ancient supremacy, and degraded to the position of a mere practical aptitude which the human mind has evolved for the purpose of dealing mainly with *matter*.

The following brief quotations from his *Creative Evolution* will give a sufficient idea, for our present purpose, of his point of view. "Our intelligence, as it leaves the hands of nature, has for its chief object the unorganized solid." "Of the discontinuous alone does the intellect form a clear idea." "Of immobility alone does the intellect form a clear idea." "The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life." "Our intellect . . . is intended to think matter." "Our thought in its purely logical form is incapable of presenting the true nature of life." "Intelligence, in what seems to be its original feature, is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, especially tools to make tools, and of

indefinitely varying their manufacture." "The human intellect feels at home among inanimate objects, more especially solids; . . . our concepts have been formed on the model of solids, and our logic is, pre-eminently, the logic of solids, and consequently our intellect triumphs in geometry."

He draws an absolute line of demarcation between 'intelligence' and 'intuition,' regarding them as different in kind. With regard to the relation between human 'intuition' and animal 'instinct,' he says: "By intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object, and of enlarging it indefinitely." The nature of 'Intuition' is most fully expounded in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*.

#### PRAGMATISM AND EXPERIENCE

Pragmatism rejects the authority both of the Logic of Aristotle and of that of Hegel, and considers that it is impossible to attain to truth by the use of intellectual or logical arguments.

It bases all truth upon *experience*—experience as 'pure' (i.e. as little contaminated by intellectual processes) as possible.

Schiller not only attempts (like John Mill and many others before him) to derive the axioms of mathematics from experience, but even assigns to the laws of thought the same origin, considering them mere practical devices framed by the mind to suit its convenience. To all but Pragmatists, the Law of Contradiction is a law of things as well as of thought. For example, we cannot think of a round table as being also square, mainly because it seems to us *objectively impossible* for a round table to be also square. But, according to Schiller, this Law has no objective validity. It only expresses the subjective demand of the human mind "that it shall be possible to make distinctions sharp, and disjunctions complete,

in order that we may thereby tame the continuous flux of experience."<sup>1</sup>

### CRITICISM OF PRAGMATISM

Since the death of William James, Pragmatism has so greatly declined in prestige (at least in the English-speaking world) that it would hardly now be necessary to criticize it at any length, were it not for the powerful influence which it still exerts upon Modernism, English as well as foreign. Probably the following discussion (after what has been said about Immanence in the previous chapter) will suffice.

#### I

As accepting the Kantian doctrine of Immanentism, or the Relativity of Knowledge, Pragmatism stands or falls with Kantianism, the leading features of which have already been discussed. Every principal paradox involved in Kantianism is also involved in Pragmatism, including the crowning absurdity of Solipsism, or the doctrine of the Non-existence of Other Persons.

That this doctrine is involved in the Pragmatism of Croce is obvious, for if he is right in affirming that external 'things' do not exist, it is obvious that other persons (who are objective things) do not exist, and that I myself am the only being in the universe.

Exactly the same consequence follows from the Pragmatism of James, Dewey, and Le Roy, who hold, with Kant, that external 'things' do indeed exist, but are unknowable. It is obvious that if they are unknowable, none of them can be known to be minds or persons.

It might seem that Schiller escapes this inconvenient conclusion by means of his theory that external things are not quite (though nearly) unknowable. If, on his principles, he could only succeed in establishing the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

objective existence of other human *bodies*, it would seem that he might also succeed in establishing the existence of other human *minds*, because it is generally recognized the existence of other minds can be legitimately inferred from the existence of other bodies.

But the 'hyle' or formless 'something,' which, according to Schiller, is the only external reality which exists, is so exceedingly indeterminate, and so completely shaped by the human mind to suit its own subjective needs, that it is impossible to be sure whether the things which we regard as other bodies are really such, or whether they are merely the subjective forms into which the 'hyle' has been moulded by our desires. The complete 'plasticity' of the 'hyle' prevents us from attributing to it in its own nature any such form or shape as that of a human body. It is impossible, therefore, to prove the objective existence of other human bodies; and therefore we can have no assurance of the actual existence of other human minds.

It ought also to be pointed out that to prove the existence of other minds from the existence of other bodies is only possible *by the use of logic*. It involves the whole principle of *argument from analogy*, which is the root principle of the logic of Aristotle. The validity of logic, however (especially of Aristotelian logic), is denied by all Pragmatists. Consequently, even if they could know by direct 'experience' the existence of other human bodies, they could not possibly (without the aid of the logic which they despise) deduce therefrom the existence of other human minds.

## II

Pragmatists derive all knowledge from immediate or 'pure' experience, uninfluenced by (or, as they would say, undistorted by) reason and logic.

In the case of man, however (and probably even in the

case of the higher animals), no such thing as 'pure' experience exists. Even if it could exist, it would be nothing but an amorphous *continuum* of sensation, feeling, and impulse, entirely vague and undifferentiated, and therefore conveying *no knowledge*.

Knowledge in all its stages of growth is *intellectual*, not sensational, emotional, or impulsive. It begins with the *discrimination* of one thing from another in the *continuum* presented by 'experience.' It then studies and *apprehends* the nature of the things thus distinguished, frames *propositions* concerning them, and in many cases proceeds to draw *inferences* from them. All these processes are intellectual or rational.

All human cognition, of whatever kind, is an activity of *reason*. Even if I cognize something in the vaguest possible way as a mere 'thing,' even this involves the purely intellectual concept of a 'thing,' and probably also of an 'objective' thing, which again implies an intellectual distinction between 'subject' and 'object.' Usually the intellectual process of cognition (even in simple cases) is much more elaborate than this. If, for instance, as I walk, I start a rabbit, I instantly cognize it, not merely as a 'thing' but also as an animal, and in particular a rabbit; and accordingly assign to it all the qualities which essentially belong to a rabbit as well as to an 'animal' and a 'thing.'

In a similar way, there can be no human knowledge even of inward experiences (such as pain, hope, depression, desire, awe, wonder, and religious feeling) without intellectual discrimination, apprehension, and judgment.

'Truth' resides not in mere ideas, but only in 'judgments' or 'propositions.' Thus 'man' is an intellectual idea or 'concept,' and so also is 'mortal,' but no 'truth' resides in either of these ideas separately considered. If, however, we combine them in a *proposition*, such as 'man is mortal,' then there is truth or error—truth if

the proposition truly expresses objective fact (as in this particular case it does), and error if it does not.

It thus involves an *impossibility* to suppose (as Pragmatists do) that 'truth' is derived from or consists of mere experience uninfluenced by intellect. In all cases (if there is to be 'truth') 'experience' requires to be interpreted by reason and expressed in a rational judgment or proposition.

It should also be noticed that nearly all judgments are the results of a process of *logical inference*. For example, the proposition 'man is mortal' is obviously not derived from mere experience (for clearly neither I nor anyone else has experienced the deaths of all actual and possible men), but from *logical reasoning from experience*, with the help of such general principles (also not derived from experience) as the Laws of Universal Causation and of the Uniformity of Nature.

### III

Mr. Schiller's attempt to derive the principles of mathematics and the laws of thought from 'experience' is a complete failure for this plain reason, that *experience can never yield either absolute universality or necessity*.

Experience can never yield *universality*, because there can never be experience of *all possible things*; e.g. there can never be experience of any future things whatever. Nor can experience ever yield *necessity*, or *necessary connexion*. For example, from the dawn of human experience the physical universe has always existed, yet no one imagines that it exists *necessarily*; and from the same ancient date night has invariably followed day, yet no one regards this sequence as *necessary*. It is quite possible in spite of all this experience to imagine (and even to believe) that the universe might be annihilated, and that instead of the sequence of night and day there might be perpetual day or perpetual night.

All mathematical and logical principles are both *universal* and *necessary* principles, and therefore not derived from experience. It might be thought, perhaps, that such simple mathematical truths as  $2 + 2 = 4$  are derived from experience. But although I can prove the truth of this by experience (i.e. by counting) in a few particular cases, I cannot possibly thus prove it in all possible cases. But the statement that  $2 + 2 = 4$  means that it is true, not only within the limits of my or anyone's experience, but that it is true *universally and necessarily* at all times, at all places, and even in all possible universes. That we know this is undeniable. It is equally undeniable that we do not know it by experience.

With regard to logical principles, we may take the Law of Contradiction as an example. This law affirms that it is impossible for any really existent thing to contain within itself any contradiction. For example, it is impossible for a red rose to be also white, or for a living man to be also dead.

Experience teaches us that in a certain limited number of cases this law holds good, nor are any exceptions to it furnished by experience. Experience, however, can never inform us that this law holds *universally and necessarily*, and yet we know for certain that it does. It follows that the Law of Contradiction, *regarded as a universal and necessary law*, is not derived from experience. It might be thought that it is derived from *reasoning from experience*; but even this is impossible, because it is one of the necessary presuppositions of all reasoning. It follows that it is a truth apprehended by direct intuition.

#### IV

The basing of all human knowledge upon experience reduces it practically to a vanishing point, as we have already shown at length in our criticism of Kant.

## V

Pragmatism reduces all truth to utility, rejecting with contempt the common-sense notion that it consists in correspondence between belief and objective fact.

Most readers will probably regard it as amounting to a refutation of this principle if we merely state, without comment, the exact form which some of the most familiar and important of human beliefs assume when interpreted 'in terms of utility.'

On the principle that truth means utility and nothing else, our beliefs in the existence of matter, of other human persons, of God, of the moral law, and of moral obligation, take the following forms :

- (1) It is useful to believe that matter exists ;
- (2) It is useful to believe that other persons exist ;
- (3) It is useful to believe that God exists ;
- (4) It is useful to believe that the moral law exists ;
- (5) It is useful to believe that this law binds men with a moral obligation.

As most Pragmatists consider that other persons than themselves do objectively exist, and not merely that it is useful to believe that they do, they are involved in a contradiction which makes shipwreck of their whole theory of truth.

## VI

Not merely do the Pragmatists fail to prove that utility is *identical* with truth, they fail even to prove that the two are coextensive. And this they are absolutely bound to do, because *unless the two are coextensive in every case whatsoever*, they cannot possibly be identical.

It hardly requires to be stated that there are many notorious cases in which the truth (if it is very bad) would produce, were it known, great unhappiness, and is therefore wisely withheld (when this is possible) from the persons chiefly concerned. There are also other

cases in which an entirely false belief of a comforting kind produces happiness, even permanent happiness. Many a fond mother lives happy and dies rejoicing because she firmly believes in the honour of her son, who is really a scoundrel and a hypocrite. Such cases show clearly that truth and utility are not always identical.

Pragmatists do indeed maintain that in the majority of cases, and 'upon the whole,' and especially with regard to beliefs about the universe, truth and utility coincide. But, so far as the universe is concerned, whether this is true or not, *obviously depends upon what the character of the universe really is*. If the universe is very good, as it must be if it is created and ruled by a perfectly wise and good and omnipotent Ruler, then (at any rate for the good man) the knowledge of the truth about the universe must produce happiness, and thus coincide with utility.

On the other hand, if the universe is very bad, as it must be if it is a mindless machine, without purpose of any kind, and therefore unable to make any distinction between the bad man and the good man; or if (worse even than this) it has mind and purpose, but a mind and purpose which are *evil*, then the knowledge of its true nature, so far from producing happiness, must necessarily produce misery so intense, that the philosopher who had the penetration to discover it, would be well advised to keep his knowledge to himself. Mr. Bertrand Russell holds such a view of the universe as this, and so far from believing that such knowledge is useful or tends to happiness, expresses himself as follows: "Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day . . . proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for

a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned, despite the trampling march of unconscious power.”<sup>1</sup>

The Pragmatist may perhaps reply that to suppose such a complete divorce between truth and utility is to suppose that *the universe is irrational*, which no doubt is the case. But the Pragmatist of all men has the least cause to complain of this, because he is always insisting, in season and out of season, that the philosophy of Rationality is played out, that the universe is fundamentally irrational, that the laws of reason are not objectively valid, and that logical argument does not conduct to truth. Our Pragmatist friends, who are continually contributing articles to *The Hibbert Journal* and other Liberal periodicals on such subjects as ‘Our Irrational Universe,’ can hardly expect to escape criticism if they play fast and loose with what they profess to believe, and are willing to exchange their fundamental assumption of Irrationality for its opposite, Rationality, whenever it leads them into difficulties.

It is a notorious fact that there are *exceptions* to the rule that truth coincides with utility; and if there are any exceptions at all—even if there is only one—the identity of truth and utility cannot be maintained.

## VII

The subject is almost threadbare, and has been already alluded to in the criticism of Kant, but it is impossible to pass over entirely in silence the naïvety with which every Modernist (including every Bergsonian) book reproduces Kant’s transparent sophism of criticizing the instrument of knowledge—viz. reason—by means of itself.

Bergson in particular, in spite of his expressed hostility to logic, shows himself in all his works a keen logician,

<sup>1</sup> “A Free Man’s Worship,” in *Mysticism and Logic* (1918), pp. 56, 57.

and argues with great subtlety, employing every kind of argument known to the traditional logic—syllogism, induction, and the argument from analogy—in his attempts to establish his position that logic is not a guide to truth. He forgets that before he can thus use logic against itself, he must assume that it is trustworthy.

Bergson puts his faith in 'intuition,' not in logic, and therefore he is bound in consistency to seek truth by means of 'intuition,' and not by means of logic. His principles entitle him to state his views clearly, and then to call upon his readers to exercise their 'intuition'—i.e. their immediate non-logical apprehension—upon them. They clearly do not entitle him to argue. To argue is to use logic, and to use logic is to be false to the principle of Irrationality.

### VIII

A word may be added upon the unnatural severance—resembling a surgical amputation—which Bergson insists upon making between 'intuition' (or instinct) and 'intelligence' (or reason). It seems to him that motion and rest, living things and non-living things, differ so fundamentally from one another that *they cannot be known by the same faculties*. Accordingly he divides the cognitive function of the human soul into two absolutely distinct faculties, differing even in kind from one another—viz. 'intuition' which knows the moving and the living, and 'intelligence' (a far lower faculty) which knows the stationary and the non-living.

It ought not to need to be pointed out, that the cognitive faculty in man is one and indivisible, that the traditional name for it is reason, and that it is a power of knowing (in principle at least) all things whatsoever, including itself and God. To suppose that when the objects of knowledge differ in kind, a different faculty is required to know them (which is Bergson's assumption),

is to multiply faculties almost indefinitely, and to destroy the unity of the principle of cognition.

'Intuition,' or immediate apprehension of truth, is as clearly an operation of reason as discursive argument. The faculty which apprehends the truth of the axioms of geometry and arithmetic by immediate intuition, and that which deduces from them (let us say) the theorem of Pythagoras, and the rule for extracting cube roots, is obviously the same, viz. reason. And it is the same faculty, viz. reason, which apprehends intuitively the existence of the soul, and proves by logical arguments its (at least probable) immortality.

As for the Bergsonian paradox—for it is no more—that the godlike endowment of Reason, which elevates man above the brute creation by enabling him to know, not merely the things of sense, but himself as a spiritual substance, and the eternal moral law, and God, is a mere utilitarian faculty for making tools and dealing practically with solids, it may be safely left to the judgment of the reader.

## IX

Finally, the assumption of Pragmatism that truth is identical with utility is shattered upon the undeniable psychological fact of *the disinterested love of truth*, which all men have in some measure, and scientists and philosophers in unusual measure. Mr. Schiller speaks of it as "a perversion of the cognitive instinct," but not even he ventures to deny its existence.

So far from this disinterested love of truth being a negligible quantity, it is the principal source of all science and of all philosophy. It awakes quite early in childhood in the form of *curiosity*, which is an objective interest in 'things,' not a subjective interest in one's own feelings or personal advantage. At adolescence, curiosity passes into a definite desire for historical and scientific knowledge,

and books on subjects of small practical utility, such as astronomy and palæontology, are often devoured by young men and women merely because they are interested in knowledge as such. At the same period also an interest in metaphysics often awakes in those who have a philosophical bent.

The object of natural science is not to provide men with railways, steamships, and other useful things, but *to know the physical universe theoretically.*

The object of mental science (psychology) is not to improve our imperfect systems of education or to cure mental disorders, but *to know the nature of the human mind as it really is.*

As to metaphysics, it may fairly be doubted whether Comte is right in regarding it as the most useless, or Mr. McTaggart as the most useful, of the sciences; but whichever of them is right, one thing is perfectly evident, that *metaphysics is not usually cultivated for its usefulness.*

Common-sense and science and philosophy are thus agreed that *the love of truth for its own sake without ulterior ends* is one of the strongest and most ennobling impulses of man regarded as rational; and Pragmatism, which belittles it or regards it as a disease, thereby shows itself not so much philosophy as banausic Philistinism.

## CHAPTER VI

### M. LE ROY'S VIEW OF DOGMA

It will be profitable to conclude our discussion of Pragmatism by criticizing in some detail what is perhaps the ablest, and is certainly the most lucid, exposition of Pragmatic Modernism yet published, the *Dogme et Critique* of M. Edouard Le Roy (Paris, 1907).

The author is an eminent mathematician and philosopher, a friend and adherent of M. Loisy, and a practising Catholic. His book, we may add, has been condemned at Rome, which is hardly to be wondered at, seeing that it reduces all the dogmas of Christianity to mere rules of behaviour or conduct, and denies that they have any intellectual meaning. I understand that M. Le Roy, having regard to the peace of the Church, has ceased to advocate the views expressed in his book.

The first part of *Dogme et Critique*, entitled 'Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme?' appeared originally as an article in the *Quinzaine* of April 16, 1905. The remainder consists of further elucidations of his position, and replies to criticisms.

### DOGMA AND PRACTICE

Le Roy's main point is that a religious dogma is not addressed to the reason or intellect, and has no positive intellectual content. It may be said to have a *negative* meaning, because its object is to warn the faithful against certain erroneous and imperfect views of religious truth (e.g. atheism, gnosticism, pantheism), but it teaches the intellect nothing positive either about God or the things of God. Its meaning and aim are entirely practical. It

instructs men *what practical attitude* they ought to adopt towards divine things, but by no means dictates to them what they should believe about them. Provided that Christians assume the correct practical and devotional attitude towards God and our Lord Jesus Christ and divine things, they are free to invent any intellectual theories they please to justify their action. "A dogma," says M. Le Roy, "has above all a *practical* meaning. It states above all a prescription of a practical kind. It is above all the formulation of a rule of practical conduct. Therein lies its principal value, therein its positive significance. . . . A Catholic is obliged to assent without reserve to the dogmas. But what is imposed upon him is by no means a theory or intellectual representation. Such a constraint would inevitably lead to unacceptable consequences.<sup>1</sup> . . . No, the dogmas are not at all like that. This meaning, as we have seen, is, above all, practical and moral. The Catholic, though obliged to admit them, is only constrained by them to rules of conduct, not to particular conceptions. Nor is he condemned to accept them as mere verbal formulas without meaning. On the contrary, they offer him a meaning very definite and positive—one entirely intelligible and comprehensible. I add that this content, having to do solely with the practical, is not relative to the varying degrees of knowledge and intelligence of different men. It remains exactly the same for the scholar and the ignorant man, for the clever and the unskilful, for the ages of advanced civilization and for races still barbarous. In short, it is independent of the successive stages through which human thought passes in its struggles towards knowledge, and thus there is *only one faith for everybody*.

"This being granted, the Catholic, having accepted the dogma, retains full liberty to make such a theory or intellectual representation of the corresponding reality

<sup>1</sup> He means that they could not be accepted by modern thinkers owing to their miraculous character.

(e.g. the Divine Personality, the Real Presence, and the Resurrection of Jesus) as pleases him. It is open to him to accord preference to the theory that satisfies him best, to the intellectual representation which he judges to be the best. His situation in this respect is the same as his attitude towards any scientific or philosophical theory. He can adopt the same intellectual attitude in both cases. Only one obligation is imposed upon him: his theory must justify the practical rules enunciated by the dogma. . . . As long as his theory respects the practical significance of the dogma, it is given *carte blanche*" (pp. 21, 31, 32, 33).

#### INTERPRETATION OF PARTICULAR DOGMAS

Applying this pragmatic principle to particular dogmas, M. Le Roy maintains that the dogma that God is personal means only that we should behave towards Him *as if* He were personal<sup>1</sup>; that the dogma that Jesus is God merely means that we should behave towards Him *as if* He were God<sup>2</sup>; that the dogma of His two natures only means that we should behave towards Him on appropriate occasions both *as if* He were God and *as if* He were man<sup>3</sup>; that the dogma of the Resurrection of Jesus means that we should behave towards Him *as if* He had risen<sup>4</sup>; that the dogma of the Real Presence merely

<sup>1</sup> "The dogma 'God is personal' means, 'Conduct yourself in your relations with God as in your relations with a human person'" (p. 25).

<sup>2</sup> "The divinity of Jesus is always defined only in terms of our attitude towards Him." "The dogma of Christ's deity [in the Apostolic Age] was a belief purely lived, purely practical" (p. 264).

<sup>3</sup> "To affirm that in Jesus Christ there are two natures, the human and the divine, is to affirm that we ought to have in relation to Him, at once in thought, word, and act, the practical and moral attitude which we should have towards a man and towards God" (p. 267). He gives a similar pragmatic explanation of the dogma of the One Person in two natures.

<sup>4</sup> "Similarly, 'Jesus is risen' means, 'Be in relation to Him as you would have been before His death; as you are now, in the presence of a contemporary'" (p. 26).

requires us to behave towards the Blessed Sacrament *as if* Jesus were present,<sup>1</sup> and so forth. M. Le Roy's attitude towards the dogma of the Holy Trinity is not very clearly expressed, but he seems to indicate that it must be 'pragmatically' construed in terms of God's practical action upon us in a threefold way, and of a threefold practical response on our part.

To complete this very brief sketch, it should be added that M. Le Roy regards miracles as incapable of historic proof, as a great offence to the modern mind, and as the gravest of all hindrances to the advance of the Christian religion. Accordingly, like most Modernists, he rejects as unhistorical the Gospel accounts of the Virgin Birth and the Bodily Resurrection of our Lord.<sup>2</sup>

So far as I have noticed, his book shows no independent acquaintance with New Testament criticism. He simply reproduces the conclusions of M. Loisy, even the most subjective and hazardous, without seeming to be aware that a large number of them are rejected, not merely by orthodox critics, but even by the majority of those of the Liberal School. This, however, I only mention in passing, because it is not so much with M. Le Roy's biblico-critical views as with his Pragmatic Theology that we are here chiefly concerned.

### CRITICISM OF M. LE ROY'S POSITION

M. Le Roy bases his theology (professedly and actually) upon Pragmatism, and accordingly, if our attempt to refute Pragmatism in the last chapter has been successful, there is no need (logically at least) to refute a single one

<sup>1</sup> "In the same way the dogma of the Real Presence means that it is necessary to exhibit in the presence of the Consecrated Host the same reverential attitude as ought to be exhibited towards Jesus Himself should He become visible" (p. 26).

<sup>2</sup> Like M. Loisy, M. Le Roy considers that the Virgin Birth and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus are legends, not based on any historical evidence, but generated by the later belief in His Divinity.

of his characteristic doctrines. If Pragmatism is a radically false system, every system of theology built upon it must be unsound, and every individual doctrine derived from it is likely to be false.<sup>1</sup>

It may be useful, nevertheless, to follow M. Le Roy into some of the theological conclusions which he deduces from his Pragmatism. If they involve contradictions and incredibilities, the conclusions which we reached in the last chapter will be thereby confirmed. If they do not, it may be desirable to reconsider some of the questions previously discussed. With this purpose in view, we proceed to consider some of M. Le Roy's principal doctrines.

## I

It is fundamental to M. Le Roy's position, as a logical Pragmatist, to insist that the Christian dogmas do not intend to assert (or at least are not successful in asserting) objective truth of any kind. They are 'phenomenal' or 'symbolic' statements only, and those who accept them are not thereby pledged to hold any particular intellectual beliefs, either about God, or about Jesus Christ, or about man in his relation to God. The intellectual content of the dogmas is *nil*.

M. Le Roy is very emphatic about this. "We wish a dogma," says he, "to be an enunciation of a truth of the intellectual order. What does it enunciate? Nothing that can be precisely indicated. Does not this fact condemn the hypothesis? Finally, the pretence of conceiving dogmas as statements of which the first function is to communicate certain items of theoretical knowledge collides, it would seem, with impossibilities on every hand. Perhaps it must therefore be resolutely abandoned" (p. 18).

<sup>1</sup> A true conclusion may sometimes be deduced from false premisses, but only rarely and by accident. We can have no assurance that a conclusion is true unless the premisses are true.

This is sound Pragmatist doctrine, but unfortunately M. Le Roy does not consistently adhere to it. Some articles of the Creed (e.g. those which speak of belief in God, in the Incarnation, in the Virgin Birth, in the Resurrection, and in the Ascension) he interprets 'pragmatically' (i.e. symbolically), but others he certainly interprets objectively. He does not expressly say so, because, if he did, the contradiction would be too patent, but he everywhere assumes that there once existed a real historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, who taught in Galilee, was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin for claiming to be the Messiah, and was finally crucified by Pontius Pilate. He even asserts in one place that a person who does not believe all this and more about the historical Jesus can scarcely be regarded as a Christian. It hardly needs pointing out, that every one of these beliefs is objective and intellectual, not pragmatismal.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is to be feared that M. Le Roy has inadvertently admitted a certain element of 'objectivity' and 'theoretical assertion' even into his account of the Resurrection of Jesus. True, he regards the story of the empty tomb as a fiction (pp. 199 ff.), and denies that the buried body ever rose; nevertheless he is convinced that *something* objective happened. He declares expressly: "I believe without restriction or reserve that the Resurrection of Jesus is a fact objectively real, a fact possessing even the highest character of reality that one can conceive. I go so far as to say that it is a fact whose plenitude and reality no human conception can adequately express (*traduire*); and I reject with energy every interpretation of my thought which would give it any other meaning" (p. 155). Similarly he says that "the survival of Jesus is other and more than that of Mahomet or of Socrates,"

<sup>1</sup> According to M. Le Roy's expressed principles, the Church has no right to require Christians to believe that the historic person Jesus ever existed, but only *to behave as if they believed it*. Belief in the existence of the historic Jesus is undeniably an *intellectual* belief.

and, further, that His Resurrection is " His entry into glory."

What, then, becomes of M. Le Roy's assertions that " What is imposed upon [a Catholic by the dogmas of the Creeds] is by no means a theory or intellectual representation," and that " A Catholic, though obliged to admit them, is only constrained by them to rules of conduct, not to particular conceptions " ? It is obviously impossible to reduce belief in the life, death, and resurrection of the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, to mere ' rules of conduct,' or to maintain that belief in these doctrines is not an ' intellectual representation ' of ' objective facts.'

It is undeniable, therefore, that M. Le Roy, in spite of his protestations of loyalty to Pragmatism, believes objectively, and not merely pragmatically, in at least the following dogmas of the Creed, viz. that Jesus—

- (1) suffered under Pontius Pilate,
- (2) was crucified,
- (3) dead,
- (4) and buried,
- (5) and also that (at any rate in the sense that His spirit objectively appeared) He rose again the third day from the dead.

The contradiction between M. Le Roy's theory and his practice is thus absolute. Like so many English Modernists, he applies the pragmatic or symbolical interpretation only to those articles of the Creeds which he dislikes, and only so far as he dislikes them, but interprets all the rest in the ordinary objective way. It is perhaps too much to expect strict logic from a Pragmatist, because he denies its validity, but we certainly should be failing in our duty to the reader if we omitted to draw attention to M. Le Roy's grave lapse in this matter from Pragmatic consistency.

## II

M. Le Roy regards himself as a Christian apologist, and considers that his novel way of interpreting the Christian dogmas as rules of conduct rather than of belief, is likely to have the effect (if officially adopted) of reconciling the alienated intellectuals of the modern world to the Church, and making them practising Christians. The essence of his programme is, to require men no longer, as of old, to believe in the objective truth of the Christian dogmas as a condition of Church membership, but only *to behave as if they did*. He considers that if this salutary and simple reform is only adopted, practically all men of good will, whatever their intellectual views, will crowd into the Church, and the painful breach between the Church and the Age will be ended.

M. Le Roy seems to have considerably underestimated the practical difficulties involved in the process of inducing men who do not intellectually believe in the Christian dogmas to behave as if they did. In the political world, certainly, it would be far from easy to induce men who do not believe in Free Trade, or Protection, or Communism, or Socialism, or Republicanism, or Prohibition, to behave as if they did; and even if the desired end could be attained, the result would be rather a system of organized hypocrisy than a system of truth. Nor do I see the slightest reason for supposing that in the sphere of religion it would be easier to bring about an analogous result. Indeed, it is not merely unreasonable, but (except in very exceptional cases) impossible to expect that an atheist, remaining such, will attend divine worship regularly; or that a Pantheist, denying God's personality, will pray to Him as his Father in heaven; or that a Unitarian, rejecting Christ's deity, will worship Him as God; or that an anti-sacramentalist, denying the very principle of the Eucharist and of the Ministry of Reconciliation, will practise frequent communion, and seek Absolution when his conscience is burdened by mortal sin.

It is, of course, true, that in certain particular cases, practice generates belief. Thus a slave may believe that slavery is right because he has always been a slave, and a master for the opposite reason that he has always been a master. Similarly, an habitual liar may repeat the same lie so often that in the end he comes to believe it. But such cases are plainly exceptional. In the immense majority of cases, belief generates practice, not practice belief; and it is normally necessary, in order to persuade a man to adopt any course of practical action, first to persuade him that the intellectual belief which naturally leads to the action is correct. Modern psychology, it is true, insists that intellectual beliefs, like diseases, are 'catching,' and that they are often generated by other than intellectual processes. This is true enough. For example, Europeans long resident in the East sometimes become firm believers in magic, and fate, and demons, merely through the influence of the psychological atmosphere. Nevertheless, even in such cases, the rule is that *the intellectual belief must be generated before appropriate action follows*. A European resident in India or China will not normally have his horoscope cast by an astrologer until he is *intellectually* convinced (however illogically) that astrology is true; nor will he normally present offerings at the shrine of the local demon until he is intellectually (however foolishly) convinced that the demon exists and can injure him.

M. Le Roy, like most Modernists, believes in psychology, not in metaphysics. The above argument is an exclusively psychological one, and it would be difficult to find a single competent student of modern social psychology who would question the general accuracy of the doctrine it lays down.

### III

M. Le Roy considers that it is impossible to require intellectual assent to the Christian dogmas because

(considered as propositions addressed to the intellect) they are quite meaningless.

An initial difficulty at once makes itself felt. If these dogmas are so entirely destitute of meaning, how has it come about that so many thousands of Christian martyrs have been willing to die for them, and that quite recently during the Boxer riots thirty thousand Chinese converts braved death—in many cases by torture—rather than abandon them? We may be sure that neither the primitive nor these Chinese martyrs died for mere rules of conduct, which, moreover, were obviously the *consequence* of their new faith, not the *substance* of it.

But without further dwelling on this very serious difficulty, let us consider on their merits M. Le Roy's attempts to prove that the Christian dogmas involve contradictions, and are therefore destitute of meaning. He starts with the assertion that even the idea of God itself is meaningless; but without dwelling at length upon this, he proceeds to insist that at any rate the doctrine that God is personal is meaningless.

“ I pass over the difficulties raised by the word ‘ God,’ ” says our author, “ but let us consider the word ‘ personal.’ How must we understand it? If we grant that the use of this word requires us to conceive the divine personality according to the image of our own psychical experience, and on the model of what common-sense calls by the same name, as a human personality idealized and carried to perfection, we fall into complete Anthropomorphism, and Catholics would certainly be in agreement with their adversaries in rejecting such a notion. . . . Shall we safeguard ourselves by saying that the divine personality is essentially incomparable and transcendent? . . . [Then] what right have we to call it ‘ personality’? Logically it should be designated by a word applicable to God alone . . . and [therefore] intrinsically indefinable. On this hypothesis, ‘ God is personal’ is equivalent to ‘ God is A.’ Is this an idea at all? ” (p. 17).

Upon the second point M. Le Roy appears to be right. To assert that God is personal in an entirely transcendental sense beyond all human comprehension, is to assert what has no meaning.

It is otherwise with his former contention that to regard the personality of God as "personality idealized and carried to perfection" involves Anthropomorphism. We do not reduce man to the level of the ape by affirming that both have intelligence, provided that we recognize that the degree of man's intelligence is immeasurably greater than that of the ape's. Nor do we reduce God to the level of man by affirming that God and man are both personal, provided that we recognize that the personality of man is finite and imperfect, and the personality of God is infinite and perfect.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that a contradiction would be involved if we were to predicate of God any attribute of man which is inconsistent with absolute perfection. Personality, however, is not one of these. If we analyse the conception of personality (or at least of moral personality, which is the kind of personality which the Church attributes to God) it will be found that the following essential elements are involved in it: (1) spirituality, (2) intelligence, (3) knowledge, (4) self-consciousness, (5) will, (6) capacity for holiness or virtue. All these qualities are *perfections*, and they are also (potentially at least) infinite. There is, therefore, no incongruity in ascribing them to God. Clearly both God and man are spirit, but man is finite, and God infinite spirit; both God and man are intelligent and possess knowledge, but man's intelligence and knowledge are finite, and God's infinite—infinite in the sense that He knows not only all actual, but even all possible things;<sup>2</sup> both God and man are self-conscious, but man is

<sup>1</sup> M. Le Roy does not fall into the mistake of speaking of God as a person.' This is a Unitarian, not a Catholic, belief. God is tri-personal.

<sup>2</sup> The debatable question of God's knowledge of the future free acts of beings possessed of free will may be answered either way without

conscious of himself as a finite, and God as an infinite being ; both God and man possess will, but man's will is limited in power, and God's adequate to the achievement of all possible things ; finally, virtue or holiness can be predicated both of God and also (potentially) of man, but the holiness of man is imperfect, that of God perfect—so perfect that He embodies in His nature, not only potentially, but also actually or equivalently, the sum of all possible moral excellencies to an infinite extent.

We accordingly reach the conclusion that though 'personality' is predicated of God and man in *an identical sense*, yet inasmuch as the perfections included in the idea of personality are realized in man only in an imperfect and finite degree, and in God in a perfect and infinite degree, the Catholic doctrine preserves the infinite gulf which separates the Creator from the creature, and does not involve the absurdity of Anthropomorphism.

M. Le Roy also maintains that the orthodox doctrine of our Lord's Resurrection involves a contradiction, and is accordingly meaningless. "What is the precise meaning," says he, "which [orthodox theology] assumes to be attached to the word 'resurrection' ? That Jesus, after having passed through death, returned alive. What does that mean from the theoretical point of view ? Doubtless nothing but that after three days Jesus re-appeared in a state identical with that in which He was before He was nailed to the cross. But the Gospel tells us the exact contrary" (p. 18).

It ought not to require to be stated that orthodox theology teaches nothing of the kind. It is not now, and never has been believed by orthodox Christians, either that Jesus rose from the dead with a natural body, or that He lived after His Resurrection a natural life. The teaching of St. Paul, that at the resurrection "we shall

interfering with the general principle. In the opinion of many, such pre-knowledge, if absolute, would involve a contradiction. There is no more perplexing metaphysical problem than this.

be changed,' and that "this corruptible must put on incorruption," has always been applied to the case of Jesus Himself, and it has been universally believed that at the moment of His Resurrection His natural body was transformed into a glorious and spiritual body, and that if at first sight any of the circumstances of the post-Resurrection appearances (such as the handling and the eating) seem to imply that His body still consisted of natural flesh and blood, these must be understood to have been the result of a temporary accommodation to earthly conditions for evidential purposes, and not as indicating that a spiritual body is normally perceptible to earthly senses, or requires to be nourished by food.

M. Le Roy finds a further contradiction in the idea of 'life' as attributed to Jesus before and after His Resurrection. We can frame, he says, no idea whatever of what 'life' is like after the Resurrection, and therefore to attribute it to the risen Lord is to make a statement without meaning.

We may reply to this objection by drawing a distinction between an adequate and an inadequate idea of a thing. Even an inadequate idea of a thing may be perfectly true so far as it goes, and if so it will never require to be corrected by subsequent fuller knowledge. This fairly obvious consideration seems to meet M. Le Roy's difficulty. If the human personality of Jesus in any sense survived death (which M. Le Roy admits), then it follows that all the essential (as distinguished from the accidental) attributes of His humanity also survived death. Hence we can affirm positively (with full comprehension of what we mean) that He continued even after death to be conscious and self-conscious, and to possess human intelligence, human affections, human will, human memory, and human capacities for virtue. The fact that we can form no *adequate* conception of what the life of a risen human being is like (owing to our lack of experience) does not prevent us from being absolutely

certain that it must possess at least these characteristics. If it did not, it would not be a human life at all, and therefore there would be no such thing as human immortality.

#### IV

Although, according to M. Le Roy, the Christian dogmas have no positive content, they nevertheless have a *prohibitive* sense—they warn against certain heresies or doctrinal errors. “A dogma,” he says, “has first of all a *negative* meaning. It condemns and excludes certain errors [he instances atheism, gnosticism, and pantheism] rather than determines positive truth.”

There is an evident contradiction in this statement. The Catholic Creeds mention no heresies, and therefore condemn none, except by implication. *The only way in which they condemn them is by teaching positive doctrines inconsistent with them.* For example, they condemn atheism by teaching that God is, and pantheism by teaching that He is the Creator of the universe, and consequently not identical with it. If the propositions ‘God is’ and ‘God is the Creator’ present to the intellect *no meaning whatever* (which is M. Le Roy’s assumption), then they cannot possibly contradict either atheism, or pantheism, or anything else.

#### V

M. Le Roy has a strange theory (shared also, so far as relates to the doctrine of the Incarnation, by many English Modernists) that the primitive Christians were allowed an unlimited licence of constructing theoretical doctrines for themselves in order to justify the practical attitude towards God, and Jesus Christ, and Christian morality, and the Christian Sacraments, which was all that the Church then required of them. He considers that in the apostolic and sub-apostolic age the Church possessed certain practical rules of conduct, but no rules

of belief, and that accordingly Christians were everywhere allowed (provided they worshipped God and Jesus Christ, and in other respects behaved as practising Christians) to invent any theories they pleased to account for the practical rules they accepted. In particular he alleges that though all the primitive Christians worshipped Jesus Christ, a considerable number of inconsistent reasons for doing this were tolerated, and that the Church had no official doctrine on the subject.

There is a *prima facie* objection to this theory, viz. that the Four Gospels—even the Synoptics, at any rate in their present form—represent Jesus Himself as teaching in broad outline the official doctrine of the Incarnation which afterwards prevailed. To this M. Le Roy replies, that M. Loisy has demonstrated in his critical writings the unhistorical character of all the great Christological passages in the Gospels, and that therefore there is no historical evidence that Jesus Himself taught any Christology at all.

The questions of New Testament criticism involved will be more conveniently discussed later<sup>1</sup>; here it will be sufficient to point out the inherent improbabilities (in fact, impossibilities) involved in the theory.

It is not to be denied that the same outward action may sometimes be justified by different, and indeed quite inconsistent reasons; for example, a cheque for £1,000 may be given to a hospital out of benevolence or out of a desire to get into parliament; also a man may be honest in business either because it is right or because it is the best policy. In a similar way it is possible, *in the abstract*, to justify the worship of Jesus by a variety of theories. For example, if the apostles and first Christians had happened to be *heathens*, they might have justified their worship of Jesus in at least the four following ways. They might have assumed:

(1) That He was one of the immortal gods, who for

<sup>1</sup> See especially ch. ix, "Modernism and Biblical Criticism."

some sufficient reason (perhaps a Promethean love for mankind<sup>1</sup>) had humbled himself to live on earth in a servile and despised condition, as (in the ancient legend) the god Apollo, when banished from Olympus, had served Admetus, King of Pheræ, as his herdsman<sup>2</sup>; or

(2) That He was the son of one of the immortal gods or goddesses by a mortal; or

(3) That though He was a man, yet divine powers of magic, miracle, divination, and prophecy resided within Him to such an unusual extent that He was entitled to religious worship<sup>3</sup>;

(4) That though He was originally a mere man, and did not exist before His conception, yet He had now become divine, because His beneficent and virtuous life had been rewarded by resurrection and assumption into heaven, followed by deification or apotheosis, or (to use the favourite Modernist term) 'adoption.'

All these (and other) theories might have been entertained by pagans anxious to justify their worship of Jesus, but none of them were possible to the Apostles. The rigid monotheism of the Jewish and early Christian Churches regarded all these theories—the last quite as much as the others—with a disapproval amounting to positive horror; for example, in the Apocalypse the crowning blasphemy of 'the Beast' (i.e. the Roman Emperor) is its insistence that divine honours should be paid to deified mortals. It is, therefore, a psychological *impossibility* that the Apostolic Church can either have believed or tolerated belief in any of these theories, because to have done so would have involved a lapse into paganism.

One theory, and only one, can possibly justify a believer

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Prometheus* of Æschylus.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Alcestis* of Euripides.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Simon Magus claimed worship as being "the power of God which is called great," probably in the sense that it dwelt within him, and enabled him to perform his prodigies. He claimed it also for his paramour Helena, whom he called the "Εννοια of God,

in monotheism, either in the first or in any other century, in worshipping Jesus of Nazareth ; and that is the theory of the Catholic Church, that He is very God as well as very man. The God of monotheism is a jealous God, and the worship that He claims is exclusive and unique. To give it to a creature is to be guilty of the deadliest sin in the monotheistic code of ethics—the sin of idolatry. If the Apostolic Christians really did worship Jesus (and M. Le Roy admits that they did) then it is *absolutely certain* (even though we had no other evidence to confirm it) that they believed in the Incarnation.<sup>1</sup>

It follows from this—

(1) That they believed in the *consubstantial* Sonship of Jesus (though the technical term to express it was not yet in use) ;

(2) That they believed that He had *always* been God, even from eternity, because to suppose otherwise would have resulted in a contradiction—a contradiction of the divine attribute of eternity.

<sup>1</sup> The only even plausible piece of New Testament evidence in favour of Adoptionism is the peculiar version of the voice at the Baptism of Jesus given in certain early MSS. at St. Luke iii. 22. It is rejected by all the critical editors. The version of St. Mark (our earliest Gospel definitely *excludes* Adoptionism.

## CHAPTER VII

### IMMANENCE AND THE INCARNATION

THE special subject of this chapter is *Theological* Immanence, and its relation to the doctrine of the Incarnation. But the doctrine of *Philosophical* Immanence, which has engaged us hitherto, is of such vital importance, and it is so necessary that the reader should be fully convinced in his own mind, not only that it is metaphysically false but also that it is practically inadequate and even ridiculous when applied to religion, that it is desirable to preface our principal discussion by a few final remarks upon its Modernist applications.

In the first place the reader should realize that if our attempts to refute Philosophic Immanence have been successful, we have already overthrown without further argument being necessary (and that not merely in principle, but even in the minutest detail) the whole imposing structure of negation which constitutes ordinary Modernism. Nearly all Modernists, English and Continental—Dean Rashdall is one of the very few exceptions—base their system expressly or tacitly upon some form of the Kantian doctrine of the Relativity of Human Knowledge (i.e. Immanence), and consequently, as Professor Gardner himself admits, if Kantianism is disproved, the whole fabric of Modernism collapses.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As a specimen of his many admissions that it is possible to construct a stable and unchangeable system of theology, if only Immanence is disproved, and the principle of the Validity of Objective Knowledge established, we may take the following: "No doubt, if we could find a basis outside the world of sense, if there existed any possibility

This is as true of the negative biblical criticism of Modernism as of its negative theology, for the former (as we have already shown) is as direct a product of the Kantian Agnosticism as the latter.

#### PROFESSOR GARDNER'S POSITION

It will be convenient if, instead of occupying space with works of less importance, we proceed at once to discuss the views of the leading English representative of Neo-Kantian Modernism, Professor Gardner, as expressed in his *Exploratio Evangelica*, undoubtedly the most thorough philosophical defence of Modernism as a whole which has yet appeared in this country. I hope to be able to show that the intellectual contradictions and practical absurdities involved in the Kantian position are so extreme that even Professor Gardner is unable to adhere to it consistently in practice.

We will begin by considering a forcible statement of the Kantian doctrine which well describes, not only Professor Gardner's own position, but that of most English Modernists.

"It is clear," he says, "that in all provinces of knowledge, whether it be knowledge of the world around us, or of human beings, or of God Himself, *objectivity is introduced, not by the intellect, but by the will*. Observation could never overstep *the adamantine limits of brain and nerve* whereby it is enclosed. We can have no perception of things, save as they are reproduced to us and in us. *And intellect can but combine the data of sense, can but compare and contrast, but cannot add to the original impressions.*"<sup>1</sup>

of taking our start from facts in regard to the Divine Being which could be proved *in an objective sense* and without regard to human faculties and human experience, this might give us means for formulating a speculative and *permanent* theology. But such knowledge is impossible to man" (*Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 49—italics mine).

<sup>1</sup> *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 31 (italics mine). Cf. also, "Objective knowledge in religion is unattainable." "If we could reach knowledge

This passage contains at least two palpable contradictions :

(1) It speaks of " the adamantine limits of brain and nerve " wherein the human mind is confined, forgetting that, on Kantian principles, the mind knows only its own thoughts, and cannot possibly be aware of the objective existence of such things as ' brain and nerve.'

(2) Again, the declaration that the human intellect " can but combine the data of sense," and " cannot add to the original impressions," collides violently with express statements made by the author only a few pages before, to the effect that the human intellect *infers*—and *infers* validly—the objective existence both of other persons and of God from the subjective data of sense. The matter is so vitally important that it is desirable to quote one of the passages in full. " If we pass by all the physical difficulties which hang around any possible perception of an objective world about us, and allow that our senses are sources of real and trustworthy information as to the material world,<sup>1</sup> yet even then it is clear that they cannot immediately inform us that human beings conscious like ourselves surround us. They can show us that we dwell amid a number of bodies formed like our own, constantly occupied with this or that, forwarding or thwarting our plans, and daily conversing with us. *But they cannot by any possibility prove that these bodies are more than unconscious automata.* The only will and thought of which we can possibly be immediately aware are our own ; if we believe that our friends also are conscious, have will and thought of their own, *this must*

objectively valid from the speculative point of view, it might better satisfy our reason. But since the rise of Critical Philosophy [i.e. Kantianism] this is impossible. The change which has been produced in our thought has been well compared to the change from a geocentric to a heliocentric scheme of astronomy." " The contradictions in which metaphysical theology is at every step involved, arise, according to the views here set forth, from the fact that theological propositions or dogmas are not speculatively valid " (pp. 44, 51).

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is quite inconsistent with ' Immanence.'

*be an addition which we make to the facts of sense.* If there ever lived a man who supposed himself to be the only conscious being in existence, he could probably never be confuted. But all sane human beings have come to the belief that those about them are willing and conscious creatures. And mainly, I think, on two grounds. *First there is the ground of analogy and inference.* We see in others actions and expressions which we know in our own case to accompany certain feelings, and thoughts, and volitions; we therefore naturally assume that *similar effects have similar causes*, and that what is in our own case the result of purpose, must be the result of purpose, and so of consciousness, in others."

It is not too much to say that in this passage Dr. Gardner gives away both his own and the whole Kantian position. For he expressly allows: (1) that matter (viz. other human bodies) exists objectively; (2) that the law of causation ("similar effects have similar causes") is valid objectively; (3) that the existence of other minds may be logically and validly deduced "by analogy and inference" from the existence of other bodies.

Nor can it be said that these inferences are of so trivial a kind that they do not affect the general principle he lays down that external reality is unknowable. The beliefs in the existence of God and in that of other persons *are infinitely the most important of all human beliefs*, and if these are capable of objective proof (as Dr. Gardner admits that they are) then there is an end for good and all of the doctrine of Immanence and of the vast structure of theological and critical negation which in his elaborate work of over five hundred pages he has laboriously erected upon it. If the logic of the mere intellect, which he so much despises, is capable of establishing such tremendous realities as the objective existence of other human persons and of God, *a fortiori* it is capable of establishing lesser objective truths. Professor Gardner

has so neatly refuted himself (and his fellow Modernists) that really nothing more remains to be said.

### RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

It follows necessarily from the principle of Immanentism, that direct religious experience is the only valid source of religious doctrine. This subject has already been discussed at some length, but a few more illustrations of its subversive effects upon religious beliefs—even those which Modernists would willingly accept if they could—are desirable.

#### I

In the first place, not only can it not be known from experience that Jesus was born of a Virgin, and rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, but *it cannot even be known that He ever existed*. If we reflect *how we know* that a person called Jesus of Nazareth once lived in Palestine and died upon the Cross, we perceive at once that we know it, not from experience, but from the two sources of (1) oral tradition, (2) certain ancient books, especially the books of the N.T. By a process of logical inference from these two sources of information, the validity of which is contested by the extreme (or 'Mythical') school of modern criticism, we reach the conclusion that Jesus once lived a human life upon earth. Even if it is conceded that His existence was once a matter of direct experience to His contemporaries living in Palestine (though even this is excluded by the doctrine of Immanence strictly interpreted), yet certainly it is not a matter of direct experience to anyone now. Modernists, however, who usually believe that Jesus once existed, involve themselves thereby in a flagrant contradiction of their principle that all knowledge is derived from experience.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See ch. iv., pp. 71 ff.

They contend, it is true, that they are aware of the existence of Jesus, because of the grace which they receive when they pray to Him, or to God through Him, which grace is to them a matter of experience. But experience of grace received only yields knowledge that grace *is* received, not knowledge of the source from which it is derived. Obviously, if it is to be known that the grace received comes from Jesus or from God, and not from the hidden resources of their own subliminal consciousness, there must be some further process of *inference* from experience. Moreover, even if it could be known directly by experience that grace is *now* given by Jesus, this would not amount to knowledge that He once lived on earth as a village carpenter, and taught in Galilee and Jerusalem, and was crucified, and rose the third day from the dead. If these things are known, it must be by *testimony*, or rather by *logical inference from testimony*, for reason is obliged to test the worth of all testimony before receiving it. Similarly it is quite impossible to know by experience that Jesus will come again to judge the quick and the dead, or that His followers will hereafter enjoy everlasting life, for these things belong to the future, and all future things are known, not by experience, but by reasoning—reasoning either from *a priori* principles or from experience.

## II

That Reason is one of the most godlike endowments of the human race, and that by use of it the human soul can ascend to the Supreme Reason, i.e. God, and know Him as He really is (not indeed completely, but truly), is the practically universal belief of mankind. If any belief can be called Catholic, as satisfying the Vincentian canon of “quod semper quod ubique quod ab omnibus accipitur,” it is surely this. The plain man equally with the philosopher believes that he can ascend to God and

the things of God by the use of his reason, and that is what in practice he tries to do. He has heard of the religious experiences of saints and mystics, and does not doubt their reality, but such high privileges are not for him. His own rare and evanescent religious experiences are too trivial to be made the basis of any definite religious doctrines.

On the other hand, he is able to reason. He has heard many of the ordinary arguments against Christianity, and many of those in its favour, and considers the latter superior. He does not regard them as *demonstrative*, but he does not expect demonstration in any such matters. He considers that some place must be left in religious matters for the faculty of faith; besides, has not Bishop Butler said that probability is the guide of life? This seems to the plain man a very sensible position.

The plain man, who has so little religious 'experience' that it is almost negligible, is often a very good Christian, punctual in the performance of his religious duties, a good husband, a good father, a good citizen, an enemy of cant (especially religious cant), a little unimaginative perhaps, but a thoroughly genuine person—a far better Christian very often in all the things that really matter than his more favoured brother who has a multitude of 'experiences,' on account of which he is sometimes unduly elated, and even arrogant (1 Cor. xii. 1-19).

Modernism denies to the plain man, who has little or no religious 'experience,' the right to be a Christian at all. It might be thought that it allows him the right to supplement his own defective experience by drawing upon the fuller experience of other people, but this is an error. Other people's experience is not experience to him: it is only *testimony*. And testimony cannot be made use of without the use of *reason*, which determines by logical arguments its source, its meaning, and its validity. Consistent Modernism, which bases everything on 'experience,' and denies the power of logical reasoning

to attain to religious truth, condemns the plain man together with the philosopher who is not also a saint or a mystic to hopeless agnosticism.

### III

The Modernist descriptions of religious 'experience,' when given in any detail, invariably show clearly that even the attenuated religious beliefs which Modernists accept are not derived directly from this 'experience,' but from rational 'interpretations' of it, and logical inferences from it.

For example, the authors of *What we want* say: "[God] reveals Himself to man working in the intimate recesses of his personal *ego*, manifesting Himself at first through a confused and inarticulate feeling of infinite, transcendental, incomprehensible Reality. Little by little, this feeling, becoming more intense, invites to the act of adoration, till at last the soul feels the urgent need of entering into relations with this invisible Reality, and is led, not only to return upon itself in reflection in order to investigate the origin and seek for the value of this experience, but also to review the whole history of the past and examine in it the origin and development of the relations of humanity with the supernatural world" (p. 27).

This thoroughly typical passage contains the following contradictions of the authors' professed principle that Modernist doctrines are derived only from experience.

They allege that reason, or 'reflection,' deduces the Modernist system from the raw material ("a confused and inarticulate feeling") furnished by 'experience,' by the following purely intellectual processes:

- (1) It "investigates the origin" of the experience;
- (2) It "seeks the value" of the experience;
- (3) It reviews the past history of man's religious experience;

(4) It examines philosophically "the origin and development of the relations of humanity with the supernatural world."

The authors also flagrantly contradict their fundamental principle of Immanence or Relativity by affirming: (1) that man is directly conscious of *Transcendental* and not merely of Immanent Reality; (2) that there exists objectively a 'supernatural world.'

#### IV

Orthodox Christianity does not, as is alleged by Modernists, undervalue religious experience. It does not now rely, nor has it ever relied, upon abstract arguments only. It attaches the greatest importance to religious experience, especially that of prophets, seers, saints, mystics. It also allows due weight to the experience of those ordinary believers, in whom the devotional instinct is strongly developed.

But it refuses—and rightly refuses—to build religion upon mere uncriticized feeling or irrational impulse. It regards Reason as supreme in man, and insists that all 'experience' of whatever kind—religious quite as much as secular—must come before the bar of Reason to be judged. It is the function of Reason, not Experience, to judge what the value of any given experience is. Not till Reason has judicially tested the claims of religious experience, has determined its precise nature, its origin, and the conclusions which may be legitimately drawn from it, can it be safely used as a basis either for a theology or for the rules of a practical Christian life. To deny that Reason is the supreme arbiter in all religious questions, even in those pertaining directly to faith—for even faith should be reasonable—is to betray the cause both of religion and of philosophy, and to capitulate to the forces of superstition, fanaticism, and obscurantism.

## V

I am glad to be able to quote, in confirmation of the general position here taken up, the wise words of a very able writer, who is usually classed with the Modernists because he adopts with too little reserve the usual Modernist attitude towards New Testament criticism, but who, in spite of his membership of "The Churchmen's Union," of which he is a vice-president, has at times done valuable service to Orthodoxy by exposing not a few of the more dangerous Modernist fallacies.

Replying to the Modernist objection to Theological Intellectualism, on the ground that it deprives religion of 'immediacy,' and therefore of all warmth of personal feeling, the Dean of Carlisle writes as follows: "Most uncultivated persons would probably be very much surprised to hear that the existence of the friend with whose body they are in contact is after all only an inference. But surely, in the man who has discovered that such is the case, the warmth of friendship was never dimmed by the reflection that his knowledge of his friend is not immediate but mediate. It is a mere prejudice to suppose that mediate knowledge is in any way less certain, less intimate, less trustworthy, or less satisfying than immediate knowledge. If we claim for man the possibility of just such a knowledge of God as a man may possess of his brother man, surely that is all that is wanted to make possible the closest religious communion."

In speaking of the danger of the Modernist proposal to base Religion upon Psychology, i.e. upon men's religious feelings rather than upon objective knowledge of God, he uses words hardly less emphatic than my own. "I would venture," he says, "to add a word of caution against the tendency fashionable in many quarters to talk of basing religious belief upon Psychology. The business of Psychology is *to tell us what actually goes on in*

*the human mind. It cannot possibly tell us whether the beliefs which are found there are true or false. An erroneous belief is as much a psychological fact as a true one.*"<sup>1</sup>

### RELIGIOUS IMMANENCE

We pass now to the doctrine of Religious Immanence, which, properly speaking, is entirely distinct from that of Philosophic Immanence, but which is frequently confused with it in Modernist literature with disastrous results, intellectually and theologically.

By Religious Immanence is meant the Indwelling of God in the universe, and especially in man. "In Him," says St. Paul, "we live and move and have our being."<sup>2</sup> Similarly Christ is said in the New Testament to dwell in the believer, and the believer in Christ<sup>3</sup>; and there are many references to the immanence of the Holy Spirit in man.<sup>4</sup>

This kind of immanence has properly nothing whatever to do either with Kant's or with any other theory of knowledge. It is simply the dwelling, or abiding, of one thing in another. It is obviously essential to the idea of immanence in this sense, that that which indwells, and that which is indwelt, should remain, in spite of their intimate union, *absolutely distinct from one another*. If the distinction between them is not preserved, there is no longer immanence, but *identity*.

Thus we can speak of the oxygen of the air as 'immanent' in the nitrogen, because, though intimately mixed with it, it preserves its own nature and qualities. And we can speak of the human soul as 'immanent' in the human body because, though it pervades the body,

<sup>1</sup> H. Rashdall, *Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 110, 111 (italics mine).

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> John xv. 14, etc.

<sup>4</sup> John xiv. 17; Ezek. xi. 19; 1 Cor. iii. 16, etc.

it is distinct from it.<sup>1</sup> Similarly we can speak of God and Christ and the Holy Ghost as 'immanent' in the human spirit, because they are distinct from it. We can even speak of the Persons of the Trinity as 'immanent' in one another (though the more precise term is *περίχωρησις*, *circuminsessio*, or *circumincessio*), because, though they mutually pervade, interpenetrate, and contain one another, they remain distinct, and function according to their respective distinct attributes.

But it is impossible, without absurdity, to speak of the oxygen of the air as 'immanent' in itself, or of the human soul as immanent in itself, or of God the Father as immanent in Himself, because the relation of a thing to itself is that of *identity*, not of immanence. A man is not immanent in himself: he *is* himself.

#### HEGELIAN IMMANENCE

Yet this plain distinction between Immanence and Identity is continually ignored by Modernist theologians, and the two things are frequently confused together under the influence of the Hegelian philosophy.

It is customary to speak of the Hegelian theory of the Incarnation as a theory of *Immanence*, but that is precisely what it is not. In spite of all the efforts of the Hegelian Right to give a more orthodox colour to the doctrine of their master, it is perfectly evident that Hegel was a Pantheist, and that what he teaches under the name of Incarnation is pantheistic identity.

In the Hegelian philosophy it is not primarily in the human race, still less in an individual man, but *in the entire universe*, that God or 'the Absolute' is primarily incarnate. And since the relation of the Universe to

<sup>1</sup> The soul is 'virtually' present in the body; and, as acting on every part of it, is 'virtually' extended. But it is not 'actually' present in the body, or 'actually' extended, because this would involve a contradiction—a contradiction of its being immaterial.

God is one of *identity*, it is obviously an abuse of language to speak of God as becoming incarnate in it. God is the Universe, and the Universe is God. That is the Hegelian position, and Hegel, to do him justice, never compromises or uses ambiguous language about it. The whole universe, in his system, is entirely divine. There is no element in it which is not absolutely and entirely God ; though, of course, no element, taken by itself, completely expresses what God is. It follows from Hegelian principles, that a mouse, or a mosquito, or even a material atom is as absolutely and completely God as a man or an archangel. The only difference is that they do not express His full nature as adequately. They are wholly He, though He is not wholly they.

Similarly, an abandoned criminal is as much God as a saint, though a saint may be said to represent more justly the *totality* of God. Everything whatever in the criminal, including his most ferocious and obscene and bestial traits, are as absolutely parts of God, and as necessary to His 'perfection,' as the most sublime virtues of the saint. Barabbas and Judas Iscariot, in spite of the fact that they represent God's full character less adequately than Jesus, are no less divine than He. "What kind of an absolute being," asks Hegel, "is that which does not contain in itself all that is actual, even evil included?"

Unlike the semi-pantheistic Modernists, whose views were so much in evidence at the late Cambridge Conference, Hegel does not flinch from the full moral consequences of his pantheistic position. He teaches that sin is not absolutely evil, but is even relatively good—good because it is a *necessary stage* in the evolution of the Universe (and therefore of God Himself, who is identical with the Universe) from the lower state of innocence to the higher state of virtue. Sin is the second member (or 'antithesis') of an Hegelian 'triad,' which leads from innocence (the 'thesis') to virtue or stable goodness

(the 'synthesis'). Thus sin, or moral evil, though inferior to virtue, is 'good as a means' to it, and is in any case superior to mere innocence, or ignorance of good and evil.

The exact manner in which Hegel arrives at his doctrine of a special Incarnation of God in a single person, Jesus Christ, is obscure, and is probably rather a concession to Christian tradition than a logical outcome of his pantheistic assumptions. Probably we shall not do serious injustice to it if we condense it as follows. God is immanent in all creation, but especially in the rational part of it, mankind; more adequately still in the noblest part of mankind, the saints; and most adequately of all in the best of men and most perfect of saints, Jesus Christ.

There are many obscurities about the Hegelian doctrine of the Incarnation, and his followers interpret it in several different ways; but one thing is quite certain about it, that it is not a theory of *Immanence* (though both Hegel and the Hegelians apply this term to it), but a theory of *Pantheistic Identity*. The usual Modernist confusion between Immanence and Identity has its source in Hegelianism.

#### IMMANENCE AND INCARNATION

One of the most popular Modernist theories of the Incarnation is that it is a kind of 'Immanence,' and the expressed aim of many members of the School is to "interpret the Incarnation in terms of Immanence," or to "exhibit the Incarnation as the supreme example of God's immanence in man," or as "an intensification of the Divine Immanence."

Nearly all their arguments conform to a single type—the Hegelian. They start with the principle which no orthodox Christian can object to, that God is 'immanent' in (i.e. dwells in, without being identical with) the entire

universe. Then they proceed to prove that God is specially immanent in the rational creation, i.e. in man ; then that He is particularly immanent in good men ; and finally that He is supremely immanent in the best of good men, Jesus Christ our Lord. Then, changing the meaning of Immanence without warning from indwelling to identity, they conclude by maintaining that the general result of their argument is to prove that Jesus Christ actually *is* God, and that it is lawful to worship Him as such.

Instead of selecting our example from the ephemeral and popular literature of Modernism, we will quote a passage from an able and valuable lecture, delivered by Dr. Rashdall at Cambridge to a large audience of members of the University.

“ We cannot say intelligibly that God dwells in Christ unless we have already recognized that in a sense God dwells and reveals Himself in humanity at large, and in each particular soul. . . . [But] men do not reveal God equally. The more developed intellect reveals God more perfectly than the child or the savage ; and (far more important from a religious point of view) the higher and more developed moral consciousness reveals Him more than the lower, and above all the actually better man reveals Him more than the worse man. Now, if in the life, teaching, and character of Christ—in His moral and religious consciousness, and in the life and character which so completely expressed and illustrated that consciousness—we can discover the highest revelation of the Divine Nature, we can surely attach a real meaning to the language of the Creeds which singles Him out from all men that ever lived as the One in whom the ideal relation of man to God is most completely realized. If God can only be known as revealed in humanity, and Christ is the highest representative of humanity, then we can very significantly say, ‘ Christ is the Son of God, and very God of very God, of one substance

with the Father,' though the phrase belongs to a philosophical dialect we do not habitually use." <sup>1</sup>

This thoroughly typical passage starts with Immanence in the sense of *indwelling* ("God dwells . . . in humanity at large, and in each particular soul"), and if it preserved the same meaning to the end it would represent Jesus as a man in whom God supremely dwelt, which is good Unitarianism, but bad Modernism. It is in the Unitarian sense that Dr. Rashdall's words have been understood, not only by many orthodox Churchmen, but even by many Modernists. For example, Mr. Howe, a Modernist, interprets the Dean as meaning that Jesus was "perfectly indwelt by the Logos of God," <sup>2</sup> and the Rev. F. A. M. Spencer not only endorses this interpretation, but proceeds to remark: "The majority of the more advanced Liberal Christians seem to hold some such doctrine. Some would call this Unitarian, and it is probable that most Unitarians would accept it, or something like it." His own formula of belief is very similar: "God dwelt in Jesus supremely, and in other men in various degrees." <sup>3</sup> The Dean, however, expressly states at the close, that Jesus is "very (i.e. true) God of very God," and that He is "of one (i.e. *identical*) substance with the Father." Furthermore, to set all doubts at rest, he has recently communicated to the Press a letter in which he declares that his Christology is essentially orthodox, and that even his recent much-criticized Cambridge paper was "an assertion of the Catholic doctrine that our Lord is God and man," and that "there is nothing in it which is not compatible with a full acceptance of the Catholic doctrine of the Divinity of Christ *as defined by the Creeds and Councils.*" <sup>4</sup>

We are forced, therefore, to the conclusion that Dr.

<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *The Modern Churchman*, May 1921.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1921.

<sup>4</sup> See *The Church Times* for August 19, 1921, and the daily Press of about that date. The italics are mine.

Rashdall in the passage quoted has been guilty of the fallacy of ambiguity. He begins with Immanence in its proper sense of Indwelling, and when he has proved that Jesus was a man in whom God supremely dwelt, he considers that he has proved that Jesus actually *was* God. He passes without warning from Immanence in the ordinary sense of Indwelling, to Immanence in the Hegelian sense of Identity. To argue in this way is not only illegitimate, but it actually amounts to a contradiction, for Immanence in the sense of Indwelling logically *excludes* Immanence in the sense of Identity.

### THE CHRISTOLOGY OF IMMANENCE

Confusion between Immanence and Incarnation is so common at the present time, not only among ordinary persons, but even among philosophers, as the strange lapse of Dr. Rashdall is sufficient evidence, that it may be worth while to explain the distinction in greater detail.

#### I

It must be obvious to every logical mind upon careful reflection, that the idea of God *dwelling in* man (which is what is meant by Immanence) and that of God *becoming* man (which is what is meant by Incarnation) are radically distinct, and indeed contradictory. Indwelling, however ideally perfect, can never (if logically interpreted) yield any other idea than that of *a man in whom God dwells*, a God-possessed, God-inspired, and God-sanctified man (*ἄνθρωπος ἔνθεος, οὐ θεός*). Never by any possibility can it yield the idea of a man who is actually God (*θεάνθρωπος, θεάνδρος*).

#### II

If miracle is excluded, and the Godhead immanent in Jesus is supposed merely to illuminate and perfect His

entirely natural humanity and human consciousness, then the result is ordinary Unitarianism (or Anthropianism, as the Greeks expressed it). Jesus, though the best and most perfect and most favoured of all men, is still mere man (*ψιλὸς ἄνθρωπος*).

### III

If miracle is admitted, and the divine element in Jesus is regarded as manifesting itself in supernatural ways, particularly in causing the consciousness and psychical powers of Jesus to be different from and superior in kind to those of other men, then the result is either Nestorianism<sup>1</sup> or one of the kindred heresies which affirm the presence of two personalities in Christ—one human and one divine. It makes no difference in principle whether the divine element in Jesus (conceived of as God, or Son of God, or Logos, or Wisdom, or Spirit, or a heavenly Æon of the gnostic type) enters into Him at His Conception, or Birth, or Baptism, or Resurrection, or Ascension. In any case, what happens is that one person enters into and dwells within another person, not that God becomes man. The Nestorian and allied theories make Jesus a miraculous personality, but they as decisively exclude His actual deity as Unitarianism itself.

### IV

Both theologically and devotionally the difference between Immanence and Incarnation is enormous.

If God is not man, but only dwells in man, then He can only know human experience *from outside*; He cannot know it *as His own*. He necessarily knows *all about it*, because He is omniscient, but He cannot possibly know it with “the knowledge of direct acquaintance.”

<sup>1</sup> Nestorianism is the doctrine that there are two persons in Christ—one human, one divine. It is not necessary to discuss here whether Nestorius was really a Nestorian or not.

There is a tendency to think that the close inter-communion involved in ' immanence ' (i.e. the interpenetration of one mind by another) must necessarily result in *co-consciousness*, in the sense that one or both of the minds concerned not merely knows what the thoughts of the other mind are, but *actually experiences them as its own*.

This, however, is an illusion. In one way, and in one way only, is it even conceivable (if it *is* conceivable) that one mind could experience as its own the thoughts of another mind, and that is (if it were possible) *by becoming that other mind*.

Similarly, the only possible way in which even God, omnipotent and omniscient as He is, could gain a real human experience, is *by actually becoming man*. This the Church believes that He has really done in the Person of His Eternal Son.

## V

Modern mental science confirms this conclusion. Students of abnormal psychology have long been aware (though the most striking instances have only been observed recently) that there are cases in which two or three distinct minds (or what seem to be such) inhabit a single human body.

Usually these distinct minds or consciousnesses alternate with one another, but occasionally *two of them are active at the same time*. In the rare cases when this occurs, the two minds are *co-conscious*, in the sense that each reads the other's thoughts intuitively without communication by speech, nevertheless *each distinguishes its own thoughts sharply from those of the other, and preserves its own psychological individuality*. It is possible in such cases that the two minds, looking with the same eyes into the same shop-window, may the one like and the other dislike the same costume or hat ; that the one mind may be

joyful and the other sad at the same moment ; and that their circles of friends may be different, the one mind positively disliking persons for whom the other has a strong attachment.<sup>1</sup>

## VI

It is, of course, possible for God to feel sympathetic joy and sorrow without becoming man, and even without becoming immanent in man. But sympathetic joy and sorrow differ, not merely in degree, but in kind, from the joy and sorrow which result from direct personal experience. To feel sympathetic joy because one's friend is in good health or has inherited a fortune is a very different thing from rejoicing because one's own health is good or because one has oneself inherited a fortune. Similarly, to sympathize with parents who have lost an only son is a very different thing from mourning for the loss of one's own only son ; to sympathize with a leper is a very different thing from having leprosy ; to stand by the cross of a crucified man and to feel the pain of sympathy is a very different thing from feeling the pain of actual crucifixion. Thus there is a world of difference between the Immanentist doctrine that God dwelt in a man who was betrayed, scourged, spit upon, and crucified, and the Catholic doctrine that God Himself in the Person of His Son (i.e. in His own Person) suffered all this for us. Not merely theologically, but also emotionally and devotionally the two doctrines are so completely different that the religions of which they form the basic doctrines are wide as the poles asunder.

<sup>1</sup> The best short discussion of this obscure subject is the presidential address of the eminent psychologist, Professor McDougall, delivered before the Psychical Research Society on July 19, 1920. His statements of facts are admirable, but some of his metaphysical conclusions are hazardous. An excellent discussion of a recent remarkable case of co-consciousness by Dr. T. W. Mitchell will be found in the Proceedings of the Psychical Research Society for May 1921 (pt. lxxix).

## VII

Finally, the doctrine of Immanence and the doctrine of a real Incarnation constitute different religions for the further reason that they imply *different objects of worship*. By no possibility can a monotheist either in the first or in any other century worship a man in whom God merely dwells (which is all that Jesus is, according to Immanentism), for to do so would be an act of idolatry or creature-worship. On the other hand, if Jesus is really God (which is what the doctrine of the Incarnation means), then to worship Him is not only allowable but is an absolute duty.

Thus the objects of worship implied by Immanentism and Incarnationism are not merely different, but incompatible. The worship which the believer in the Incarnation is bound to pay to Jesus Christ is regarded by the consistent Immanentist as blasphemy.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MIRACLES AND THE ORDER OF NATURE

THE subject of miracles is a highly contentious one, bristling with ambiguities as well as inherent difficulties ; nevertheless we ought not to despair of reaching substantial agreement, provided that we are wise enough to take the essential precaution of starting with premisses which both sides accept. Too often the orthodox proof of miracles is based upon assumptions which Modernists reject, and which therefore for them vitiate the whole argument from the very beginning.

In order to avoid this error, I propose to begin by laying down four leading principles, which not only all orthodox Christians, but also all Modernists (or nearly all) are agreed in accepting. It will be possible, I hope, arguing from these principles alone, to reach, if not an identical view, at least a working agreement upon the subject of the Miraculous and the Supernatural in regard to the Christian religion.

These principles are all *cosmic* principles, because our principal aim is to establish Miracle as an integral part of the constitution of the universe, not as an anomalous series of magical interferences with the Order of Nature which occurred for some incomprehensible reason for a short space of time two thousand years ago in Palestine, and which have no resemblance of any sort to the wonderful works of God in any other time or place.

To take up this position is neither to deny the *uniqueness* of the Christian miracles nor the fact that they *transcend* all other historical manifestations whatever of

God's miraculous working ; but it is definitely to commit ourselves to the view that the cosmic process of evolution is *in itself*, both in whole and in part, a miraculous process, and that the miraculous events of the career of Jesus of Nazareth are merely the most striking and significant, and to us the most valuable, manifestation of a universal miraculous principle inherent in the order of the universe itself.

It will also be our business, in connexion with our proof of this principle, to show that the usual Modernist distinction between a 'miraculous supernatural' and a 'non-miraculous supernatural' is purely imaginary, and that the Supernatural differs from the Miraculous only in the circumstance that the former is the term generally applied to the more ordinary and less surprising, and the latter to the more dramatic and more astonishing of the supernatural acts of God in the sphere of man's religious history.

#### OUR FOUR INITIAL ASSUMPTIONS

Our four initial assumptions are as follows :

(1) *That God is 'immanent' both in the universe and in man.* Although Modernists often interpret this 'immanence' in a more pantheistic sense than Orthodoxy approves, the difference is not important for our present purpose.

(2) *That in consequence of this 'immanence' the universe resembles a living 'organism', rather than an inanimate machine.*

(3) *That the universe has reached its present state of perfection as the result of a process of 'evolution' or 'development.'* Without discussing the obscure question of the possible origin of ponderable matter and of the chemical elements from some assumed simpler form of matter, we shall here take it for granted that the evolution of the Solar System from the Nebula to Man is an historic fact.

(4) *That there has been a special and unique Incarnation of God in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth.*<sup>1</sup>

The first proposition is accepted unreservedly by all Modernists whatsoever. The correct name for a person who rejected it would be Deist, not Modernist. The second (as we shall see presently) is necessarily involved in the first, and cannot be logically rejected by anyone who accepts it. The third is probably accepted by all Modernists, as well as by the immense majority of orthodox Christians. The fourth would perhaps be not quite so unanimously admitted. It would be rejected, for instance, by Dr. Lake and Dr. Foakes-Jackson, but the position of these scholars (though they are still members of "The Churchmen's Union") is that of Liberal Protestantism rather than of Modernism as ordinarily understood. Probably it would be accepted (or at least not denied) even by such advanced Modernists as Mr. Major and Dr. Bethune-Baker, because although they look forward to a time when God will be incarnate in every Christian in the same sense in which He is now incarnate in Jesus Christ, I do not understand them to affirm that that time is yet. Probably, *so far as this life and this world are concerned*, they would admit that the Incarnation of God in the Founder of the Christian Religion is unique. Both of them admit His sinlessness, which certainly constitutes a fundamental difference between His humanity and ours.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF CONTINUITY

I hope further to commend the argument to Modernists by laying the chief stress upon the principle of 'continuity' rather than upon that of discontinuity. The conception of Miracle as an occasional 'interposition' of the Deity in the affairs of the world from which He is

<sup>1</sup> The New Testament, with true philosophic insight, treats the Incarnation as *a cosmic event*, because it is the Incarnation of *the Logos*, the Creator and Sustainer of the universal frame of nature.

ordinarily absent, is mere Deism, an antiquated form of thought which is as abhorrent to present-day Modernism as it has always been to Orthodoxy.

Nevertheless, it is important to realize that it is not possible to express the essential character of the process of Evolution in terms of Continuity alone. This would be nearly (but not quite) possible if the evolutionary process consisted merely of movements of matter and of the redistribution of energy. But since Evolution consists even more essentially in the emergence of ever new (and therefore discontinuous) *qualities* and *values*, it is evident that the scheme of Continuity cannot be carried through.

Nearly all metaphysicians agree that there is no continuity at all between *quantity* and *quality*, and not complete continuity even between different kinds of quality. For example, there is a considerable 'continuity' between different shades of green, because they all agree completely in being green. But there is also 'discontinuity,' because all the shades are different shades, and a difference of shade is a difference of *colour*, i.e. of *quality*, not reducible to quantity. There is still more discontinuity between green and red ; more still between a colour and a sound or a taste ; and yet more between the nervous tremor of the brain which accompanies consciousness and consciousness itself.

Many earnest Darwinians imagine that their theory of man's origin from the ape, and ultimately from the dust of the earth, establishes 'continuity' between man and the dust of the earth, or at least lessens the discontinuity. This, however, is an illusion. Of course, on the theory of the instantaneous creation of man from the dust of the earth, the discontinuity is exhibited in a specially obvious and striking way. But the discontinuity is only veiled, not removed, if we suppose that the dust of the earth evolved into man in millions of years, after passing through numerous intermediate forms of animal life. The discontinuity is not constituted by the *suddenness*,

or removed by the slowness of the process. It is constituted by the fact that *man differs in quality and value from the dust of the earth.*

It should also be noticed that recent experimental research in biology tends to substitute sudden 'mutations,' or discontinuous changes, for gradual development, as the normal method of origin of new species and varieties. Practical gardeners and breeders have always been of opinion that new varieties are usually produced, not by the slow accumulation of small differences, as Darwin imagined, but suddenly from 'sports.'<sup>1</sup> It is not, therefore, a valid argument against the Christian miracles that they involve 'discontinuity,' because the cosmic process itself involves discontinuity.

#### WHAT IS THE ORDER OF NATURE ?

Our subject is 'Miracles and the Order of Nature,' and a certain initial difficulty arises as to what precisely Modernists mean by the Order of Nature. If they are true to their principle of the Relativity of Human Knowledge (to which so many of them are committed), they have no right whatever to believe in any such order. If they follow Kant strictly, they must hold that the so-called 'Order of Nature' is purely illusory. It is nothing but the structure of our own mind and the forms of its thought, which we falsely attribute to external 'things.' Our inquiry accordingly resolves itself into this: "Is belief in miracles compatible with the order and structure of the human mind?" And it must be admitted that it is, for the great bulk of mankind firmly believe in miracles, and only a small minority disbelieve them.

On the other hand, if they prefer the Pragmatist version of Kantianism, they are forced to believe that the so-called 'Order of Nature' is not in Nature at all, but im-

<sup>1</sup> See especially H. de Vries, *Species and Varieties*, and *The Mutation Theory*.

posed by the human will upon unknowable 'things' in order to suit its own practical needs and conveniences, and that as these needs and conveniences change, so also does 'the Order of Nature.' It would appear, therefore, that, upon Pragmatist principles, belief in miracles is merely a matter of individual taste. If a man wishes to believe in miracles, he imposes upon 'things' a somewhat elastic order which allows miracles to happen. If, on the other hand, miracles are an offence to him, he attributes to 'things' so rigid a system of uniformity that miracles are altogether excluded. Thus miracles are possible to one man, and impossible to another. What of it? "There is no fixed truth." *De gustibus non est disputandum.*

Since, however, nearly all Modernists, when they come to discuss Miracles, forget their agnostic theories of knowledge, and assume that there really is an objective Order of Nature, and that it closely resembles what common-sense and unsophisticated science suppose it to be, it will be convenient to conduct the argument on the assumption (which we ourselves accept) that this Order of Nature actually exists.

### ARE MIRACLES POSSIBLE ?

Modernists are divided upon the question whether miracles are *impossible* or only *incredible*. Some, like Spinoza, consider them *impossible*, but the majority are content to pronounce them *incredible*.

At first sight, the latter position seems less open to objection. If we declare miracles *impossible*, we clearly make a metaphysical assertion which we must be prepared, if challenged, to justify by metaphysical arguments. All assertions about the 'universe,' or about ultimate 'reality' (neither of which is an object of ordinary scientific knowledge) are necessarily metaphysical; and if we declare miracles impossible, we clearly assert that

the nature of ' the universe ' and of ' reality ' is such as to exclude them.

On the other hand, if we only declare miracles *incredible*, we seem, at first sight, to avoid the pitfalls of metaphysics, and to transport the argument to the familiar ground of common-sense and ' neutral ' historical criticism.

Only in appearance, however ; for when the matter is carefully thought out, it becomes evident (as we shall presently show) that no one has a right to declare miracles incredible unless he is also prepared to prove them impossible, and that for this plain reason, that *all the evidence against miracles is only negative evidence* ; and negative evidence is not merely weaker than positive evidence, but is infinitely weaker. The whole negative experience of the human race from the beginning may easily be overthrown by *a single well-attested fact*. In other words, positive and negative evidence are incommensurable in respect of their probative force, because it is possible for an infinitesimally small amount of the former to overthrow an infinitely large amount of the latter.

This is not only a matter of theory, but also of fact. The limits of space compel us to rest content with a few striking illustrations.

## I

The important psychological discoveries of Mesmer (1733—1815), which formed the starting-point of the greatest positive advance in the science of psychology which has taken place since the days of Aristotle, were derided by the orthodox science of his day because they contradicted the laws of psychology as then understood, and also (practically) the whole previous experience of civilized man. Not till nearly a century later were the marvellous facts reluctantly and ungraciously admitted,

with the result that the science of psychology had to be radically reconstructed in order to admit the amazing phenomena of hypnotism and of the subliminal consciousness.

## II

The phenomenon of 'stigmatization,' of which the first recorded instance is that of St. Francis of Assisi in 1224, was generally disbelieved by scientific men until our own generation. Recently, however, a closer study of the original evidence (which, though exceedingly strong, is not coercive) and the careful investigation of several modern instances, has convinced the majority of those who have given attention to the subject that the phenomenon is genuine, though at present physiologists are not in a position to explain it. M. Paul Sabatier, a Liberal Protestant and opponent of miracles, rejected it as incredible in the first edition of his well-known *Vie de S. François* (1894), but in his second edition he found himself forced to accept it. The reader desiring to pursue the subject further may profitably consult the cautious and severely critical but by no means negative article on "Stigmatization" (in *Encycl. Brit.*) by the eminent physiologist, Dr. Macalister, Professor of Anatomy at Cambridge; also Fr. Thurston's more recent and not less judicial paper in the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research for July 1921.

## III

Until quite recently it was a fixed principle of biology that without a supply of oxygen gas no living organism can exist. All experience confirmed this assumption, and not a single known fact contradicted it. Yet we now know that there is a large class of organisms, technically known as *anaërobic*, which not only do not require oxygen but which in some cases oxygen actually kills.

It has been necessary to revise the principles of biology in order to admit this new knowledge.

#### IV

From prehistoric times horses have been familiarly known to the human race, and their psychical powers have been matter of continual observation; yet, until a few years ago, no one ever suspected that they had the least capacity for reading, writing, and arithmetic. Yet now we are assured by some of the most eminent scientific men in Europe (including Professor Häckel, the agnostic author of *The Riddle of the Universe*) that certain Arabian stallions trained by Herr Karl Krall of Elberfeld, are able, not only to work out sums of considerable difficulty in the four simple rules of arithmetic, but even to extract the square, the cube, and the fourth roots of quite large numbers. That a horse should be able to extract a cube root, or even to understand what a cube root means, is a far more obvious contradiction of the universal experience of mankind (and therefore far harder to credit) than even the most amazing miracles attributed to Christ by the Evangelists.

I have before me at this moment Herr Krall's extraordinary work, *Denkende Tiere* (Leipzig, 1912); also Vol. xii. of the *Archives de Psychologie* (Geneva, 1912) containing an elaborate report upon "Les chevaux savants d'Elberfeld," drawn up by Dr. Ed. Claparède, Professor of Psychology in the University of Geneva, and supported by the signed declarations of Professor Dr. H. Kraemer (Hohenheim-Stuttgart), Dr. Paul Sarasin (Basel), Professor Dr. H. E. Ziegler (Stuttgart), Professor Dr. A. Besredka (Paris), Professor Dr. von Buttel-Reepen (Oldenburg), Dr. Wm. Mackenzie (Gênes), and Dr. Roberts Assagioli (Florence).

With regard to *Denkende Tiere*, its compilation has evidently been a labour of love to the author. It de-

scribes with feeling the sad career of his predecessor in this new realm of research, Wilhelm von Osten, who trained the first equine arithmetician in the world's history, "Der Kluge Hans," and died of a broken heart because he could induce hardly anyone to accept his theories. Krall describes in great detail his methods of educating his own learned horses, particularly Muhamed and Zarif, to spell, to write brief sentences, to learn the multiplication tables, to understand the mathematical symbols  $+$ ,  $-$ ,  $\times$ ,  $\div$ , to perform simple operations in the four rules of arithmetic, and finally to extract roots. It is most difficult not to believe in Herr Krall's entire sincerity. If his book is a hoax, it is the most elaborate one in history, and upon the whole it seems easier to believe that the feats of the horses are genuine, than in what seems the only alternative, a theory of deliberate and base deception.

From the report of the savants upon Herr Krall's horses, I select the following statements :

(1) "It is established that the animals observed by us read either numbers or the names of numbers (written phonetically in German or in French), and by the aid of these numbers, spoken orally or written down, perform arithmetical operations."

(2) "It is established that the horses which have only been under instruction for a few months know how to perform easy calculations, but cannot solve difficult problems."

(3) "It is established that the horses which have been longer under instruction, Muhamed and Zarif, solve more difficult problems. . . ."

(4) "It is established that the horses know how to spell numbers as well as (proper) names, and even words which are altogether new to them, by means of an alphabetical blackboard. The orthography depends upon the sound of the word, and is often careless."

(5) "It is established that the horses sometimes speak

spontaneously of things comprehensible [to them] by means of the alphabetical blackboard."

(6) "It is established that in all these performances of the horses, any transmission of signs was out of the question" (this is signed by Kraemer, Sarasin, Ziegler).

Mackenzie and Assagioli add: "The horse Muhamed has solved correctly and without hesitation, in our presence, arithmetical problems prepared by us beforehand, and unknown to any other person, including cube roots and fourth roots, while we sat beside and a little to the rear of the horse. We have proved that Zarif as well as Muhamed solved various problems without any person whatever being present. . . . Under these conditions Muhamed has performed difficult operations, such as the extraction of the cube and fourth roots of numbers of from five to seven figures."<sup>1</sup>

#### HUME'S ARGUMENT AGAINST MIRACLES

The instances already given are sufficient of themselves, without further argument, to overthrow the plausible but fallacious canon of Hume, that no event ought to be believed which contradicts universal experience, because (in his opinion) it is always more probable that the witnesses to such an event are lying or are mistaken than that it really happened.<sup>2</sup>

But inasmuch as this famous canon constitutes practically the whole of the Modernist case against miracles (at least, there is no other which possesses anything like its plausibility), it may be desirable to consider it in some further detail, especially in its application to

<sup>1</sup> A very readable popular account of Herr Krall's marvellous horses will be found in M. Maeterlinck's *The Unknown Guest*, pp. 181 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Hume states his case against miracles as follows: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of Nature, and as a firm and unalterable experience has established those laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined" (*Essay concerning Human Understanding*, X).

natural science, the neutral ground of which affords peculiarly favourable opportunities for testing its value as a principle of investigation. The general laws of evidence are, of course, the same for all branches of human inquiry, so that results reached in science will be valuable also in theology, so far as theology is based upon evidence and not (as so much of it is) upon intuitive axioms. I hope to be able to show that Hume's canon, as applied to science, not merely hinders the attainment of truth, but leads in many cases to positive error, and thus to discredit it both as a scientific and also as a theological principle.

## I

A Modernist professes to believe in *progress*—progress both in secular and in religious knowledge; but unfortunately he fails to recognize that the canon of Hume, to which he is so strongly attached, so far from assisting progress, is one of the most reactionary and obscurantist principles imaginable. It erects a complete barrier against all fundamental (as distinguished from detailed) progress in science, by forbidding scientists to take cognizance of any fact which is absolutely unexampled and new. It does not prevent progress in matters of detail. It allows new facts to be assimilated provided that they are analogous to facts already known, *but it completely forbids the acceptance of all unique, anomalous, and revolutionary facts whatsoever*; and inasmuch as most of the epoch-making advances of science have been due to the establishment, against strong conservative opposition, of facts of this kind, it is obvious that the Humian principle, if seriously acted upon, condemns science to sterility.

The baneful effects of this principle (which has been far too influential in the past) are writ large upon the past history of all the sciences. Belief in it hindered the acceptance of the physical discoveries of Roger Bacon

and Galileo, the medical discoveries of Paracelsus and William Harvey, and (as we have seen) the psychological discoveries of Mesmer. At the present time the same irrational prejudice (for it is no more) hinders, not merely the acceptance, but even the investigation, by orthodox science, of the anomalous and perplexing problems which are the subject-matter of 'Psychical Research,' such as thought-transference, premonitions, clairvoyance, phantasms of the living and the dead, supposed communications with the departed; and alleged physical phenomena, such as fire-walking, 'levitation' of persons, and mysterious movements of objects without physical contact.<sup>1</sup> All these things contradict ordinary experience, and it may be that none, or very few of them, are really genuine. Nevertheless they are all capable of being established by evidence, if evidence is forthcoming. Those who maintain that they are impossible, and therefore not worth investigating, forget that only a generation ago the now admitted facts of hypnotism, of the subliminal consciousness, and of stigmatization were among the 'impossible' things with which orthodox science refused to have anything to do.

## II

It is sometimes maintained by Modernists that their true position is that it is only when an alleged event contradicts a known law of nature, and not when it simply contradicts previous 'experience,' that they regard it as incredible.

This is a correct position to take up if by 'the laws of nature' are understood only the most fundamental of all, which are also laws of reason, and are known, not by experience, but by intuition or by reasoning from truths which are known by direct intuition. Thus all

<sup>1</sup> Upon the last subject the following recent books by the late Dr. W. J. Crawford of Belfast are worth consulting: (1) *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena*; (2) *Experiments in Psychical Science*.

events which are inconsistent with the law of causation, or the law of contradiction, or the axioms of geometry or arithmetic, are correctly described as incredible, as violating the fundamental and unchanging and necessary laws of nature and reason.

The immense majority of 'the laws of nature,' however, are based merely upon experience (or rather reasoning from experience), and it is obvious that whatever is established by experience can be modified by fresh experience. Whether these secondary or 'experimental' laws of nature are immutable or not, is a question upon which neither metaphysicians nor scientists are entirely agreed.<sup>1</sup> But that *human knowledge* of them is mutable, admits of no doubt whatever. Some, it is true, have suffered little or no change since their first discovery, e.g. the law of gravitation and the law of chemical combination in multiple proportions; but others (such as the law of the incompressibility of fluids and Boyle's law of the compressibility of gases) have been modified perceptibly by recent research. In some cases supposed laws of nature have actually been disproved and abandoned. Thus the physical 'law' that nature abhors a vacuum was exploded by the experiments of Torricelli; the dynamical 'law,' laid down by Aristotle, that bodies fall towards the earth with velocities proportionate to their weights, was dramatically disproved by Galileo in his famous experiment at the leaning tower of Pisa; the 'law' that diseases originate from disordered 'humours' has been replaced in our own time by the germ theory; the 'law' of the immutability of species has been replaced, since the publication of Darwin's great work, by the opposite theory of their variability; the 'law' that all living organisms require oxygen has been

<sup>1</sup> The older scientific view was that even the 'secondary' laws of nature are immutable. But the most recent physical theory is, that matter has been gradually evolved from something simpler, and that accordingly the laws of matter did not exist until matter existed.

disproved by recent researches into the nature of fermentation.

We conclude, therefore, that it is unphilosophical and unscientific to pronounce an event incredible merely because it contradicts or seems to contradict one or more of the merely 'secondary' laws of nature which rest only upon the basis of experience. The duty of the scientific investigator is to examine the evidence for the alleged event, and, if he finds it satisfactory, to amend the supposed 'law of nature' which it contradicts, not to disbelieve the ascertained fact.

### III

It should further be noticed that to pronounce an event incredible merely because it seems to contradict the laws of nature is to assume that scientists *already know all the laws of nature*, which is absurd. New laws of nature are being continually discovered, and it is always a tenable hypothesis that a unique and unaccountable phenomenon is the effect of a law which has not yet been discovered.

Besides, it is a fact of continual experience that the laws of nature 'interfere' with one another, modifying or annulling effects which but for such interference would assuredly take place. Thus the microbes of health in the human body are continually at war against the microbes of disease; vaccines counteract certain maladies; magnets raise masses of iron from the earth, and aeroplanes fly in the air, counteracting the usual effects of gravitation. Consequently it is often possible to explain an anomalous event as due to 'interference,' in which case the question of a contradiction of natural law does not arise.

### IV

The acts of human free will (and even the spontaneous acts of animals) have never yet been reduced (and are

not likely to be) to any 'laws of nature,' and are consequently essentially *unpredictable*. It follows that even if all the laws of nature were known to us, all human and many animal acts, would be incapable of explanation by any natural laws—in fact, from the standpoint of those laws they would be miracles. It follows that if we suppose (as we ought) that the action of God upon nature is analogous to that of the human will, we must expect to find in nature many facts and events which natural causation cannot explain. As J. S. Mill well says, in criticism of Hume: "The interference of human will with the course of nature is not an exception to law; and by the same rule interference by the divine will would not be an exception either."<sup>1</sup>

## V

Hume frequently contradicts his own statement that all evidence is opposed to miracles, and none is in their favour, without noticing the inconsistency. For example, speaking of the recent alleged miracles at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, the famous Jansenist, he says: "Many of the miracles were immediately proved upon the spot, before judges of unquestioned integrity, attested by witnesses of credit and distinction, in a learned age, and in the most eminent theatre that is now in the world. The curing of the sick, giving hearing to the deaf, and sight to the blind, were everywhere talked of as the usual effects of this holy sepulchre."

But if there is all this profusion of strong evidence in favour of miracles, what becomes of Hume's assertion that "a firm and unalterable experience" has established the unvarying Uniformity of Nature, and that "the proof against a miracle is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined"? Even John Mill admits that at this point Hume has blundered.

<sup>1</sup> *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 227

## VI

It may be replied that even if the preceding argument suffices to prove that a quite unexampled event ought to be accepted if it is well attested, it by no means suffices to prove it a miracle.

That is so ; but the first and usually the most difficult step in proving a miracle is to prove the historical truth of the extraordinary event alleged to be a miracle. Not until the fact itself is proved does the further question arise of its origin or cause, which may either be physical or psychical, and, if psychical, either (1) human, or (2) angelic, or (3) divine, or (4) diabolical, according to its circumstances or intrinsic nature.

The essential point to notice is, that if Hume's canon is false (as we trust has already been shown), none of the Gospel miracles, not even the most amazing, can be pronounced incredible in principle. We are able to examine the evidence without bias for or against it, and, if it seems to be strong, to accept it with a clear conscience, without feeling that we are doing violence to any rational principle either of science or philosophy. With regard to the origin of the Gospel miracles (supposing them to be facts), their general benevolent character, and their close connexion with the religious mission of Jesus, renders their attribution to any other being than God practically impossible.

## WHAT THINGS ARE IMPOSSIBLE

Before passing from this most important part of our subject, it is essential for the reader to realize that there is no event of so marvellous a nature (provided it is not absolutely impossible in the sense explained), that it cannot be proved by evidence—even by a comparatively small amount of evidence—provided it is of good quality.

The evidence of a few reliable scientific witnesses

would suffice to establish that there are sea-serpents several miles long in the Pacific Ocean, that there are fire-breathing dragons in the swamps of Brazil, that there are fakirs in the Himalayas who possess the mysterious power of 'levitation,' that there is an area in Central Africa where the weight of a pound is reduced to an ounce and men can jump over palm-trees; nay, even that there are in unexplored regions of the earth centaurs, and phœnixes, and satyrs, and mermen, and hippogriffs, and cyclops, and monsters like Scylla. Such discoveries would necessitate the entire reconstruction of the sciences, especially the biological; but in the past there have been several reconstructions of an extremely drastic kind, and it is impossible to forecast with certainty what amount of reconstruction future discoveries may necessitate.

On the other hand, if the same witnesses (or if thousands of witnesses) were to assert that they had visited a country where two plus two amounted to five, and the diameters of all circles were longer than their circumferences, and physical objects were capable of being in several places at once, they would not be credited, for the very sufficient reason that the things asserted are *impossible*, as contradicting not merely empirical laws of nature, but laws of nature which are also *laws of reason*, and as such *absolutely immutable*.

#### OTHER ARGUMENTS AGAINST MIRACLES

Besides Hume's, the only other arguments against miracles worth mentioning are (1) the Naturalistic or Materialistic, (2) the Pantheistic, (3) the Deistic.

We need not here deal with the first, because it is rejected by Modernists as decisively as by orthodox Christians; nor with the second, because it is only those forms of Pantheism which deny God's personality which are really inconsistent with miracles, and these forms

are rejected by Modernists ; nor with the third, because the Deistic conception of the universe as a machine (a clock, for instance), which God constructed and wound up long ago and left to the operation of its own mechanical laws, is as hateful to present-day Liberalism as it has always been to Orthodoxy.

### THE UNIVERSE AS AN ORGANISM

Our positive proof of the reality of Miracle as a cosmic fact and principle starts with the assumption (common to Orthodoxy and Modernism) that the Universe is indwelt by the Spirit (or the Logos) of God, and therefore resembles *a living organism* rather than a lifeless machine.

It is not, of course, an ordinary organism, or even an organism at all in the strictest sense of the term. In all ordinary organisms, the psychical element or 'soul' is incomplete (and perhaps cannot even exist) without the body in which it finds outward expression. This is the case even with man, for though the human soul is capable of *existing* (as in the Intermediate State) without the body, its complete and perfect life does not begin until the Resurrection. God, on the other hand, is complete without the Universe, which He infinitely transcends. He does not need it for His self-expression, and it reveals but an infinitesimal portion of His infinite perfections. He has made it out of pure bounty and benevolence, for the benefit of His rational creatures, not for His own.

Nevertheless, the least inadequate way of conceiving of God's relation to the Universe or Cosmos, is to think of it as analogous to an *organic* relation. This, at any rate, is nearer the truth than to think of it as similar to the external relation of a clockmaker to his clock, or of an engine-builder to his engine. The famous lines of Pope—

"We are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul"—

are a poetic exaggeration of the Christian standpoint, but they represent the truth of things far more nearly than the machine-theory of the Deists, or even the less mechanical transcendentalism of Aristotle.

Both machines and organisms are the expressions of a rational principle and purpose ; but whereas in the case of a machine the rational principle is situated *outside it* in the mind of its designer or maker, in the case of an organism the rational principle is situated *within it*. It follows that no degree of spontaneity is possible to a machine. All its movements being predetermined, they repeat themselves with monotonous regularity, and are incapable of adjustment to changed conditions. An organism, on the other hand, however humble—even one as simple as the amœba, which consists of a single cell and apparently possesses no organs of sensation—has always *some* degree of spontaneity and adaptability. Its rational principle being immanent within it, adjustment to changed conditions is always possible. This is especially evident in the case of the higher organisms, which possess organs of sensation and movement, a clear indication of a more developed consciousness.

It is now generally agreed among physiologists and psychologists, that although mechanical and chemical principles are involved in the movements and functions of organisms, mechanics and chemistry are insufficient of themselves to explain them. Such movements and functions seem to be directed by an indwelling *teleological* principle, which seeks the proper good both of the individual and of the race. Thus some actions of organisms are the result of an implanted instinct of *self-preservation*, and others (especially those connected with sex) are obviously directed towards the preservation of *the race*. In neither case is a full explanation of the actions in terms of mechanics and chemistry possible.

Still more obviously in the case of man, who is endowed with reason, free will, and some degree of apprehension

of the good, the beautiful, and the true, does the purely mechanical and chemical explanation of his actions and works break down. The distinctive works of man—e.g. schools, colleges, churches, pictures, statues, books, microscopes, telescopes, hospitals, orphanages, asylums—are all physical facts, but their causes are spiritual, not physical. Among them may be mentioned, love of God, love of knowledge, love of artistic beauty, and disinterested love of the human race.

The laws of physics and chemistry are not *violated* by such human works as these, but they are certainly *transcended*. Animal organisms unconsciously, human organisms consciously, use the substances and forces of physical nature to attain their own non-mechanical ends. It follows that not even the mechanical (much less the spiritual) future of the universe is predictable, even in principle. If Laplace's imagined omniscient calculator had been located in the original Nebula from which the Solar System originated, he would not have been able to predict the emergence of the human mind, and therefore not of the *works* of the human mind, such as clothes, houses, tools, machinery, roads, bridges, and canals, *which, though physical facts, have no physical causes or explanations.*<sup>1</sup>

According to modern ideas, no function or act of any organism is *entirely* determined by mechanical or chemical laws. The 'routine' functions of an organism, such as the beating of the heart, the expansion and contraction of the lungs, the separation from the blood of the secretions, the digestion and assimilation of food, and the whole class of what are ordinarily called 'reflex' actions, may seem to be purely mechanical or chemical, but

<sup>1</sup> An excellent popular refutation of the mechanistic psychology and physiology will be found in J. S. Haldane's *Mechanism, Life, and Personality* (1914). For more technical discussions see especially H. Driesch, *The Science and Philosophy of the Organism*, and E. B. Wilson's classical work *The Cell*, particularly the remarkable passage on p. 433.

inasmuch as they all form part of a rational and teleological 'system,' whose primary aim is the proper good of the organism and of the race, and which directs and controls them in these interests, it is *certain* that the mechanical explanation even of these functions is insufficient. What possible mechanical or chemical explanation, for instance, can there be of the blush of shame at wrongdoing, or of tears of repentance for sin, or of the inhibiting of sensual thoughts and acts by the virtuous will, or even of the more rapid circulation and respiration brought about by the mental resolution to walk faster or to run? In all these cases the determining causes are psychical, not physical, and the mechanical explanations, so confidently offered by nineteenth-century Naturalism, seem now to the majority of scientists (as they have always seemed to common-sense and to nearly all philosophers) simply preposterous.

#### APPLICATION TO THEOLOGY

The application of this (now generally accepted) theory of the relation of the soul to the body, to the relation of God to the Universe, is vitally important to theology in many ways, but we are only concerned with it now from the point of view of the light which it sheds upon the obscure problems connected with miracles, providences, and answers to prayer.

#### I

It follows necessarily from the assumption of God's immanence (unless His immanence is regarded as entirely inert, and therefore not worth assuming at all), that the life of the Universe, as indwelt by the Spirit of God, resembles the spontaneous and purposive life of an organism, not the predetermined and monotonous functioning of a soulless machine.

Upon the hypothesis of Immanence, which Modernists

as well as Traditionalists accept, *God is free in His own Universe*, not indeed to violate His own laws<sup>1</sup> (which there is no evidence that He ever does, though the possibility of it can never be excluded), but certainly free to direct and use them for the attainment of His own righteous ends, with even more than that lordship and sovereignty with which man in his lower estate uses them for the attainment of his more limited ends.

If man can so freely control and use the forces of nature without violating natural law—if he can use sunlight for the purposes of photography, electricity to light his dwellings and carry his messages, heat to raise the steam which propels his locomotive engines and steamships, winds and streams to turn the mills which grind his corn; if, further, he can change the flora and fauna and physical condition of the earth which he dominates, cutting down forests, draining fens, reclaiming land from the sea, deciding what plants shall grow or be eradicated, and what animals shall be preserved or be exterminated; if he can even (though as yet only to a limited extent) control the climate and alter the weather—then it is evident that God the Creator not only can, but actually does perform on a large scale such acts of dominion over matter as man performs on a limited scale: viz. direct the whole of the physical forces of nature towards the attainment of universal good, the good of man being a not unimportant part of that good.

## II

It follows, further, from the doctrine of Immanence, that we ought to regard God, not so much as a Great Engineer or Great Carpenter, or even as a Great Archi-

<sup>1</sup> If God is personal, it is possible in the abstract that God (like an earthly sovereign) may sometimes suspend His own laws (i.e. those laws which are contingent, not necessary) to suit particular cases or emergencies. But this supposition is rejected by nearly all theologians, and is not required for the proof of miracles.

fect, but rather as *the Supreme Creative Artist*, who did not exhaust His originality and fertility of imagination in the initial act of creation, *but who is the Creator still*, fashioning every moment something unique, the like of which never was before and never will be again, weaving day by day upon the vast loom of the universe some entirely new design, and continually producing from the inexhaustible stores of His creative fertility absolutely new and unexampled forms of goodness, beauty, and truth.

It is this free, artistic, and entirely non-mechanical aspect of God's creative activity (so different from the crude mechanical theories of nineteenth-century Naturalism) which Bergson has so firmly grasped and vividly portrayed in his greatest work, *L'Évolution Créatrice* (Paris, 1907, E.T. 1911). If we substitute for Bergson's vague, elusive, and apparently impersonal *élan vital*, the more definite and satisfactory conception of a personal God who is immanent as well as transcendent, we reach a theory of the universe and its development which is at once orthodox and modern—a theory which both Traditionalists and Modernists will be wise if they accept as approximately true.

### III

The cosmology of Bergson resembles that of traditional Christianity in laying the chief stress upon the idea of 'the good' rather than upon mere physical 'fact,' as Naturalism does. To Bergson, as also to Croce (who in this respect is more Christian than he knows), the evolution or development of the universe consists essentially of the continual emergence of *new qualities and values, æsthetic, spiritual, and moral*, not, as to Herbert Spencer and other exponents of Naturalism, in the unending movement and mechanical redistribution of an unchanging matter and force. The Bergsonian philosophy hinges upon the conception of spontaneity or creative free will,

which it attributes both to man, and in fuller degree to the immanent *élan vital* of the universe, which is the Bergsonian equivalent for God. It regards the course of the world's history, not as rigidly determined beforehand, but as freely created from moment to moment by the spontaneous acts of God (or rather, the *élan vital*), and of inferior minds like man's.

It is obvious that such a conception of the universe as this leaves ample room for belief both in answers to prayer and in miracles—even physical miracles. The history of the world being not made already, but being continually in the making, it is evident that it is possible for God to respond to prayer by immediate voluntary acts, which may take the form either of internal movements of grace, or of outward providences, or even of miracles, which are nothing, upon the theory we are defending, but providences of a specially dramatic and striking kind.

#### THE SUPERNATURAL AND THE MIRACULOUS

The reader will already have noticed that upon this view of the relation of God to the Universe there is no difference whatever in principle between God's *supernatural* acts and His *miraculous* acts. The Supernatural or the Miraculous (whichever name is preferred) is not an occasional *intrusion* into the order of the universe, which at other times is purely natural and mechanical, but rather *a permanent element in that order, resulting from the fact that the Spirit of God is immanent within it.* Just as the immanence of the human soul or spirit in the human body makes it *a living organism*, with the result that not a single act or function of the human body—not even those functions which seem of a purely 'routine' character, such as digestion—are determined by purely physical causes; so the immanence of God in the universe brings with it as a *necessary* result, that *there is not a single purely mechanical fact in the entire*

*universe*, and that even the motions of the winds and the tides and the revolutions of the heavenly bodies do not obey quite strictly the abstract laws of mechanics, but, as forming part of *the living organism of the universe*, are controlled by the indwelling Spirit of God in such a way that their motions subserve the good of the entire system of the universe, and especially of the rational part of it, to which man belongs.

If it be replied that the motions of the heavenly bodies, at any rate, *appear* to be mechanical,<sup>1</sup> the reply is that so also do most of the internal functions of the human body. Indeed, brain-physics, for its own peculiar purposes, usually treats the movements of the brain-cells as mechanical; and physiology, in the interests of simplicity of treatment, usually explains digestion, assimilation, and secretion in terms of chemistry, though no competent physiologist whose conception of physiology is typically modern would be likely to assert that the physiology of the organism can be *entirely* explained in terms of mechanics and chemistry. He would probably admit that inasmuch as an organism has a *psychical* as well as a physical aspect, its actions and reactions must be psycho-physical, and not merely physical, and that inasmuch as the organism is a *teleological system* in which the parts are subordinated to the whole, probably not a single function of the organism—not even the functions of respiration or secretion—are purely mechanical.

### THE THEORY OF PARALLELISM

The tendency of Modernism is to admit *spiritual* miracles (or providences), but to deny *physical* miracles (or providences). For example, the typical Modernist

<sup>1</sup> Our most refined methods of observation are unable to detect small changes, but even to these methods the motions of the heavenly bodies do not in all cases even *appear* to be uniform. For instance, during the last few years the moon's motion has become distinctly accelerated for no reason which science has yet been able to detect.

will maintain that it is right and reasonable to pray for grace, but wrong and unreasonable to pray for rain.

He does not realize that in taking up this position he is involving himself in a *palpable contradiction*—a contradiction of the fundamental principle of Immanence. If he treats this principle seriously (as he is bound to do if he wishes to rank as a thinker) he is absolutely compelled to hold that the universe resembles a *living organism*, and that the material part of it is as directly moved and controlled by the Spirit of God immanent within it as the human body is moved and controlled by the human spirit immanent within it. If God is immanent in the universe, it follows that He is immanent in matter, and therefore that *He moves matter*—moves it purposively, as spirit always does, not mechanically as one piece of matter moves another. We are compelled to believe this unless we make the grotesque assumption that His immanence in matter is merely nominal and produces no effect.

Upon one, and only upon one theory of the relation of soul (or mind or spirit)<sup>1</sup> to body, is it possible to affirm spiritual miracles (such as those of conversion and grace) while denying physical miracles (such as answers to prayers for rain), and that is the theory, once popular but now largely discredited, of *Psycho-physical Parallelism*. According to this theory, credible enough in the days of mid-Victorian Materialism, but hardly credible now (though it still lingers here and there in Modernist and Liberal circles), there is no causal interaction of any kind between mind and body. Mind cannot act upon body, nor body upon mind. Though so closely connected together, as forming a single living organism, they exercise not the slightest influence of any kind upon one another. The body's movements are determined, not by

<sup>1</sup> The same substance or entity (but from different points of view and emphasizing different activities) is described by the three terms soul, spirit, mind.

acts of will, which are powerless to produce physical effects of any kind, but only by previous physical movements, the causation being thus of a purely mechanical kind. Similarly the mind's thoughts are determined neither by external objects which are apprehended by the senses, nor by the internal states of the brain and nervous system, but simply and solely by the previous thoughts of the mind. Thus each of the two chains of causation, the physical and the psychical, is complete in itself, and neither of them has or can have the slightest effect upon the other. As Professor W. K. Clifford once forcibly put the matter, "If anybody says that the [human] will influences matter, the statement is not untrue, it is nonsense."<sup>1</sup>

Of course, if Parallelism is true—if mind cannot act upon matter, nor matter upon mind—it follows logically that God, even if immanent in the world, can produce no physical effects in it, and that therefore both physical miracles and physical providences are impossible. But it is possible to purchase the right to deny physical miracles at too heavy a cost—a cost so enormous that I doubt whether (upon reflection) even the most ardent of Modernists will be found ready to pay it. For if Parallelism is true, the following (among other) absurdities follow: that toothache is not caused by decayed teeth, but by previous anticipations of toothache; that the pain of a schoolboy's thrashing is not caused by the schoolmaster's rod, but by the boy's anticipatory fears; that it is impossible for a man by an act of will, however strong, to move his arms or legs or to direct his eyes toward an object which he wishes to observe; and that it is not the devout Christian's resolution to take part in public

<sup>1</sup> *Lectures*, vol. ii, p. 33. Tyndall, Huxley, and even Shadworth Hodgson have also espoused this strange theory, which Herbert Spencer (though like them a semi-materialist) had the penetration to reject. It is also decisively rejected by Wm. James in his *Principles of Psychology*, by J. Ward (art. "Psychology," *Encycl. Brit.*), and by Bergson.

worship which carries his body to church on Sundays, but simply and solely his body's automatic action. I am glad to be able to quote, as on my side in this matter, so representative a Modernist as Dean Inge. He declares expressly in *Contentio Veritatis* that the only real argument against physical miracles is the theory of Parallelism, and that if this can only be disproved, physical miracles are credible: "Many thinkers," he says, "who are not writing in the interests of Christian dogma, maintain this interaction [of soul and body] against the rival hypothesis of psycho-physical parallelism. *Once admit this possibility, and there is no bar to accepting [physical] miracle, if it is well attested.*"

Since these words were written (1902), the "many thinkers" who reject Parallelism have become the majority, and the present tendency of psychologists is to regard it as a mere belated survival of nineteenth-century Naturalism. It has probably received its final *coup de grâce* in the exhaustive work (*Mind and Body*, 1911) of Professor Wm. McDougall, who certainly has no theological axe to grind, and to this the reader is referred for further information. I have myself attempted to expose some of the *unspeakable absurdities* (no weaker description is adequate) to which this theory necessarily leads in an earlier work.<sup>1</sup>

### THE ARGUMENT FROM EVOLUTION

It is now time to redeem the promise made at the beginning of this chapter to prove the possibility and fact of miracles (even of physical miracles) from that very principle (viz. of Evolution or Development) which is popularly supposed to exclude them.

The following argument in proof of this turns upon the question whether Evolution is a natural or a supernatural (i.e. a miraculous) process. If it is a natural process,

then there is a presumption (not overwhelming, but strong) against special miracles occurring in the course of it; if on the other hand the process is supernatural (or miraculous), then there is a presumption of the opposite kind.

## I

Until the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, the scientific (as distinct from the philosophical) argument against miracles can hardly be said to have existed. Scientists almost universally believed in the Linnæan doctrine of the Immutability of Species, and were thus committed to the belief that every one of the many thousands of existing and extinct species of plants and animals had once been formed from the dust of the earth by a special miracle of instantaneous creation. No miracles recorded in the Gospels are of so amazing a character as the sudden production out of the earth of the first pairs of lions, horses, oxen, and other animals, in which practically every scientist (except Lamarck) of the pre-Darwinian age firmly believed.

When, however, Darwin had proved, or at least rendered probable, that species are not immutable, but have originated in the course of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of years, from some very simple primitive germ or germs by a process of gradual development, under the influence of the entirely non-miraculous law of Natural Selection; and especially when in his subsequent work, *The Descent of Man* (1871), he had explicitly applied the same principle of explanation to the origin of the human species, it seemed to the advocates of Naturalism, among whom should be reckoned not only thorough-going materialists like Häckel and Büchner, but also semi-materialists like Spencer and Huxley, that the entire process of development of the solar system from the Nebula to Man might be explained by purely natural (i.e. mechanical and chemical) causes, without assuming any miracle.

## II

The argument that the evolutionary process is a natural one, is ordinarily stated as follows. It is conceded that had the production of Man from the Nebula been an instantaneous, or even a very rapid process, it could not be naturally explained. But it is contended that if the process be regarded as spread over a practically infinite period, each upward step becomes so exceedingly small that natural causes are sufficient to account for it. But if each step regarded separately can thus be naturally explained, it seems to follow that the whole process can be naturally explained.

## III

This argument evidently turns upon the question of the causal efficacy of time, and there can be no doubt that, as a general rule, the efficacy of causes can be indefinitely increased by increasing the time during which they operate. For example, a pumping-engine which could not fill a reservoir in one day, might fill it in a week or a month; an express train which could not reach Worcester from London in one hour, might do so in two; and a lesson which could not be learnt by a pupil in five minutes, might be learnt in ten or twenty.

But in every case in which time thus increases the efficacy of the cause, the cause is naturally adapted to produce the effect required. If it is not so adapted, it will not produce the effect, even if it operates through infinite time.<sup>1</sup> For example, an entirely unmusical person will not produce such an opera as *Don Giovanni* or *Lohengrin* even if he devotes his whole life or even eternity to the task. Similarly, a person without humour could not possibly write such a book as *The Pickwick Papers*, nor

<sup>1</sup> That is, through time indefinitely prolonged. As explained above, the idea of *absolutely* infinite time probably involves a contradiction.

could an inartistic person paint such pictures as Turner's, nor an undramatic person write such a play as *Macbeth*, nor a fool or commonplace person produce any work of genius whatever, however long the time which he chose to occupy in the attempt. Similarly, a force of attraction, like gravitation, could never, however long it acted, produce the effect of repulsion; nor could the forces of international jealousy and hatred ever produce international peace and goodwill.

The task, therefore, which the advocates of Naturalism have to undertake, if they wish to prove Evolution a natural process, is to show that the causes which existed in the original Nebula (viz. matter and energy) were of a kind fit and sufficient to produce the final effect, viz. Man. Of course, if matter is the kind of cause which is naturally adapted to produce mind, they may hope to prove their case; but if they cannot, their argument cannot even begin.

The principle of Causality requires us to assign to every effect, not merely a cause, but an *adequate* cause; and by an adequate cause is meant one which in magnitude and excellence is at least equal to the effect. Mind is more excellent than matter, and therefore that mind should produce matter (as in the case of the creation of the universe by God we believe it has actually done) is perfectly credible, and involves no contradiction. But it involves an absolute contradiction—in fact, an absurdity—to suppose that matter under any circumstances by its own unaided powers could generate mind. To suppose that the absolutely unintelligent and lifeless gases of the Nebula could have produced *without supernatural assistance* the mind of an Aristotle, or a Shakspeare, or a Newton, is as great an absurdity as to suppose that an absolute imbecile could have written *Paradise Lost*. Indeed, it is a greater absurdity, because even an imbecile possesses *some* intelligence, but the Nebula *ex hypothesi* possessed none.

## IV

It is pleaded that though intelligence was not *actually* in the Nebula, it was there *potentially*; in other words, that though intelligence was not present at first, it came to be present afterwards, and that by a purely natural process.

Upon this argument (if it can be called one) two observations may be made. First, that to be something actually is far better than to be something potentially. For example, it is far better to be an actor, or mathematician, or philosopher, or saint *actually*, than to be one only potentially; for to be one only potentially, is not to be an actor, mathematician, philosopher, or saint at all. It follows that even if there is such a thing as 'potential intelligence,' and if 'potential intelligence' was really present in the Nebula, it cannot possibly have been the cause of the *actual* intelligence of Aristotle and Shakspeare and Newton, because what is merely potential is not only inferior in excellence to what is actual, but *infinitely inferior*. Secondly, there is no evidence that intelligence was in the Nebula at all, either actually or potentially. It is only assumed to have been there, in order to afford a starting-point for the Naturalistic argument, to which, however, it affords no real help. The only rational way of accounting for the upward course which Evolution has uniformly pursued from the Nebula to Man is to assume that a *Supernatural Cause* at least equal to (in fact, infinitely greater than) the mind of Man co-operated with the purely physical forces present in the Nebula to produce the final effect, *Homo sapiens*. To believe in Evolution without believing in God as its efficient cause involves a palpable contradiction—a contradiction of the principle of Causality, one of the root principles not only of science and philosophy, but also of common-sense.

## EVOLUTION A PERPETUAL MIRACLE

How absolutely miraculous the entire evolutionary process is, may perhaps be rendered clearer by a familiar illustration. Suppose that the statue of the Apollo Belvidere in the Vatican Gallery were suddenly to warm into living flesh and blood (as in old time Pygmalion's ivory statue is said to have done through the miraculous power of the goddess Venus),<sup>1</sup> and, descending from its pedestal, were to walk about and talk, no one would hesitate to call the event a miracle. But would the process be less a miracle if it occupied a week, a year, a century, or even a thousand years? Assuredly not. However long it took, it would remain a miracle—a miracle as great and undeniable as though it had occupied only a moment.

The miracle of the evolution of Man from the Nebula is *a miracle of the same order*, involving precisely the same degree of supernaturalism as the legendary miracle of the transformation of Pygmalion's statue into the woman whom he married. The one miracle took longer than the other to effect, but the same degree of supernaturalism is involved in both.

We may conclude, therefore, confidently, that the evolutionary process is an irreducible miracle—a miracle at once physical and spiritual; and that therefore the occurrence of lesser miracles in the course of it is altogether credible.

## THE REV. J. M. THOMPSON'S OBJECTION

The Rev. J. M. Thompson does indeed contend<sup>2</sup> that the statement that all events are miraculous, is equivalent to a statement that all events are natural, but it is difficult to attach any distinct meaning to his words. If

<sup>1</sup> See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, x, 243 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Miracles in the New Testament*, pp. 2-5, etc.

they are meant seriously, it follows from the principle they assume, that to be always in pain is equivalent to being never in pain, to be always happy is equivalent to being never happy, and to be entirely green equivalent to not being green at all.

Mr. Thompson does not seem to realize that Naturalism and orthodox Christianity take entirely different views of *the nature of the facts* which constitute the Universe. Naturalism regards the Universe as a *machine*, and all the facts occurring in it as mechanically determined. Christianity regards it as a *living organism*, not a single function of which (in its whole nature) is mechanically determined. Naturalism regards answers to prayer, providences, and the Christian miracles as impossible, Christianity regards them as facts. Naturalism denies human and divine free will, Christianity affirms it. But we need not elaborate the numerous differences in detail. What has been already said is sufficient to prove that the mechanical and the organic views of the universe differ *toto cælo* from one another, and are quite incompatible.

#### MIRACLES AND THE INCARNATION

Modernists profess to believe in the Incarnation, seldom reflecting that in so doing they commit themselves to the whole principle of the miraculous.

The Incarnation is an obvious miracle, a psychical miracle, because its result is a personality divine as well as human; a physical miracle, because the God-man assumed a body which performed acts which it would not have performed had it been the body of an ordinary man.

Modernists labour to reduce the miraculous element involved in the Incarnation to a minimum, but they cannot eliminate it. The more extreme of them teach that all Christians will one day be Incarnations of God

in the sense in which Jesus Christ now is, but even they admit that, *so far as this world is concerned*, God's Incarnation in Him is unique, i.e. a miracle. Moreover, they believe in His *sinlessness*, an obvious miracle, and one far more difficult to credit than any of the physical miracles which He is alleged by the Evangelists to have wrought. It is more difficult to credit, first of all because it is hard to understand upon what possible adequate evidence (if the belief is to be based upon evidence) so far-reaching a conclusion can be based ; secondly, because there is some (though not very strong) evidence against it ; for instance, He submitted to John's Baptism of Repentance, and declared that God only is good (Mark x. 18) ; lastly, sinlessness is *contrary to all human experience*, and is not claimed even for the greatest saints, not even for the founders of the great ethnic religions, such as Moses, Mahomet, Buddha, and Zoroaster. It is very much easier to believe (if *evidence* is to decide) that Jesus walked upon the waves than that He was sinless, because there is a considerable, if insufficient, volume of evidence in favour of 'levitation,' which is alleged of saints like St. Teresa and St. Joseph of Cupertino, of the gymnosophists of ancient India (who, however, according to Philostratus, made no display of their amazing accomplishment, and did not consider it important <sup>1</sup>), and of 'mediums' like Home, who was never detected in fraud, and to one of whose most remarkable 'levitations' we possess the written testimony of three actual eye-witnesses. On the other hand, there is no evidence whatever, except in the case of Jesus, of human sinlessness.

If therefore we make up our minds to believe in the major miracle of the Incarnation, and its equally unique accompanying miracle of sinlessness, it seems altogether unreasonable to disbelieve (or raise captious objections against) the minor miracles which are asserted on good

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Apollonius*, Bk. iii. 15.

evidence to have accompanied it. For in the first place it is natural and almost necessary to suppose that a life which (if Jesus was really God as well as man) was a continuous miracle from beginning to end, contained special miraculous incidents of a striking kind ; and in the second place these special miracles (especially those selected for insertion in the Creeds) are so thoroughly harmonious with the theory of the Incarnation itself that they lend it strong confirmation. Thus the Virgin Birth marks at once the *continuity* of the nature of Jesus with that of ordinary humanity, and also (and still more strikingly) its *discontinuity*, as being the nature of one who was also God. Similarly, the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus harmonize admirably with the theory of His divine origin, and (according to the records which we possess) were among the most potent of the causes which generated belief in it among the first disciples.

Of course, in the abstract it is possible to believe in the divinity of one whose works were purely human ; but it is not possible in the concrete—at least, not possible for many, nor for long. It is the custom of common-sense to argue from effects to their causes. A purely human Christ may be able to dispense with miracles. A divine Christ cannot. From a divine Christ, divine works, exceeding the measure of ordinary humanity, are imperatively demanded ; and if they are not forthcoming, sober reason will be inclined to conclude that the ‘divine’ Christ is not really divine.

## CHAPTER IX

### MODERNISM AND BIBLICAL CRITICISM

#### AUTHORITY AND CRITICISM

THE Scriptures of the Old and New Testament form a portion—a very small portion—of the ancient literature which has been transmitted to us, and Modernists are quite right in insisting that the very same principles of ‘textual’ and ‘higher’ criticism,<sup>1</sup> which are applied to the secular writings of antiquity, should also be applied to the Bible. This demand should not be contested even by those Christians who attach the highest value to the doctrine of Biblical Inspiration. Indeed, the more strongly a Christian believes in Inspiration, the more anxious he ought to be to ascertain (1) the true text and (2) the true interpretation of the Bible, which he can only do by making use of ‘textual’ and ‘higher’ criticism.

Even if, following tradition, he regards the Church as the only authoritative and final interpreter of Scripture,<sup>2</sup> still the fact remains that the Church has not actually done more than lay down a few very broad and general rules to guide interpreters of Scripture (as, for instance, that Scripture must be interpreted as not contradicting the doctrines defined in the Creeds and

<sup>1</sup> The ‘lower’ or ‘textual’ criticism of the Bible aims at determining its true text; the ‘higher’ criticism concerns itself with the subject-matter, also with questions of date, authorship, and literary character.

<sup>2</sup> “The Church hath . . . authority in Controversies of Faith” . . . and is “a witness and keeper of holy Writ” (*Articles of Religion*, XX).

Councils) and has left all detailed comment to the private enterprise of individual scholars.

Moreover, it is necessary to remind ultra-traditionalists, that the Church has never yet, in any of its Creeds or Ecumenical decisions, pronounced officially or explicitly upon the authorship, date, or literary character (as distinguished from the Inspiration <sup>1</sup>) of any of the Sacred Books whatever, wisely leaving these and other kindred matters to the judgment of experts. Strange as it may appear, there is not any ecumenical definition even of Biblical Inspiration. No orthodox Christian is now, or ever has been, required to believe as part of his faith, either that the Bible is free from historical and scientific errors, or that it contains no human element, or that it is equally inspired in all its parts, or that God is its 'Author' (*auctor*) in a literary sense. Indeed, inasmuch as Christ criticized with great severity certain features of the Mosaic law (e.g. free divorce, the *lex talionis*, and, by implication, polygamy), and declared that they had been permitted merely for the hardness of men's hearts, it seems certain that the Old Testament (unless interpreted in the light of its general tendency, and of the fuller revelation for which it prepared the way) actually contains *moral error*, a blemish at least as serious, in the judgment of orthodox Christians, as theological error.

Furthermore, it is part of the traditional view of the Bible, that the Old Testament, being only a preparatory dispensation, is much less perfect than the New, and that in all cases where the two differ (or seem to differ) the New is to be preferred. Indeed, the Old Testament itself in not a few places explicitly recognizes its own provisional and imperfect character, and looks forward to the time when it will be superseded (in the Messianic

<sup>1</sup> The statement in the Nicene Creed that the Holy Ghost "spake by the prophets" refers to both Testaments, and has special reference to the Canonical Books of Scripture.

age) by a perfect and eternal covenant between God and man (Isa. lv. 3 ; Jer. iii. 1, 31 ; xxxii. 40 ; Ezek. xxxvii. 26 ; xi. 19). So vast is the superiority of the New Dispensation over the Old, that the greatest representative of the Old, John the Baptist, is declared by our Lord to be inferior to the 'least' (*μικρότερος*, literally 'a meaner member') in the New Kingdom (Matt. xi. 11 ; Luke vii. 28).

### THE PRINCIPLES OF CLASSICAL CRITICISM

The principles of textual and higher criticism are best learnt in the classical field, and that for two reasons : (1) the field of classical criticism is far wider and more varied than the Biblical, and (2) it is *neutral* territory, in which there is little danger of conclusions being influenced by theological proclivities. One of the principal causes of the present unsatisfactory state of New Testament criticism is that hardly any of the German theological specialists (to whose conclusions undue weight is attached in England) have received a sufficient preliminary training in the wider field of classical scholarship and criticism. The classical scholarship of Germany is indeed excellent, but unfortunately a full command of it is seldom possessed by German theologians. Only in the very few cases in which a German classical scholar migrates to the theological faculty of his University do the conditions arise which are needful for fruitful and really reliable work in the field of New Testament criticism. The twenty-seven short works which make up the canon of the New Testament are neither long enough nor varied enough to permit reliable critical principles to be deduced from them alone. Yet, as a rule, it is only of these, and of the history of the criticism of these, that the average German New Testament critic possesses any accurate knowledge. The narrowness which results from undue specialism is at present the evil genius of German theology,

and indeed of all theology which takes its principles from Germany.

Under existing circumstances it will not be time wasted if we devote a few pages to sketching in broad outline the main principles of textual and historical criticism as they are at present accepted by classical scholars at home and abroad, the more so as they differ very widely indeed from those which unfortunately still find favour with nearly all Modernists.

## I

The philosophic agnosticism of Kant contributed (as has been already explained) to a widespread rejection of traditional views, not only in the realm of theology, but also of classical learning. Parallel with the negative movement in Biblical criticism, which culminated for the Old Testament in Vatke, Reuss, and Graf, and for the New Testament in F. C. Baur, Strauss, and Bruno Bauer,<sup>1</sup> there arose a similar movement in the classical field. It became the fashion to deny or doubt the authorship of a large number of classical writings which had never been questioned before; to favour 'partition' theories of authorship; to dispute the authority of the entire manuscript tradition (especially by assuming extensive interpolations in the received text); and to dissolve a large number of well-attested historical events into legends or 'tendency' fictions.

<sup>1</sup> K. H. Graf opened the modern period of Pentateuchal criticism by proving that the whole priestly document, previously regarded as the *Grundschrift* (or oldest portion), is the most recent. Vatke and Reuss had previously taught that the Prophets are older than the Law, and the Psalms more recent than both. F. C. Baur, the founder of the modern 'tendency' criticism of the New Testament, reduced its genuine documents to five (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Revelation). Strauss developed the 'mythical' theory of the Gospel history. Bruno Bauer, starting as an orthodox Christian and an adherent of the Hegelian 'Right,' gradually lapsed into extreme views, denying first of all that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and finally, His very existence. He ended by rejecting all the New Testament documents, even those accepted by Baur.

## II

The negative school of classical criticism scored one notable success which seems likely to be permanent. A long line of Homeric critics, beginning with F. A. Wolf, whose epoch-making *Prolegomena* (Halle, 1795) marks the real re-opening<sup>1</sup> of 'the Homeric question' in modern times, seem to have established at least the two following negative conclusions: (1) that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are not by the same author; (2) that neither is a complete literary unit, both poems (especially the *Iliad*) being considerably interpolated.

Modern critics profess to discover in Homer a still greater multiplicity of 'documents' and 'sources,' and more evident indications of 'redaction' and late editing than the school of Graf and Wellhausen discovers in the Hexateuch.<sup>2</sup> A view of the *Iliad* now widely current regards its original nucleus (which may fitly be termed the *Achilleid* or *Wrath of Achilles*) as consisting only of books 1, 8, 11, 16, and 22, and perhaps not of the whole of these. Wolf broke up the two great poems into a number of short lays, which he regarded as originally distinct. W. Christ detected no less than forty of these lays in the *Iliad* alone. Even such a conservative scholar as Monro is inclined to surrender the whole of the tenth book of the *Iliad*, and to admit somewhat extensive interpolations in other books.

With regard to the *Odyssey*, which has much more coherence and unity than the *Iliad*, most modern scholars

<sup>1</sup> There were a few scholars even in antiquity who on critical grounds assigned the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to different authors. They noticed that in the former Hephæstus's wife is one of the Graces, in the latter Aphrodite; and that the *Iliad* makes Iris, the *Odyssey* Hermes, the messenger of Zeus. They also noticed differences in points of grammar and various archæological discrepancies. The arguments (or perhaps the authority) of Aristarchus, who wrote against these 'Separators,' finally prevailed.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. the Pentateuch and Joshua, which, according to modern ideas, form one work.

are inclined to reject the whole of the 11th book (describing Ulysses' adventures among the dead), and even Monro, who accepts the book as a whole, admits that lines 565-627 are interpolated.

Practically all modern critics acquiesce in the opinion of Aristarchus and Aristophanes, that *Odyssey*, xxiii. 296, is "the end of the *Odyssey*," and that the rest of the poem is by a later hand. They also accept the judgment of the ancient Museum that all the other poems attributed to the bard are spurious, even the fine hymn to the Delian Apollo, which Thucydides accepted without suspicion.

### III

But in practically every other case the conclusions of the negative critics of the nineteenth century have failed in the end to commend themselves to scholars, and that for a fairly obvious and sufficient reason. The epic poetry of Greece (in dealing with which alone negative criticism has achieved its successes) belongs to the prehistoric and legendary period, and consequently has no continuous literary tradition. The actual literary history of 'Homer' begins not earlier than the recension of Pisistratus (sixth century B.C.), which A. Ludwich<sup>1</sup> is probably right in identifying with the 'vulgate' (or 'textus receptus') of Homer, which accordingly dates from the middle of the sixth century B.C., and not (as has usually been taken for granted until recently) from the later period of the Alexandrian grammarians (the third century B.C. onwards). In the days of Pisistratus (c. 605-527 B.C.), 'Homer' was already a legendary figure, and

<sup>1</sup> See especially his important work, *Die Homer-vulgata als vor-Alexandrinisch erwiesen* (Leipzig, 1898), the main results of which are accepted by T. W. Allen (see *The Classical Review* for 1899, pp. 39 ff., 334 ff.), also by Monro, and by Leaf, who says: "The Peisistratean text is identical with the vulgate, which has held its own through all time."

authentic details concerning his life and writings were no longer procurable.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the fully historical period of Greek and Roman history, it may be said without fear of contradiction, that only in the rarest and most exceptional cases has modern criticism succeeded in shaking permanently the credit of works which antiquity unanimately accepted. Already in the Preface some striking instances have been given, in which recent criticism has entirely reversed the verdict of nineteenth-century scholars. It would be easy to add largely to these individual instances, but it will probably be more interesting to the reader, and certainly more likely to throw light upon our main subject of inquiry, if we proceed to discuss in some detail the recent revolution of critical opinion which has taken place with regard to that group of classical writings which most closely resembles the New Testament, *the Platonic Canon*.

### THE PLATONIC CANON

The Platonic Canon bears a close resemblance to the New Testament in at least the four following respects :

(1) In being a Canon, i.e. a defined body of literature, which all the followers of Plato, including in Christian times the Neo-Platonists, regarded as sacred and almost inspired.

(2) The canonical works of Plato were committed to and jealously guarded by a philosophic school founded by him (the Academy),<sup>2</sup> in much the same way as the

<sup>1</sup> I only indicate here, without discussing, the perplexing problem presented by the 'eccentric' text of Homer found in certain ancient quotations, and in the pre-Christian papyri, some of which date back as far as the third century B.C. It differs mainly from the 'vulgate' text in being longer, in which particular it resembles the so-called 'Western' text of the New Testament, and offers a similar problem to criticism.

<sup>2</sup> Plato committed his writings to his nephew Speusippus, who in 347 B.C. succeeded him as head of the Academy. His successors were

Apostolic Scriptures were committed to and jealously guarded by the Christian Church.

(3) In consequence of this, the canonical writings of Plato share with those of the New Testament the well-grounded reputation of being among the best attested works of antiquity, Vergil's alone, in all probability, having anything like the same amount and quality of external attestation.

(4) Outside the Platonic Canon were various 'Platonic' writings of lesser authority, which were valued by many, and were sometimes circulated along with the undisputed works (e.g. such dialogues as the *Axiochus*, the *Sisyphus*, and the *Eryxias*). Similarly, alongside the 'undisputed' writings of the New Testament, there were 'disputed' writings on the very border of the Canon (such as *Revelation*, *James*, *Hebrews*, *Jude*), which ultimately gained admission, and also certain 'ecclesiastical' writings (e.g. *Prima Clementis* and the *Pastor*), which were occasionally treated in early times as having at least semi-canonical rank.

The Platonic Canon consists of thirty-six dialogues (counting the Epistles as one), and of these, when the tide of negative criticism reached its height in the fifties and sixties, there remained only two, according to Socher, which were not contested by critics of credit and authority. Socher himself rejected thirteen, Hermann, Stallbaum, and Steinhart nine each, Ueberweg seven at least, Ast as many as twenty-two; and as these critics were by no means agreed as to which of the dialogues were spurious, nearly the whole of the canon of Plato fell under suspicion. The most important weapon employed by these negative

Xenocrates, Polemo, and Crates, with which last the period of 'the Old Academy' closes. It should be noticed that the ideas of 'succession' and 'tradition' in the philosophical schools and in the Christian Church closely resembled one another. The Christian bishop of an apostolic see was usually regarded as succeeding to the teaching chair of the apostolic founder, whose doctrinal tradition he was bound to (and usually did) maintain.

critics was discrepancy of doctrine between the dialogues, which in some cases was real, in others imaginary.

At the present time the general tendency of critics (represented, for example, by Blass) is to accept practically the whole of the dialogues as genuine. There is hardly a single one which has not strong defenders. For example, C. Ritter, a critic of far less conservative tendencies than Blass, accepts unreservedly twenty-five (which occupy 2,000 pages of text in the Teubner edition), regards as "not fully secure, but probable," the *Hippias Major* (36 pages), and rejects as spurious only six (*Platon, sein Leben, seine Schriften, seine Lehre*, 1910, vol. i, pp. 197-283).

#### THE PLATONIC EPISTLES

Both in this work and in his *Neue Untersuchungen über Platon* (1910), Ritter discusses the genuineness of the thirteen Platonic Epistles, which practically every nineteenth-century critic, except Grote, rejected, Jowett voicing the general judgment when he described them as "unworthy of Plato" and "flagrantly at variance with historical fact."

"These letters," says Ritter, "have been entirely rejected by criticism, but lately famous scholars have again taken them entirely into favour. It appears to be made out from my separate investigations, that three letters of the collection, the third, the seventh (i.e. apart from a certain section which I must treat as an interpolation), and in its kernel-contents the eighth, were either written by Plato's own hand or proceed at least from one of his most intimate friends. In that case they are witnesses of the first rank."

More conservative critics, such as H. Räder and Blass, accept practically the whole of them as genuine, except the supposed interpolation dealing with *ἐπιστήμη* in the seventh (pp. 342a-344d). Even this has recently found

a thorough-going and persuasive defender in A. E. Taylor (see his able article in *Mind*, 1912, pp. 347-370), and I am inclined to think that he has made out his case.

On the other side must be set that excellent authority, the late H. Richards, who, writing in *The Classical Review* (1900), rejects the whole of them. Even he, however, admits that their style is entirely Platonic, and gives as practically his sole reason for rejecting them that their contents are unworthy of Plato. This argument, though not without weight, cannot be regarded as convincing, because it assumes (1) that an author must always be at his best, and (2) that the same degree of perfection is to be expected in mere letters as in such highly elaborate works of art as the Platonic dialogues.

#### THE EVIDENCE OF PAPYROLOGY

The new evidence afforded by papyri is continually rendering more and more impossible the uncritical practice, widely current in the nineteenth century, of questioning the authorship of universally received documents; of requiring *demonstration* of authorship (a thing scarcely ever possible in the case of ancient writings, many of which are attributed to their authors solely on the authority of their MS. titles); of assuming that the current text is untrustworthy and largely interpolated; and of rejecting for little or no reason a large number of uncorroborated statements of ancient historians. The discoveries of the last quarter of a century have established beyond all possibility of doubt *the extraordinary fidelity to his exemplar, both of the ancient and even of the much-abused medieval scribe*. For example, it is now *certain* that the text of Homer has descended to us, with scarcely a single alteration, from the remote days of Pisistratus, when the first known recension of the text was made. As Dr. Leaf truly says: "Such as the vulgate [text of Homer] was before the days of Aristarchus, such it still remains.

. . . The great addition to our knowledge of the tradition made by the discoveries of papyri has shown how wonderfully tenacious and correct was the medieval scribe." Or as Professor A. C. Clark forcibly puts the matter: "The combined evidence seems to show that the *sciolus*, or the *mala manus*, that demon, sometimes foolish, sometimes cunning, but always malignant, who was supposed to haunt [the scribes of] the Dark Ages, was merely a phantom which has vanished in the daylight of further knowledge."

#### PROFESSOR A. S. HUNT'S VIEW

Professor A. S. Hunt thus sums up the general effect of recent papyrus discoveries upon classical criticism: "The chief lessons to be learnt from a study of the early evidence [of papyri] for the Greek classics, are, I think, three. First and most important, the general confirmation of tradition. Our classical texts are found to be substantially the same as they were at the beginning of the Christian era. . . . Secondly, I think that on the whole they tend to justify the methods of the best modern scholarship. . . . Thirdly, the papyrus texts . . . do not as a rule tend to support a single MS. or group of manuscripts. Editors must beware of pinning their faith to any one MS. or group." <sup>1</sup> After giving a considerable number of instances in which historical statements made by ancient writers, but doubted by modern critics, have been confirmed by new evidence furnished by papyri, he continues: "It is a grave mistake, therefore, to treat such reports of ancient historians cavalierly. They are not, of course, free from confusions and corruptions, against which it is right enough to be on guard; but to neglect their affirmations, or to dismiss them without

<sup>1</sup> The thorough-going supporters of the text of Hort, which rests practically upon a single manuscript, with some support from a very small group, should take note of this most important result of recent discoveries.

strong conflicting evidence, is not consistent with the principles of sound criticism. At any rate, those who are minded to flout early testimony, will do well to wait until the period of papyrus discovery is safely over" (*Papyri and Papyrology*; see also the Preface to this book).

### PROSE-RHYTHM

Within the last few years an entirely new weapon of criticism has been forged which has already achieved important results. It has been discovered (or rather re-discovered) that most ancient prose is definitely rhythmical, and that by carefully studying an author's rhythm it is often possible to ascertain whether a reputed work of his is really from his pen, and also whether a suspected passage is or is not an interpolation.

Cicero is the author whose rhythm has been most exhaustively studied as yet,<sup>1</sup> and the general result of investigation has been to confirm tradition. For example, the evidence of prose-rhythm has definitely proved spurious such works as the *Invective against Sallust*, the *Oratio . . . antequam iret in exilium*, and the *Consolatio*, which there are independent reasons for rejecting; but it has triumphantly vindicated the *Pro Archia*, the two orations, *Post Reditum*, the *Pro Marcello*, and the last three speeches, *In Catilinam*, which were rejected or doubted by eminent nineteenth-century critics for very insufficient reasons. As Professor Clark truly says: "The discovery of papyri has been termed a divine judgment for sceptical critics. Their discomfiture has been completed by a new weapon. I refer to the science of prose-rhythm. . . . We are now in possession of Cicero's thumb-marks, and can decide with certainty whether a suspected work is authentic or not. Here again we have to notice the bankruptcy of subjective criticism. From the time of

<sup>1</sup> The pioneer works are Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa* (1898) and Zielinski, *Das Clauselgesetz in Ciceros Reden* (1904).

Markland (1745) it was fashionable to reject as spurious the speeches *post reditum*. The objections were mainly based on matters of language and style. The speeches were termed weak, periphrastic, and unworthy of Cicero. Also, their Latinity was impugned. It is now shown that the *numeri* conform exactly to the Ciceronian canon. The artist's hand is attested by his private mark." <sup>1</sup> Professor Clark also draws attention to the numberless cases in which passages bracketed or omitted by nineteenth-century editors have lately been rehabilitated by the double witness of papyri and prose-rhythm. The rule *Præstat brevior lectio* <sup>2</sup> has now been proved to be liable to so many important exceptions that it is doubtful whether it ought any longer to be regarded as a rule at all. It certainly seems to be an established fact that the average ancient and medieval scribe was much more prone to omit than to add to his text,<sup>3</sup> from which it follows that in many cases the longer text is preferable to the shorter. *Innumerable* instances could be given, if space permitted, in which recent classical editors prefer the longer text.

#### APPLICATION TO BIBLICAL CRITICISM

A modern classical scholar, approaching the question of Biblical criticism from outside, without knowledge of (or without interest in) the theological controversies which for over a century have divided Biblical scholars into hostile camps, would arrive almost immediately at the following provisional conclusions, which he would expect perhaps to be slightly modified by subsequent detailed investigations, but not to be fundamentally changed.

<sup>1</sup> *Recent Developments in Textual Criticism* (1914).

<sup>2</sup> This rule is of more ancient lineage than is generally supposed. It goes back at least to Aristarchus, who applied it with a rigour which would have satisfied Hort himself.

<sup>3</sup> See A. C. Clark, *The Descent of Manuscripts* (1918), especially ch. i, "Omissions in Manuscripts."

## I

With regard to the Old Testament documents, which belong in large part to an early and almost prehistoric date, he would recognize that the results of the more moderate school of advanced criticism, those, for example, of Robertson Smith, Driver, Burney, and of *Hastings' Bible Dictionary* (not those of Cheyne and *The Encyclopædia Biblica*) are likely to be approximately correct. He would cordially approve, both in principle and in detail, of the methods upon which the literary analysis of the Hexateuch is based; he would also agree that much of the patriarchal history, and some even of the Mosaic (especially that which is recorded only in the later documents) is legendary; though he would probably be inclined to conjecture that the nucleus of genuine Mosaic legislation is larger than is generally supposed. He would point out that the recent discovery of the Code of Hammurabi confirms the tradition that Moses delivered to Israel a written law, and would contemplate as possible and even probable that a substantial portion of this original legislation (doubtless considerably modified to suit later conditions) still survives embedded in the compilation known as the Books of Moses. Similar considerations would lead him to acquiesce in modern views of the origin of the *Psalter*, and of the relative values of the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*.

With regard to *Daniel*, as soon as he recognized its apocalyptic character, he would regard it as improbable that it was written by the prophet himself. Classical scholarship has its own apocalyptic problem in *The Sibylline Oracles*, and scholars have long been aware (ever since, in fact, the critical edition of this work by C. Alexandre in 1841) that apocalyptic authors write usually under *assumed names*, and deal mainly with *contemporary or nearly contemporary events under very thin disguises*. Consequently he would regard it as antecedently

probable that the author of *Daniel* was a Jew who lived in Palestine in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (176-164 B.C.), in whose persecution of observers of the Law he shows so absorbing an interest, and that accordingly his work has probably as little connexion with the prophet Daniel as *The Sibylline Oracles* have with the Cumæan or any other Sibyl.<sup>1</sup>

## II

But such a scholar, summoned to pronounce judgment upon the New Testament books, would begin by declaring such extremely negative views as those of Schmiedel and Loisy, and even those of Harnack and Jülicher, quite unacceptable.

He would point out that with regard to the fully historical period (to which the books of the New Testament belong), modern critics are agreed that only in rare and quite exceptional cases is it possible to challenge the ancient ascription of authorship. He would therefore insist, prior to all detailed investigation, that it is practically certain that all, or nearly all, the New Testament books which the ancient Church *unanimously* received (viz. the Four Gospels, the thirteen Pauline Epistles, including the Pastorals, but omitting *Hebrews*; also 1 *Peter*, 1 *John*, and *Acts*) are genuine documents. Nor would he admit as likely the hypothesis of indirect authorship now so largely favoured by the mediating Liberal school, except in the single case of the First Gospel, where the tradition itself assigns only the groundwork to St. Matthew, leaving the exact relation between

<sup>1</sup> *The Sibylline Oracles*, originally a purely heathen compilation, became in its later redactions almost entirely Jewish and Christian. Vergil's magnificent fourth Eclogue is obviously based on a Jewish redaction, steeped in Messianic ideas. Of the purely heathen oracles we possess less than 100 lines, mainly preserved by Phlegon (second century A.D.).

St. Matthew's original Hebrew (or Aramaic) 'Logia' and the present Greek Gospel quite undetermined.<sup>1</sup>

### III

He would further deny that differences of style, or internal difficulties, or even *inconsistencies* between a given work and the alleged author's other works, ought to be allowed to outweigh the *unanimous* attestation of antiquity, unless they were of so extreme a character as to render it morally impossible to believe that the reputed author really wrote it.

Accordingly, if he were asked his opinion upon the somewhat marked difference of style between the Pastoral and the earlier Pauline Epistles, he would be likely to reply that it is not so great as that between the *Dialogue* and the *Annals* of Tacitus, the unity of authorship of which all recent critics have come to admit. Considering that the Pastoral Epistles are freely used by Polycarp (A.D. 110), and that there are distinct echoes of them even in Clement of Rome (95), he would hold that the chances are decidedly in favour of their genuineness.

If, further, it were pointed out to him that the theology of these Epistles (especially the attitude of the author towards the Law and good works), differs considerably from that of St. Paul's earlier Epistles, particularly *Galatians*, he would be inclined to argue that it is possible that St. Paul gradually changed his views (or at least his emphasis) as the controversy concerning circumcision died down, and the Church's real peril was seen to be, not legalism, but antinomianism.

The canon of advanced criticism which refuses an author permission to change his opinions (or even his

<sup>1</sup> The venerable tradition that St. Matthew compiled the oracles ('logia') of the Lord in Hebrew, and that "each one interpreted them as he could," ascends almost certainly to the Presbyter (or Elder) of Papias, i.e. possibly the Apostle John (see below).

emphasis), or ever to contradict himself even on minor matters, has produced deplorable results in the classical field (notably in the criticism of Plato), has introduced chaos into the criticism of the Pauline writings, and if applied to modern works would produce results equally absurd. For example, it would require us to believe that George Salmon, who wrote *The Human Element in the Gospels* (1907), was a different person from the George Salmon who, at an earlier date, wrote the well-known *Introduction to the New Testament*.

A trained classical critic would make short work of the chief Liberal argument against the Petrine authorship of **I Peter**, viz. its use of the Pauline Epistles. He would dismiss as mere prejudice the supposition that the early antagonism between Peter and Paul, alluded to in the Epistle to the *Galatians*,<sup>1</sup> was lasting. Arguing from the entirely credible primitive tradition (already clearly stated in Clement of Rome) that the two Apostles co-operated harmoniously at the close of their lives in the great work of consolidating the Roman Church, he would argue that there is nothing improbable in the supposition that St. Peter was an admirer of St. Paul's writings, and therefore quite likely to make use of them in his own Epistle. He would regard it as an outrage upon criticism to reject, or to attribute to Silvanus (as is usual now in Liberal and Modernist circles) an Epistle with which the short Letter to Polycarp (A.D. 110) offers no less than fourteen close coincidences, which was quoted by Papias; and against which the only piece of definite evidence that can be produced is, that it is not mentioned in the fragmentary (and corrupt) Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 200). If **I Peter** is not to be regarded as Petrine, the credit of hardly a single ancient document can stand.

<sup>1</sup> Criticism seems to be gradually moving towards the view (which has much to recommend it) that *Galatians* is the earliest Pauline Epistle.

## THE JOHANNINE QUESTION

Passing by the problem of the authorship of *Luke* and *Acts*, which, since the adhesion of Harnack and other Liberals to the traditional view, can hardly now be said to exist for reasonable criticism, we come to the most vexed of all New Testament questions, the origin of the Johannine writings.

I leave undiscussed, for lack of space, the origin of the disputed *Apocalypse*, merely remarking that if, in spite of its being an apocalypse and being disputed, it is really (by a unique exception) by its nominal author,<sup>1</sup> it seems just possible (though very difficult) to assign it (as Harnack does) to the same writer as the Gospel. We may account for the remarkable difference of style between the two works by supposing: (1) that the author employed different amanuenses; (2) that there was a wide interval of time between the two books; (3) that the *Apocalypse* is written in the author's usual vernacular style, abounding in solecisms of a kind usual in non-literary papyri, whereas the Gospel represents an attempt (only moderately successful) to write the simplest possible literary Greek; (4) that the peculiar style of the *Apocalypse* is partly due to a basic document upon which the author worked, and the diction of which he imitated.

## EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

A classical scholar, asked for his opinion upon the authorship of the Fourth Gospel and the closely related

<sup>1</sup> The early evidence for the Apostolic authorship of the *Apocalypse* is so strong that it is not altogether unreasonable to hold that it counterbalances the undoubted difficulty of assigning it to St. John. Justin ascribes it to "a certain man among us, named John, one of the Apostles of Christ" (*Dial.*, 81); Irenæus, wishing to establish the correct Number of the Beast, appeals not only to ancient copies, but to the testimony of those elders "who saw John face to face" (*Iren.* v. xxx. 1; the Greek in Euseb. *E. H.* v. 8).

*First Epistle of John* (which is almost certainly by the same writer), would inquire first of all concerning the external evidence, and when he learnt that it was classed by Eusebius without hesitation among the 'undisputed' books; that Origen, the most learned and critical of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, had no doubt about its authenticity; that Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian of Carthage (c. A.D. 200) accepted it and used it freely; that it is attested by the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 200); that already to Irenæus, who wrote about A.D. 180 in Gaul, but who in youth had lived in Asia Minor and received instructions from the venerable Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle, it was not only Johannine, but also canonical, and had been so ever since he could remember<sup>1</sup>; that Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus (c. A.D. 190), clearly assigned it to the Apostle; that it was ascribed to John by name by Theophilus (A.D. 175), and used by Justin Martyr (c. 155); that Papias (c. 130) also knew it, for Irenæus quotes (obviously from him) an explanation by certain 'elders' of our Lord's words, "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John xiv. 2)<sup>2</sup>; that Polycarp (c. 110) (and also Papias) quote the First Epistle of John, which is a work by the same author; that the seven genuine

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus even tries to prove that there *can* be only Four Gospels. Whatever we may think of his argument, it is a clear proof that, ever since he could remember, the Church had acknowledged only the present four. "It is not possible," he writes, "that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four all-pervading winds, and since the Church is scattered over all the earth, and the Gospel is 'the pillar and ground of the Church,' and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing forth immortality on every side, and giving new spiritual life to men." After comparing the Gospels to the four-faced cherubim, he continues: "And therefore the Gospels are in accord with these [cherubim], among whom Christ is seated. For the [Gospel] according to John relates His original and effectual and glorious generation from the Father, saying, In the beginning was the Word, and all things were made through Him, etc." (III. xi. 18).

<sup>2</sup> See Iren. v. xxxvi. 1, 2. He has mentioned Papias just before. We also know from Euseb. *E. H.* iii. 19, that Papias made use of the closely related 1 *John*.

Epistles of Ignatius (A.D. 110) are full of echoes of it<sup>1</sup>; furthermore, that its authority was admitted by nearly all the Gnostics of the second century except Marcion, whose only Gospel was a mutilated *Luke*, e.g. by the very early Naasenes and Perataë, by Basilides (c. 120-130), by the Valentinians and probably Valentinus himself<sup>2</sup> (c. 140), to all of whom the author's leading doctrine that the Word was made flesh, and his strong anti-docetic<sup>3</sup> tendency, were most distasteful, and when he learnt further that the only persons who are known to have rejected it were an obscure and quite unimportant group called the 'Alogi,' of whom almost the only definite piece of information procurable is that they acknowledged the antiquity of the Gospel which they rejected, by assigning it to St. John's opponent Cerinthus; he would certainly consider that external evidence of genuineness of such exceptional strength as this could only be refuted by the production of internal evidence of *demonstrative strength* that the Apostle could not have written it.

<sup>1</sup> Even Dr. Latimer Jackson considers Ignatius's use of the Fourth Gospel "highly probable" (*Problem of the Fourth Gospel*, 1918, p. 16). Ignatius speaks of Jesus as the Logos (Word), the Door of the Father, the Shepherd of the Sheep, the Giver of Living Water. The very phrase "He knoweth whence he cometh and whither he goeth" (John iii. 8) occurs. The Eucharist is the flesh (*σάρξ*), not body, of Christ, also the Bread of God, as in John vi. The devil is "the ruler of this world."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Iren. III. xi. 7. "So firm is the ground upon which these [four] Gospels rest, that the very heretics bear witness to them. . . . Those, moreover, who follow Valentinus, making copious use of that according to John . . . shall be proved totally in error by this very Gospel. . . . Since, then, our opponents bear testimony to us, and make use of these [Gospels], our proof derived from them is firm and true." Full proof of the statements in the text will be found in Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium hæresium*.

<sup>3</sup> The Docetæ (and the Gnostics generally) held that our Lord became man 'in appearance' only. His body was a mere phantom. He had no human soul or human experience. When He was crucified (if He was crucified, which many Docetæ denied), He suffered no pain.

## RECENT DISCOVERY

He would also learn that, although all recent Continental criticism is unfavourable to apostolic authorship, and even some conservative critics are inclined to compromise by adopting theories of *indirect* authorship, nevertheless every recent discovery of fresh ancient evidence has confirmed tradition.

The most important of these is a large fragment of *The Gospel of Peter*, a docetic work of the former half of the second century, the limits of date of which lie between A.D. 100 and 140. The author uses (and abuses) our present Four Gospels, and apparently no others, from which we may conclude with confidence that already at the very early date of A.D. 120-130, our present Four Gospels had already been singled out as especially trustworthy, and were well on their way towards a canonical position. The Rev. L. St. Alban Wells, who (in agreement with Harnack) assigns the *Gospel of Peter* to the period 100-110, speaks of its "strong Johannine flavour." "Though entirely parallel with the Synoptic accounts of the Passion, it contains no fewer than twenty-nine additions to the Markan narrative . . . and both in its verbal and in its historical variations it is largely (Harnack gives eight examples) influenced by the corrections found in the Fourth Gospel, e.g. the date of the Crucifixion is Nisan 14, as in John xix. 14 and 31." <sup>1</sup> Similarly, Dr. Armitage Robinson says: "The unmistakable acquaintance of the author with our four Evangelists deserves a special comment. He uses and misuses each in turn. He lends no support to the attempt which has been made to place a gulf of separation between the Fourth Gospel

<sup>1</sup> Article, *Gospels, Apocryphal*, in *Hastings' Encycl. of Rel. and Eth.* The most thorough proof of the author's use of St. John (which is generally acknowledged) is Professor C. H. Turner's article in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, Jan. 1913. Harnack dates the Gospel of Peter quite early in the second century, Sanday 125, Zahn 130.

and the rest, as regards the period or area of their acceptance as canonical."

*The Apology of Aristides*, discovered in 1889, which, if Eusebius is right, was presented to the Emperor Hadrian (117-128), speaks of the Incarnation as involving a coming down from heaven (cf. John iii. 13; vi. 33, 38, 41, etc.) and of our Lord's sinless human nature as 'flesh,' expressions peculiar in the New Testament to St. John.

Our fuller knowledge of Tatian's *Diatessaron* (A.D. 160) has completely established what orthodox critics have all along maintained, that this work was a harmony of the present four Gospels, which accordingly were already at that date canonical.

#### THE TESTIMONY OF IRENÆUS

The fullest and strongest early testimony to the direct apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel is that of Irenæus. As a youth, Irenæus was a hearer of Polycarp (who was an actual disciple of St. John), and therefore his evidence is of unique importance. As there is a tendency in some quarters to discount his testimony on the plea that he was only a young boy when he heard Polycarp—too young to remember anything definite—it will be well to quote Irenæus's own account of his intercourse with Polycarp.

Writing to his friend Florinus, who had fallen into heresy, and whom he wished to reclaim by reminding him of the orthodox teaching which they had together received from the venerable Polycarp, he says: "I am able to describe the very place where the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed, and his goings out and comings in, and the manner of his life, and his physical appearance, and his discourses to the people, and the accounts which he gave of his intercourse with John, and with others who had seen the Lord. . . . These things being told me by the mercy of God, *I listened to them attentively, noting them down, not on paper but in my heart.*

*And continually, through God's grace, I recall them faithfully."* <sup>1</sup>

Irenæus mentions that he was at this time in early manhood (*ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμῶν ἡλικίᾳ*), a phrase which Philo applies to the patriarch Joseph when he was about seventeen years old (*De Josepho*, i.), the probable age of Irenæus himself when he listened to Polycarp. Irenæus is perfectly explicit in affirming that the John who was the teacher of Polycarp was the Apostle and that he wrote the Gospel. He calls him "John the Apostle" (I. ix. 2; III. xi. 9), "who lay upon the Lord's bosom" (III. i. 1), and once designates him Apostle jointly with St. Paul.<sup>2</sup>

It is now the fashion in Germany, and to some extent even in England, to assume that Irenæus was mistaken, and that Polycarp's revered teacher was some other John about whom nothing definite is known. But this is infinitely improbable, because (1) it is most unlikely that an intelligent youth like Irenæus could have made so absurd a mistake; (2) because even if he had, there were hundreds of Christians in Asia Minor who would have put him right in a matter which was then one of common notoriety; (3) because the fact of the Asiatic sojourn of the *Apostle* John is confirmed by much independent evidence, notably that of Polycrates.

#### TESTIMONY OF POLYCRATES AND JUSTIN

The testimony of Polycrates upon this point is really conclusive. He became Bishop of Ephesus, St. John's own city, about A.D. 190, and was thus the official guardian of the Apostle's tomb. It is surely incredible that such a man should have been misinformed as to the identity of the famous John who had been buried in it

<sup>1</sup> Preserved in Eusebius, *E. H.*, v. 20.

<sup>2</sup> "The Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently till the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the traditions of the *Apostles*" (III. iii. 4).

less than a century before. He was thoroughly acquainted with the traditions of Asia, and mentions the fact that seven of his relatives had been Asiatic bishops before him, and that he followed their traditions. "In Asia also," he says, "great luminaries have fallen asleep. . . . Among them are Philip, one of the twelve Apostles, who fell asleep in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit, and now rests at Ephesus; and moreover John, who was both a witness (*μάρτυς*) and teacher, *who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord*, and, being a priest, wore the mitre (*πέταλον*). *He also fell asleep at Ephesus*. Also Polycarp of Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr, etc." <sup>1</sup>

Here it should be noticed (1) that the identity of the John buried at Ephesus with the Beloved Disciple, and therefore with the Apostle John, is expressly stated; (2) that Polycrates knows of only one famous Ephesian John, and of only one tomb of this John; (3) that the residence of John in Ephesus is assumed as an incontrovertible fact, for Polycrates appeals controversially to the Apostle's manner of keeping Easter "on the fourteenth day of the passover" as justification for his own "Quarto-deciman" practice. He could not have done this if it had been possible for an adversary to retort that the Ephesian John on whose tradition he relied, was only a presbyter, not the Apostle.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Preserved in Euseb., *E. H.*, iii. 31, and more fully in v. 24. John probably wore the *πέταλον* (the plate on the Jewish high-priest's mitre) in order to show that the authority of the Jewish priesthood had passed to the Apostles and the Christian ministry.

<sup>2</sup> It is sometimes argued that since Polycrates has mistaken the deacon Philip for the Apostle of that name, he may have mistaken 'the Elder' John for the Apostle. But there is no sufficient reason for thinking that the *deacon* Philip was ever in Hierapolis. All the early evidence brings the Apostle there; only the later authorities confuse him with the deacon. Philip the deacon had *four* daughters who were virgins, and prophesied (Acts xxi. 9). Polycrates speaks of *three* daughters, two only of whom were virgins, for had the third been a virgin (a title to great honour in the second century) he would have been likely to mention it. None are called prophetesses.

The Asiatic residence of the Apostle is further confirmed by Justin Martyr, who lived in Ephesus itself about A.D. 130-135, and who ascribes the *Apocalypse*, which is addressed to the Seven Churches of Asia, to "John, one of the Apostles of Christ" (*Dial.* 81). Whether the *Apocalypse* was really written by the Apostle or not, Justin's words are demonstrative proof that as early as A.D. 130 the Church of Ephesus believed that the Apostle John had lived in Asia, and had presided over its churches.

## INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Unless the internal testimony of the Gospel is *conclusive* against apostolic authorship, we are bound (on such evidence as this) to ascribe it to St. John.

Now, it can hardly be denied that much of the internal testimony is *favourable* to apostolic authorship; for (1) the author was certainly an *eye-witness* of the Ministry of Jesus. He says distinctly, "we beheld (*ἑθεασάμεθα*)" the glory of the Word made flesh (i. 14), and still more emphatically he numbers himself among those who had heard, who had seen with their eyes, and *had handled with their hands* (*αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν*) the Life that was manifested (1 John i. 1-3). (2) The emphasis on *the handling with the hands* strongly suggests that the reference is especially to the handling of the Lord's risen body ("Handle Me and see," Luke xxiv. 31; cf. John xx. 25), and it is in this way that the great majority of commentators understand it. If so, the author must have been *one of the most intimate disciples* of Jesus, and therefore almost certainly *an Apostle*, for it was to the *Apostles* that the most detailed and intimate proofs of the Resurrection were given.<sup>1</sup> (3) This is further

<sup>1</sup> "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead" (Acts x. 41).

confirmed by the way in which the writer associates himself with the Apostles in their witness to the facts of the Incarnation and of the Resurrection ("we have seen and heard," "we bear witness," "what we have seen and heard [viz. from Christ] we announce also unto you"). A man who had *handled* the risen Lord, who could remember His discourses and report them, and who had from the first been associated with the Apostles in their authoritative proclamation of the Gospel of the Incarnation and Resurrection, belonged certainly to *the inner circle* of the Lord's followers, and therefore was *almost certainly* one of the Twelve.

Professor Stanton's mediating view that the author was merely one of the aged Christians, who "included among the reminiscences of their own childhood . . . some instances of personal contact with Jesus," and that his sole intention is to affirm that as a mere boy or lad he "could remember having sometimes seen and heard Jesus," contradicts the actual evidence almost as completely as the Liberal Protestant theory that he had never seen Jesus at all. There are undoubtedly cases in which mediating theories are helpful, but this does not seem to be one of them. If 1 John i. 3, is taken at its face value, there are only two reasonable alternatives—one is that the author was a most intimate disciple, and almost certainly an Apostle of Jesus; the other that he was an untruthful boaster who wished to pose as such.

The Gospel contains another passage which *must* have proceeded from an eye-witness: "One of the soldiers pierced His side, and straightway there came out blood and water. And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true. *And he* (καὶ ἐκεῖνος)<sup>1</sup> *knoweth that he saith true*, that ye also may believe" (xix. 34). It is quite impossible that anyone but the author himself

<sup>1</sup> The use of ἐκεῖνος to indicate the author himself presents no difficulty. See ix. 37, where Jesus uses it of Himself.

could *know* that he was speaking the truth. Even if we adopt the arbitrary (and, as I cannot help thinking, *absurd*) supposition of Zahn, that the person who is said to know that the author is speaking the truth, is not the author himself, but the ascended Jesus, still the author was an eye-witness, because he calls his ascended Lord to witness that he is speaking the truth.

In this case also the supposition that the witness was a mere child is inadmissible. A child would not be likely to appreciate the significance which, even at the moment of witnessing it, the author already perceived in this mysterious effusion of blood and water, which proceeded from the Redeemer's pierced side (cf. 1 John v. 6 ff.).

#### THE EVIDENCE OF THE APPENDIX

Most authorities regard the Appendix (ch. xxi) as added by the author himself before the final publication of his Gospel, and this is rendered highly probable by its close resemblance in thought and style with the Gospel. But however this may be, inasmuch as it is contained *in all copies*, it was certainly added to the Gospel before its final publication to the world, and therefore belongs to *the first century*.

The last two verses, by general consent, are a codicil added by the responsible persons (almost certainly the elders of Ephesus) who officially published the work *urbi et orbi*, and wished to assure all readers that this Gospel, though written so long after the others, was (1) completely trustworthy ("we know that his witness is true") and (2) actually written by the Beloved Disciple, who at the Last Supper reclined on the bosom of Jesus ("this is the disciple . . . who *wrote* these things").

Who was this disciple? Since he was the Beloved Disciple he must have been one of the chosen three, Peter, James, and John. He was not Peter, from whom he is clearly distinguished in the whole of chapter xxi ;

nor was he James, who was the first of the Apostles to suffer martyrdom; therefore he was John, whose presence at the final manifestation of the risen Lord is expressly mentioned ("the two sons of Zebedee," v. 2).

There is absolutely no room for Professor Stanton's mediating view, that all that the evidence requires us to believe is that the aged Apostle left a few notes behind him, with the help of which someone else compiled the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> For the Ephesian elders, who must have known the facts and who either during the author's lifetime or immediately after his death, published his Gospel, say bluntly, "This is the disciple . . . who wrote these things," by which they certainly mean the things recorded in the first twenty chapters, and probably also the things recorded in the twenty-first.

Here we have cogent first-century evidence emanating from Ephesus itself for *direct apostolic authorship*, and this (if we are true to the established principles of modern criticism) we are bound to accept. No objection would lie against Professor Stanton's theory of indirect authorship *if only it were supported by evidence* (as in the case of the First Gospel it is). In this case, however, *all* the evidence, including this absolutely explicit contemporary evidence, is in favour of *direct* authorship, and consequently, since none of the opponents of the genuineness are able to prove that it is *impossible* for the Apostle to have written the Gospel, or that it contains any clear *anachronisms* or other *decisive* proofs of spuriousness, the principles of criticism now generally accepted require us to regard it as the first-hand work of John, the son of Zebedee, as the unanimous tradition declares that it is.

<sup>1</sup> "The framer of the statement at xxi. 24, was betrayed into an exaggeration when he attributed the composition of the Gospel to an immediate disciple of Christ" (*G. H. D.*, vol. iii. p. 146).

## DR. DRUMMOND'S OPINION

We may sum up the whole argument in the words of the late Dr. James Drummond, whose exhaustive *Inquiry into the Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* (1903) has not yet been adequately answered, and is not likely to be. He writes as an avowed Unitarian and an opponent of miracles, and therefore he cannot be reasonably suspected of any bias whatever towards traditional conclusions. "We have now," says he, "gone carefully through the arguments against the reputed authorship of the [Fourth] Gospel, and on the whole have found them wanting. Several appear to be quite destitute of weight; others present some difficulty; one or two occasion real perplexity. But difficulties are not proofs, and we have always to consider whether greater difficulty is not involved in rejecting a proposition than in accepting it. This seems to me the case in the present instance. The external evidence (be it said with due respect to the Alogi) is all on one side, and for my part I cannot easily repel its force. A considerable mass of internal evidence is in harmony with the external. . . . In literary questions we cannot look for demonstration, and where opinion is so much divided we must feel some uncertainty in our conclusions; but on weighing the arguments for and against to the best of my power, I must give my own judgment in favour of the Johannine authorship" (p. 514).

## APPENDIX I

## JOHANNINE DIFFICULTIES

THE scale of this book unfortunately forbids a full discussion of the intricate Johannine problem, which I hope to deal with more adequately in a forthcoming Critical Introduction to the New Testament. Space permits only a few imperfect notes upon certain special difficulties which are felt in connexion with the apostolic authorship of the Gospel.

## THE ALLEGED MARTYRDOM

The alleged martyrdom of the Apostle need not detain us long. The only real authorities for it—a fragment universally assigned to Philip of Side, an ecclesiastical historian of the fifth century whose works have perished (*Codex Baroccianus*, 142), and a passage in the best MS. of Georgius Hamartolus, a chronicler of the ninth century—contain internal evidence of unreliability. Both quote Papias as recording the martyrdom of the Apostle “by the Jews” in his second book. Philip, however, makes Papias, a writer of the second century, call St. John ‘the Divine,’ a title which only became current in the fourth. Georgius (who on the main point is probably not altogether independent of Philip) gives us the further information that “the very learned Origen, in the commentary on Matthew, affirms that John *was martyred* (μεμαρτύρηκεν, literally *witnessed*).” The passage in Origen is fortunately extant (*tomus* xii, ch. vi, a diffuse comment on our Lord’s prophecy to the two brothers, Matt. xx. 20 ff.). It affirms, indeed, that John ‘witnessed,’ but by *suffering*, not by death.

From the hint of Georgius, we are enabled to restore the misunderstood passage of Papias somewhat as follows: “James was killed by the Jews, and John his brother (fulfilling the Lord’s prophecy that he should drink of His cup) also *witnessed*” (ἐμαρτύρησεν οἱ μάρτυς ἐγένετο, these expressions not being restricted in early times, as they became later, to blood-martyrdom).

The reader is advised, before hastily crediting the most improbable statement of Philip, to read and ponder what Socrates (*Eccles. Hist.*, vii. 26 ff.) and Photius, one of the most learned and impartial of all ancient critics (*Cod.* 35), have to say about the worthlessness of his character, both as a man and as a historian. All the early authorities who allude to the subject state positively that St. John died a natural death in

extreme old age at Ephesus, and when we consider how strong was the tendency in early times to attribute to all Apostles the crowning glory of martyrdom, we shall find good reason to distrust these two late and untrustworthy witnesses.

In any case, there is no evidence whatever for the favourite Liberal hypothesis of a *Palestinian* martyrdom. If the evidence of Georgius is of any value at all, it is evidence for *an Ephesian martyrdom of the apostle in extreme old age*, "after having composed the Gospel according to him."

### JOHN THE PRESBYTER

It is now customary in Liberal (and not altogether unusual even in orthodox) circles to ascribe the Fourth Gospel (directly or indirectly) to a supposed 'Presbyter' John, distinct from the Apostle.<sup>1</sup> Some even regard the 'Presbyter' as the teacher of Polycarp, rejecting the express statement of Irenæus (confirmed by the *consensus* of all ancient authorities) that he was the Apostle.

No ancient authority earlier than Eusebius mentions this 'Presbyter,' and Eusebius's entire knowledge of him is derived, not from tradition, but from his own dubious exegesis of a single obscure passage quoted by him from the preface to Papias's lost work.<sup>2</sup> The passage from Papias makes excellent sense, if the Apostle John and the 'Presbyter' or 'Elder' John there mentioned are understood (as they are by G. Salmon, in his *Introduction*, pp. 83, 268 ff., and by Dom. J. Chapman in his *John the Presbyter*, pp. 33 ff.) to be *the same person*. Considering that no earlier reader of Papias (whose work was much studied) finds any mention of two Johns in his writings, but that they all, on the contrary, *identify* the 'Presbyter' (or 'Elder') with the Apostle, it seems to me that Salmon's and Chapman's interpretation of the passage is probably correct. But even if Eusebius is right, and there really was a 'Presbyter' John, distinct from the Apostle, still there is no evidence whatever connecting him with the Fourth Gospel, or even with Asia. It should be noticed, also, that the title 'Presbyter' (which in this case is probably a title of office in the ministry) suggests that he was a person of no great prominence in the Church, and is decidedly unfavourable to the supposition that he was a kind of *episcopus*

<sup>1</sup> Harnack makes the 'Presbyter' the author, but regards him as a disciple of the Apostle John. Sanday (in *Hastings' E. R. E.*) leaves the choice open between the Presbyter and the Apostle, with a preference for the Apostle.

<sup>2</sup> See *E. H.*, iii. 39.

*episcoporum* in Asia, such as the Ephesian John, even if not the Apostle, undoubtedly was.<sup>1</sup>

No evidence whatever for the existence of this 'Presbyter' can be gathered from Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 250), who, on the ground solely of difference of style, assigns to a different author the *Apocalypse*, which in his day was a seriously disputed book. He expressly identifies the 'Presbyter' who wrote 2 and 3 John with the Apostle, and says that he knows nothing whatever from tradition of the John who he supposes wrote the *Apocalypse*. He mentions, indeed, on the evidence of mere hearsay, two 'memorials,' or possibly two tombs, of John at Ephesus, but not the slightest reliance can be placed upon this statement, for Polycrates, who is a much earlier authority, and a much better one, for he was actually bishop of Ephesus, knows of only one tomb.<sup>2</sup>

#### CHRISTOLOGY OF THE GOSPEL

It used to be alleged that the Fourth Gospel cannot be apostolic, because its Christology is not merely more developed than that of the Synoptics, but is even inconsistent with it.

Of late, however, there has been a retreat from this position all along the line. Gardner and Rashdall, for instance, unite with Loisy and Le Roy in eliminating a large number of leading Christological passages from the Synoptics, as being "Johannine interpolations" or as "reflecting the later consciousness and experience of the Church."

They thus admit—and a very significant admission it is—that St. John's Christology is not really inconsistent with the Synoptics as they stand, *but only with these Gospels as expurgated by Modernist critics, in order to bring them into forced accord with their own attenuated Christology.*

If we take the text of the Synoptic Gospels as it appears

<sup>1</sup> The historical authority of the Fourth Gospel is not greatly weakened by the supposition that the 'Presbyter' wrote it. For this 'Presbyter,' on the authority of Papias, was a disciple of the Lord, and (on the authority of the Gospel itself) was the Beloved Disciple, who leaned on the Lord's breast at the Last Supper. The supposition that the Beloved Disciple, though present at the Last Supper, was not an Apostle, but a wealthy (and probably young) adherent of Jesus from among the aristocracy of Jerusalem, seems to me infinitely improbable.

<sup>2</sup> See Eusebius, *E. H.*, vii. 25. It is not clear that Dionysius speaks of two tombs (τάφοι). The word used (μνημα) is properly a *memorial*, and there may very well have been two memorials, one placed on the tomb, which was outside the walls (Jerome, *Catal. Script. Eccl.*, ix), and one in the Church where John ministered, or possibly on the site of his house, which may have had a Church erected upon it, as Zahn suggests.

in the best critical editions, we find all the essentials of the Johannine Christology (and indeed much of the language) already contained in it, although (as is natural) the forms of expression are still somewhat rudimentary.

The Johannine Christ, like the Christ of the Synoptics, speaks of Himself, not as the Logos (this term occurs only in the Preface), but as the Son of Man, the Son of God, and sometimes absolutely as 'the Son.' This last expression, which is especially Johannine, is found in all the Synoptics (Matt. xi. 27, xxiv. 36, xxviii. 19; Mark xiii. 32; Luke x. 22). According to Synoptic teaching, the Son of God or Son of Man (the terms differ but little in significance) is a Being exalted far above, not merely the human race, but even the hosts of heaven. His nature is so exalted that only the Almighty Father Himself can comprehend it (this implies consubstantiality). He shares with the Father and the Holy Ghost one single 'name' or nature, and is therefore consubstantial with them, but He is distinct in person (Matt. xxviii. 19). Though He is ignorant as incarnate of the Day of Judgment, His teaching is infallible and immutable (Mark xiii. 31, 32). He revises the Law given to Moses by His own authority. As Incarnate, He is the sole Mediator between God and man. All power is committed to Him in heaven and in earth, including the power to judge. Accordingly, at the last Great Assize, He will not, like other men, stand before the Judgment Seat of God to be judged, but will Himself sit upon the tribunal, and assign to the whole human race, and to the evil spirits, their eternal recompense.

This, and nothing less than this, is what the Synoptics, when allowed to give their own unmanipulated testimony, affirm concerning the Person of the Redeemer. It is difficult to see what important element has been added to it by the Fourth Evangelist, or even by the creeds and general councils of the undivided Church.

### CHRIST'S PRE-EXISTENCE

It used to be imagined that one difference, at any rate, could be firmly established. It was supposed that at least *the personal pre-existence of Christ in heaven before His Incarnation* was a doctrine unknown to the Synoptists, and that its attribution to the historic Jesus by the Fourth Evangelist is a gross anachronism.

Recent research, however, challenges even this distinction. Practically all critics now recognize that the title Son of Man, which Jesus applies to Himself no less than seventy-one times

in the Synoptic Gospels, is *in itself* a claim to heavenly pre-existence, as well as to divinity and Messiahship. As Bousset, who cannot be suspected of any orthodox bias, forcibly puts the matter: "This Messianic man [or Son of Man] . . . is a supernatural figure, He comes down from heaven, He was with God from the beginning of the world, He appears in the splendour of His divine glory, and He is actually the Judge of the world, thus displacing God Himself from that position" (*Jesus*, E. T., p. 187).

Our earliest gospel, *Mark*, represents Jesus as working a striking miracle, almost at the beginning of His ministry, in order to establish His claim, not merely to be the Son of Man, but also to possess, even in His earthly humiliation, the divine prerogative of pardoning sin, which had been His in heaven before His Incarnation (Mark ii. 1 ff.). Similarly, the voice of the Father at the Baptism of Jesus probably testifies to His pre-existence as 'the beloved Son' (*ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα*, 'in Thee I was well pleased'). At the very least, it excludes the idea of His having *become* the Son of God at that moment, as was taught by certain of the ancient Adoptionists.

The phraseology of the Fourth Gospel is considerably more developed than that of the Synoptics, and it is clear that the far-reaching implications of the doctrine of the Incarnation have been more completely thought out, as is only natural after an interval of a quarter of a century; nevertheless, in all essentials the two Christologies are *identical*. So little real difference is there between them that it is perfectly possible, by selecting only passages which bear on the dignity and claims of Jesus, to construct thoroughly 'Johannine' discourses *out of Synoptic material alone*. It is something of this kind that the Fourth Evangelist has actually done. Writing after the rise of heresy, and with the express purpose of asserting the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation against Docetism on the one hand, and Humanitarian Ebionism on the other (John xx. 13), he deliberately *selects* from the utterances of Jesus known to him those only which illustrate (1) His true divinity, (2) His true humanity.<sup>1</sup> It is this dominant purpose which accounts for the undoubted *monotony* of the Johannine discourses, as compared with those recorded by the earlier evangelists, who aimed chiefly at giving a vivid impression of the teaching of Jesus *as a whole*.

<sup>1</sup> So many Liberals and Modernists deny that the Fourth Gospel emphasizes or even recognizes the *humanity* of Jesus, that it is refreshing to be able to quote Prof. Burkitt: "In no early Christian document is the real humanity of Jesus so emphasized as in the Fourth Gospel."

Even these earlier Gospels are written to produce faith in Jesus, but, heresy not having yet arisen, the authors show no *special* interest in Christology. They take the usual view of Christ's Person for granted, as familiar to Christians, and do not go out of their way to enlarge upon it.

### THE DISCOURSES OF JESUS

No part of the discourses of Jesus in St. John's Gospel seems less convincing to Liberal and Modernist critics than His controversies with the Pharisees and 'Jews.' But it is just in these that modern Rabbinical authorities detect the chief proofs of this Gospel's reliability and accuracy.

Mr. J. Abrahams, for instance, writes: "My own general impression, without asserting an early date for the Fourth Gospel, is that that Gospel enshrines a genuine aspect of Jesus' teaching, which has not found a place in the Synoptics." He considers, for example, that many of our Lord's controversies with the Pharisees, which to many Liberal Protestants seem so improbable and unsuitable, are well reported in the Fourth Gospel, which also, in his opinion, is quite correct in locating a large number of the main incidents of the ministry in Jerusalem. "My own conviction," he says, "is that most of the controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees occurred in Jerusalem, and not in Galilee. . . . It is interesting to note that John vii. 22 reports Jesus as defending His general position [on Sabbath observance] from the analogy of circumcision. Here we have yet another instance of the Fourth Gospel's close acquaintance with Hebrew traditions, for the most notable relaxation of the Sabbath law was just in cases of circumcision (see Mishnah and Talmud, *Sabbath*, ch. xix). In *Yoma*, 85 b, the very words of John vii. 23 are paralleled, and the saving of life derived by an *a fortiori* argument from the rite of circumcision." (*Studies in Pharisaism*, pp. 12, 13, 135.)

*The Jewish Encyclopædia* treats quite seriously many of the historical statements of the Fourth Gospel. For example, it says: "A greater familiarity with Jewish rites (vii. 7), and with Jewish personalities (see *Nicodemus*), and with the geography of Palestine (ii. 1, iii. 23, iv. 5, v. 2, xii. 21, xix. 13) is shown than in the other Gospels—another indication of an older tradition. There are besides genuine popular legends, which can hardly be the invention of an Alexandrian metaphysician (cp. ii. 1-11, v. 2-12). . . . There is discernable in this Gospel a substratum which points to an older tradition. Not only has it, alone of all the Gospels, preserved

the one possible date of the Crucifixion of Jesus, the 13th of Nisan (xviii. 28), but the remark of Caiaphas, the high-priest, expressing fear of the Romans as the motive of his action against Jesus (xii. 48-50, xviii. 14), as well as Pilate's act (xx. 1), seems to be part of the older tradition. . . . Possibly the original Gospel bore the name of John, to whom frequent allusion is made as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' (xiii. 23, xix. 26, 27, xx. 2, xxi. 7, 20). . . . Gudemann thinks that the whole book was written by a born Jew."

## APPENDIX II

### DR. RASHDALL'S BAMPTON LECTURES

It is sometimes claimed for Anglican Modernism, that in the field of Biblical criticism, at any rate, it follows more scientific methods, and attains less extreme results, than Roman. There is some justification for this claim, but how little may be seen from the following brief synopsis of the critical results obtained by Dr. Rashdall in his recently published Bampton Lectures, *The Ideas of Atonement* (1919).

In this work he commits himself to the following extreme positions :

(1) That not till a comparatively late date in our Lord's ministry, probably not till St. Peter's confession, if even then,<sup>1</sup> did He become aware that He was the Messiah, or Son of God, or Son of Man.

(2) That our Lord probably began to preach the coming of the Messiah, without knowing who the Messiah was.

(3) That it is doubtful,<sup>2</sup> to say the least, whether He ever called Himself the Son of Man ; certain that He did not do so until after St. Peter's confession that He was the Messiah.

(4) That it is doubtful, and on the whole improbable, that He regarded Himself as the future Judge of the world.

(5) That not a few of the leading Christological passages in the Gospels are unauthentic, or coloured with later ideas, and that this is notably the case with—

(a) The voice of the Father at the Baptism of Jesus as recorded by St. Mark (i. 11).

(b) "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" (Matt. vii. 23).

<sup>1</sup> At Cambridge, Dr. Rashdall went so far as to declare it improbable that our Lord ever used any of these titles at all.

<sup>2</sup> At Cambridge he declared it improbable that He ever used this title.

(c) "Everyone, therefore, which shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32 = Luke xii. 8).

(6) That both the two Synoptic passages in which our Lord appears to teach the atoning character of His death are unauthentic, viz. :

(a) Matt. xx. 28 = Mark x. 45, "to give His life a ransom for many (*λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*)," and

(b) Matt. xxvi. 28 = Mark xiv. 24 = Luke xxii. 20, in which He speaks of His blood of the (New) Covenant shed on behalf of many (for the remission of sins).

(7) That neither Baptism nor the Eucharist was instituted by Jesus ;

(8) It is further implied in the Bampton Lectures, and was explicitly stated at Cambridge, that the self-consciousness of Jesus was of a purely human kind, that, though He was sinless, His attitude towards God (in principle at least) was precisely that of any other good and religious man. Dr. Rashdall emphatically insists that, though He was God, He was quite unaware of the fact, and consequently never taught His deity, not even after He had (somewhat unwillingly) consented, at Peter's suggestion, to adopt the rôle of the Messiah.

#### THE TITLE 'SON OF MAN'

All these positions are against the weight of the evidence (most of them against *all* the evidence), and they are clearly dictated in the main by subjective considerations.

To deal first with the title 'Son of Man,' which in Dr. Rashdall's opinion was probably never used by Jesus at all, it occurs (following Hort's text) in St. Matthew's Gospel no less than thirty-one times, in St. Mark's, which records but few discourses, fourteen times, in St. Luke's twenty-six times, in St. John's thirteen times, amounting in all to eighty-four times.

It is suggested that the Evangelists are responsible for putting this title into our Lord's mouth, but this is most improbable, for they never apply it to Him in narrative passages, nor do the Apostles or any of His contemporaries ever address Him by it. Quite clearly it is our Lord's favourite designation of Himself, and it is a remarkable fact that it is never used of Him by any other person in the New Testament, with the single exception of the dying martyr Stephen (Acts vii. 56). The very peculiarity of the usage of this title speaks strongly for its authenticity, and even to doubt that it was frequently

used by our Lord convicts a critic of an unusual want of capacity for estimating the weight of evidence.

A little more (but not very much) can be said in favour of Dr. Rashdall's contention, that, if our Lord used the title at all, it was not till after St. Peter's confession that He was the Messiah. It is natural that He should use the title (which was a Messianic one) *more frequently* after this event, nevertheless all the Synoptics testify that He sometimes used it even before. In *Matthew* He uses it ten times, in *Luke* four times, in *Mark* twice in this earlier period. The evidence even of *Mark* is decisive on the point, for almost at the beginning of the Ministry he represents our Lord as healing a palsied man, for the express purpose of proving (1) that He was the Son of Man, (2) that He possessed, even when incarnate on earth, the divine prerogative of pardoning sin, which He had previously possessed in heaven (Mark ii. 1 ff.).

It is quite natural that the Dean should be unwilling to admit that Jesus applied this title to Himself, for if He really did so, then it is certain (as all modern authorities admit) (1) that He believed that, even before His Incarnation, He had existed in heaven in a state of divine (or at least super-angelic) glory and majesty; (2) that He was the Messiah; (3) that He would one day sit upon the throne of the universe as Judge.<sup>1</sup>

In this, as in so many other cases, Dr. Rashdall prefers his *a priori* theories to the evidence. A more cautious critic would prefer the evidence to his theories.

#### OTHER CHRISTOLOGICAL TITLES

If Jesus really called Himself the Son of Man (as there is practically *demonstrative* proof that He did), then the whole of the Dean's numerous objections to the leading Christological passages of the Synoptic Gospels fall to the ground. There is absolutely no essential difference in meaning (so far as they relate to the divine dignity of Jesus) between the titles Son of God and Son of Man, which in many connexions might be interchanged. The voice of the Father at the Baptism and at the Transfiguration of Jesus, the attitude of the devils towards Him as their Lord and future Judge (Mark i. 14, xxxiv. 3-11; Luke viii. 31, etc.), and such decidedly 'Johannine' passages as Matt. xi. 27 and Mark xiii. 32, show clearly that already in the Synoptics the title Son of God is used in a transcendental and metaphysical sense, not in the purely human sense in which it is sometimes used in the Old Testament of the Davidic king, or of the Messiah regarded as such.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 220

## OUR LORD'S SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Not only our earliest Gospel, *Mark*, but also the primitive source Q (i.e. the 'Logia' of the Apostle Matthew), regard our Lord as being fully conscious, at least from the period of His Baptism, of being the Messiah and the Son of God and the Son of Man. St. Mark's account of our Lord's experience at His Baptism (which must have come from His own lips) makes the Father declare that He is His 'beloved Son,' and the tense of *εὐδόκησα* suggests that pre-existent Sonship is meant. Q, which records the Temptation which followed (a narrative which also must have been derived from our Lord Himself), represents Him as fully conscious, even before the opening of His ministry, of being the Son of God, of possessing the power to work remarkable physical miracles, and of being entitled to exercise Messianic dominion over the whole earth.

Dr. Rashdall's method of dealing with these (as with other inconvenient) passages is to pronounce them unauthentic, for no reason whatever, so far as appears, except that they contradict his preconceived theories.

We have shown that Dr. Rashdall's assumption that Jesus was ignorant of His Divine Sonship during His ministry is contrary to the evidence. It is also contrary to all rational probability. Surely, if the self-consciousness of Jesus, even when fully mature, was precisely similar to that of other men, if, even during the eventful ministry in which (even according to Dean Rashdall) He established the final and absolute religion of mankind, He was neither conscious of His Divinity nor taught it, then the natural (and indeed the inevitable) conclusion for sober reason to draw is not Dean Rashdall's, that He was very God, but that of the Liberal Protestants and Unitarians, that He was mere man.

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus (even if interpreted, not in the minimizing manner of the Modernists, but in the full orthodox sense) are entirely insufficient *of themselves* to establish His Deity. Every orthodox Jew of that age believed that favoured individuals in the past had occasionally been raised from the dead, and that Enoch and Elijah, and perhaps Moses, though mortals, had ascended into heaven. Moreover, every primitive Christian believed that he himself, equally with Jesus, would one day rise and ascend into heaven. Even the wonderful effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost *of itself* proved nothing but that the intercession of the ascended Jesus had been uniquely efficacious. Undoubtedly the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus were acts of God, which stamped with divine approval the whole

of His teaching ; but *unless His own divinity formed part of it*, they are not evidence of it. They do, indeed, strongly confirm the doctrine of His Divinity, if it has other support, but they cannot (for monotheists at least) generate it in the first instance. All valid and convincing proof of the deity of Christ must start with His own self-consciousness and teaching. If Christ during His earthly ministry did not believe and teach His own divinity, nothing that has happened since can possibly make it credible.

### THE SACRAMENTS

Equally contrary to the weight of the evidence, and to all probability, is Dr. Rashdall's assertion that Jesus did not institute the two great Sacraments of the Gospel. Without taking into account the Gospel evidence,<sup>1</sup> the *Acts* and the Epistles alone are sufficient to establish the ordinary view.

St. Luke (as Dr. Rashdall admits) is the author of the Acts, and from this book we learn that he was well acquainted with one of the best possible authorities for the early history of the Church of Jerusalem, "Philip the Evangelist, who was one of the Seven," with whom he stayed 'many days' (xxi. 8).

St. Luke informs us that only ten days after the Ascension of Jesus, three thousand converts were baptized at Jerusalem, for the remission of sins, that they might receive the gift of the Spirit, and further that all these "continued stedfastly. . . in the breaking of the bread [*or loaf*] (*τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου*)," i.e. the Eucharist, which memorial rite we also learn became the central feature of the Lord's Day worship (ii. 38 ff., xx. 7).

Is it even conceivable that rites such as these, which were universally practised by the Church from the beginning, and which were supposed to have attached to their believing reception such supernatural and essential effects as the remission of sins (ii. 38, xxii. 16), the gift of the Holy Ghost (ii. 38, xix. 16, viii. 17, 1 Cor. xii. 13, etc.),<sup>2</sup> and participation in the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Cor. x. 16, xi. 27-29, cp. John vi. *passim*), had any other origin than the direct commandment of the Lord? Is it in any way credible that mere ecclesiastical

<sup>1</sup> It is not wise to despise the evidence even of the conclusion of St. Mark, which, though not by the Evangelist, belongs certainly to the sub-apostolic age, and may perhaps (as Mr. F. C. Conybeare suggests) be by Ariston or Aristion, an actual disciple of the Lord, to whom it is ascribed in an Armenian MS. of the tenth century.

<sup>2</sup> The gift of the Holy Ghost was regarded as specially given in the laying on of apostolic hands, which (whenever possible) immediately followed the immersion. This laying on of hands was regarded in early times, not as a separate sacrament from baptism, but as an integral part of it.

ceremonies, not ordained by Christ Himself, should have been believed so early and so universally to confer such transcendent benefits as these? <sup>1</sup>

## THE RANSOM PASSAGE

Dr. Rashdall rejects as spurious, without the support of a particle of evidence, the great Ransom Passage, which concludes with the words, "and to give His life a ransom for many (*λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*)," although it is contained, not only in *Matthew* (xx. 28), but also in *Mark*, our oldest Gospel (x. 45).

Here again the subjective point of view is far too much in evidence. He has a strong dislike (which he takes no pains to conceal) to the ordinary or 'objective' theory of the Atonement, and as this theory seems to be taught, or at least favoured, by this passage, he decides that it ought to be eliminated.

There is a further objection to its authenticity from Dr. Rashdall's theological standpoint, viz. that it collides with his theory that Jesus, though truly divine, was unaware of the fact. Obviously, if Jesus regarded His death, not as a mere human martyrdom, but as a supernatural event, altering for the better the whole status of the human race in the sight of God, winning pardon for racial and individual sin, and initiating a new and everlasting Covenant between the Creator and the creature (as this saying, taken in connexion with the words at the Institution of the Eucharist, naturally suggests, and as the strong corroboration of the Petrine, the Pauline, and the Johannine epistles renders an almost certain fact), then it is beyond all doubt that He regarded Himself as a *superhuman*, and almost certainly as a *divine* Person. Jesus, however, according to Dr. Rashdall, was entirely ignorant of His own divinity; therefore He cannot have used words which suggest it; therefore He cannot have uttered either of the two great sayings which imply that His death was a sacrifice for sin or a ransom for many.

Dr. Rashdall's only real argument against Jesus having taught the doctrine of an objective atonement is that it seems

<sup>1</sup> In denying that Jesus instituted the sacraments, Dr. Rashdall has the support of Prof. Gardner, who doubts it with regard to Baptism, and denies it with regard to the Eucharist, the pagan origin of which he no longer maintains (*Exploratio Evangelica*, pp. 443-461); also of Loisy in his *Les Mystères païens et le Mystère chrétien* (Paris, 1914), where he speaks of "the myth of the institution of Baptism" (p. 277) and "of the Eucharist" (pp. 281 ff.). He doubts whether Jesus was ever baptized by the Baptist, and among other extravagances, positively denies that the Christian Lord's Day commemorates the Resurrection. Numerous Liberal Protestants take a similar line.

inconsistent with the teaching of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, that the only condition of pardon which God requires on the part of a sinner is that he should repent.

Even if the Dean is right, and the only necessary condition of pardon on man's part is repentance, it does not in any way follow that no other condition is necessary on God's part. For anything we know to the contrary, God may owe it to the violated majesty of the Eternal Moral Law, and to His own Holiness, to make such an Atonement for human sin, as orthodox Christians believe He has actually made through the Incarnation and Death of His Eternal Son.

### THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

The most important evidence that Jesus attached central importance to *His Death*, is the fact that He made the distinctive act of Christian worship consist in a commemoration of it.

Our oldest authority, Mark, represents our Lord as saying at the delivery of the Cup: "This is My Blood of the Covenant which is shed (or poured out) on behalf of many (*ὑπὲρ πολλῶν*)"; words which look back certainly to Exodus xxiv. 8, where Moses, after receiving a promise from the people to observe all the commandments of "the Book of the Covenant" which he had just read to them, "took the blood [of the sacrifices] and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold *the Blood of the Covenant* which the Lord hath made with you concerning [i.e. upon the basis of] all these words."

It appears, then, according to our oldest witness, Mark, (1) that Jesus regarded His death as establishing a Covenant (i.e. a New Messianic Covenant, see Jer. xxxi. 31 ff., xxxii. 40; Ezek. xxxvii. 26) between God and man; (2) that whereas the Old Covenant had been made with a few (i.e. only one nation), the New One was made with 'many,' viz. mankind at large; (3) that the Blood of Jesus was sacrificial blood, ratifying the New Covenant, and making its privileges (remission of sins, the gift of the Spirit, salvation, etc.) available to all believers. This is the incontestable meaning of Mark, and it is confirmed by 'Matthew,' who (representing the Palestinian tradition) adds the explanatory words "for the remission of sins"; and by Paul and Luke, who add that the Lord's Body (as well as His Blood) formed part of the sacrifice offered on behalf of sinful man, and explicitly call the Covenant 'New.'

Dr. Rashdall rejects Mark's, Matthew's, and Paul's accounts, also Luke's usual text, as unhistorical; accepting as trust-

worthy only Hort's 'shorter text' of Luke. Hort's version of the text, as is well known, omits the critical words, "which is given for you, this do in remembrance of Me; likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which is shed (*or* poured out) on your behalf" (Luke xxii. 19 *b*-20). The attractive feature of Hort's abbreviated version (from Dr. Rashdall's point of view) is that it omits all reference to the sacrificial character of the body and blood of Christ, all reference to the New Covenant, and to the command, "Do this in remembrance of Me." There is not even any allusion to the Lord's death at all, nor any indication that the Eucharist was intended to have any connexion with it whatever.

If we decide to accept Hort's text of Luke, the question arises, Which account is the more worthy of credit, that of the oldest Gospel, *Mark*, supported as it is by Matthew and Paul (1 Cor. ii. 23),<sup>1</sup> or that of *Luke*? and who can doubt that if the question is to be decided by evidence rather than personal preference, the testimony of three witnesses ought to be preferred to that of one.

But probably the 'shorter text' of Luke is not the true one. There are in fact (though Dr. Rashdall does not inform us of it) not one, but *two*, shorter texts of *Luke*. From the earliest times the mention of *two* cups in the ordinary text of this Gospel was felt to be a difficulty,<sup>2</sup> as seeming to contradict the other accounts, and also the Church's eucharistic practice. Consequently attempts were made to reduce the two cups to one. Some scribes did this by omitting the first cup<sup>3</sup>; others by omitting the second.<sup>4</sup> The object in both cases was clearly the same, *viz.* to assimilate St. Luke's account to the other three by reducing the two cups to one. In neither case is the extremely tenuous evidence sufficient to justify omission, and we may conclude with considerable confidence

<sup>1</sup> In all probability St. Paul did not receive his account of the Institution *directly* from the Lord in vision, but indirectly through others. The preposition used (*ἀπό* not *παρά*) suggests *indirect* derivation (see Gal. iii. 2, Col. iii. 24), though it is not decisive on the point. The use of the third person in the narrative is also unfavourable to direct derivation from Jesus Himself.

<sup>2</sup> The difficulty is apparent rather than real. Four cups (and sometimes five) were drunk at the Passover, hence there is no intrinsic improbability in St. Luke's statement that our Lord distributed an earlier cup.

<sup>3</sup> The first cup (vv. 15-18) is omitted by the Gospel lectionary 32, the Peschitta-Syriac version, the Arabic Diatessaron, and certain MSS. of the Egyptian (Bohairic) version.

<sup>4</sup> The second cup is omitted by the Codex Bezae, also by the following MSS. of the Old Latin, a, ff, i, l. In each case the omission of the cup has the authority of only a single Greek manuscript.

that Tischendorf, von Soden, also Souter (whose divergence from Hort, whom he usually follows, is especially significant), are right in preferring the usual text.<sup>1</sup>

I may mention that, since Hort's time, the longer (or usual) text of *Luke*, which testifies to the New Covenant, to the sacrificial character of the body and blood of Christ, and to the command, "This do in remembrance of Me" (which, according to Dr. Rashdall and most Modernists, was never uttered by Christ), has received fresh confirmation through the discovery of the Diatessaron of Tatian, the Sinai-Syriac Version, and the new Egyptian fifth-century manuscript, W.<sup>2</sup>

#### DR. CHARLES'S METHODS

Dr. Rashdall's subjective methods of criticism are not peculiar to him, but characterize the English movement as a whole, not excepting even its most learned and eminent members. Dr. Charles, for instance, in his recent book, *The Teaching of the New Testament in Divorce* (1921), begins his investigations by arbitrarily excising from the New Testament, without a particle of evidence, two of the most important passages relating to the subject, viz. *Mark* x. 12 ("And if she herself shall put away her husband and marry another, she committeth adultery") and *1 Cor.* vii. 11 ("But if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled with her husband").

Dr. Charles's (like Dr. Rashdall's) method of New Testament criticism is, first to make up his mind what he wishes the New Testament to teach, secondly to erase or declare unauthentic every passage which contradicts his preconceived view, thirdly to apply a forced and unnatural interpretation to the record, mutilated, and finally to present the foregone conclusion to the public as the assured result of the scientific criticism of the New Testament.

<sup>1</sup> Hort's general principles of omission no longer command the assent of classical scholars, by whom it is becoming generally recognized that ancient scribes are more prone to omit than to add. If Hort had acted in this case on his usual principle, that any evidence, however bad, suffices for an omission, *he would have omitted both cups*. But even he, courageous as he was, shrank from presenting to the public an account of the Institution of the Eucharist which contained no mention of a cup at all.

<sup>2</sup> W. supports the entire "longer text." The Diatessaron and the Sinai-Syriac omit the former cup, but they record the second, together with the sacrificial language to which the Dean objects, and the command to perpetuate the rite.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FUNCTION OF DOGMA

MUCH Modernist criticism of the principle of dogma proceeds from the mistaken assumption that it is something entirely peculiar to religion. As a matter of fact, dogmas, i.e. common beliefs which are the basis of association for practical ends, are absolutely necessary, not merely for the efficiency, but even for the very existence, both of all smaller combinations of men, and also of the State itself, and of human society. Without common beliefs as to the proper methods of cultivation, two farmers cannot co-operate to cultivate a farm; without common beliefs as to the nature and duties of matrimony two persons cannot marry; trade cannot be carried on without general agreement as to the necessity of honesty and truthfulness; the State cannot function unless there is a general belief that government is better than anarchy, and that the laws and commands of rulers ought to be obeyed; it is not even possible for persons to co-operate in playing football or cricket or bridge or chess unless there is complete agreement among them as to how these games ought to be played—an agreement which is usually expressed in written 'Laws' imposed by an authority which the players accept.

### SECULAR DOGMAS

The need for dogmas, creeds, or authoritative confessions of faith, hardly arises so long as men are content merely to speculate, without regard to practical ends. For example, a body of academic philosophers, animated by

the sole desire of seeking truth for its own sake, would probably abstain from formulating any creed. They would aim at keeping as many questions as possible open for as long as possible, and would only give their final assent to a proposition when the evidence in its favour had become coercive.

But if this body of philosophers were called upon to do something practical ; if, for instance, they were summoned (as Plato was by Dionysius the Younger) to govern a city, their attitude towards truth would be entirely altered. Having now to act, and not merely to speculate, they would have to decide dogmatically many questions which they had previously left open.

#### POLITICAL DOGMAS

The first question they would be called upon to settle would be the form which the new government should assume. They will no longer be able to discuss interminably, as in old days, the abstract merits of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. They will have to decide peremptorily which of these forms of government they intend in practice to adopt. If they decide for aristocracy, that is, in practice, for government by themselves (as following philosophic tradition they will be likely to do), immediately aristocracy will cease to be a private opinion, and will become a *dogma*, with the result that all who cannot conscientiously accept it will be compelled to retire from the government.

They will probably next proceed to consider the important but perplexing question of the relations of the sexes. The biological experts among them will argue for the high eugenic view that it is the bounden duty of rulers to breed only from the best stocks, and forcibly to prevent all others from multiplying. The moral experts, on the other hand, will contend that to treat men and women like stud animals in the way proposed violates the dignity of human personality and outrages the moral law. They

will insist on the adoption of monogamy as the only form of sexual union which satisfies the moral ideal which the State—especially the Philosophic State—exists to promote. Whichever of these alternatives they adopt, whether marriage or scientific breeding, will become, by their choice of it, a *dogma*, which it will be the duty of every official of the State to enforce.

To take one more example, our philosophers will probably find it necessary next to decide the difficult question of the ownership of property. They will no longer be able to leave undetermined the conflicting views of the communists, the socialists, and the individualists among them. They will have to decide definitely and authoritatively, either for communism, or for socialism, or for private property. Whichever of these principles they finally adopt will become a dogma—a fundamental principle of the new State, enforced by the laws and (if need be) by the armed forces of the rulers.

Three points of close correspondence between the Dogmas of the State (which are usually expressed in laws, or unwritten constitutional principles) and the Dogmas of the Church (which are usually expressed in Creeds and decrees of Ecumenical Councils) should be especially noted :

(1) In both cases they are imposed by authority.

(2) All citizens are required to accept them, or at least to behave as if they did.

(3) They are interpreted by authority, and not by the individual citizen. The individual citizen, who sets up his own private interpretation of the laws against that of the State, is likely to find to his cost that the State will enforce its own view against his, if need be by pains and penalties.

### THE DOGMAS OF PARTIES

Within a great State there commonly exist a considerable number of smaller associations of men, called

parties, each united by a common belief in certain particular political principles, the triumph of which its members desire to secure. The minimum credal basis of such a party is *one dogma*. Thus the Prohibitionists, the Anti-vaccinationists, and the Tariff Reformers, are united by a single dogma only.

More usually the basis of association is several dogmas. Most of the larger parties have a definite party creed, which could hardly be expressed in less clauses than the Nicene Creed, and which, like it, is regarded as a test of orthodoxy. If a well-informed Conservative were asked, what is the Creed of his party, he would at once reply that Conservatism stands for the institution of private property, for the maintenance of the Monarchy and of the Established Church, for Religious (and especially Denominational) Education, for the maintenance of the Empire, for strong government, and for the principle of tradition and authority in the State.

Nor is attachment to a definite and authoritative Creed a mark only of old-fashioned parties like the Conservative. When in a fit of youthful enthusiasm I once joined the Fabian Society, I was required to sign a definite and fairly elaborate confession of my personal faith in Socialism. Similarly the Liberal Party insists on Free Trade and many other dogmas; the Labour Party on Trade Union Principles, and (in practice) on Socialism; Lenin and Trotsky insist upon two dogmas, (1) Communism, and (2) the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Even the Anarchists seem to require belief (1) in Atheism, and (2) (as a practical consequence of this) the unlawfulness of all forms of government.

Nor are any of these parties, not even the most liberal and advanced, willing to allow their dogmas to be understood (after the Modernist fashion) in a purely 'symbolic' sense. Certainly the Liberals would not be satisfied with merely 'symbolic' adherence to Free Trade; nor the Labour Party with 'symbolic' adherence to Collectivism;

nor the Conservative Party with 'symbolic' adhesion to the principle of Private Property.

If a Conservative, who had become a Communist, were to claim the right of preaching Communism from the Conservative platform, on the plea that he was only exercising his undoubted right of giving a 'symbolical' interpretation to the principle of Private Property, public opinion would certainly not regard his conduct as honourable; yet his position does not seem to differ very greatly, either in principle or in practice, from that of those Modernists who claim the right to deny some or all of the articles of the Creed under the pretext of 'symbolical' interpretation.

### THE MEANING OF DOGMAS

Credo (political and religious) consist not so much of words as of the *meanings* of words. Unless the members of a party understand the party credo *in an identical sense*, there can be neither cohesion among them nor unity of aim. It is permissible for members of a party to differ from one another upon all conceivable subjects except one, the meaning of the party credo. As soon as any serious controversy arises as to the meaning of this, the party is thrown into confusion, and its activities paralyzed, until authority has determined which of the competing interpretations is the true one. If there is no authority capable of determining this, the party, having lost its sole principle of cohesion, ceases to exist. Indeed a difference of opinion, even upon a quite minor point (such as who the party leader is or ought to be), may have the effect of destroying a party.

It is a fundamental principle of all parties that the interpretation of its Creed belongs to the party as a whole (in practice, to its recognized leaders), and not to its individual members. No individual member of a party is permitted to set up his own private interpretation of

the party creed against the official one. When the official interpretation has once been made clear, it is the duty of every member of the party either to accept it or to leave the party. All parties, even the most advanced, recognize this principle. For example, it is universally recognized that if a Socialist becomes a Conservative, or even a Communist, he must leave the Socialist party.

### FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND SPEECH

The twin principles of freedom of thought and speech are universally recognized in Western Europe to-day, with only slight reservations with regard to a few doctrines of a specially dangerous and demoralizing character. But no party, however advanced, considers that either of these principles justifies a man in joining or remaining in a party with whose doctrines he does not agree, much less in preaching alien doctrines in its name. That a man should preach Liberalism as a Conservative, or Conservatism as a Liberal, or Socialism as either, is universally regarded as demoralizing. If a man has ceased to agree in opinion with his party, it is regarded as his duty to leave it, and (if he wishes actively to propagate his views) to join another party with which he does agree; or, if there is no such party, to form a new one of his own.

### FREEDOM OF COMBINATION

Another political principle of later recognition than Freedom of Thought and Speech, but hardly, if at all, less important, is Freedom of Combination. Without the right to combine with other like-minded persons to achieve practical ends, Freedom of Thought and Speech are to a large extent barren privileges.

The Roman Empire allowed much liberty of thought and speech to its citizens, but was most jealous of combinations; and it was because Christianity was not

merely a religion, but an exceedingly powerful *combination*—because, in fact, it was an *imperium in imperio*—that it was so relentlessly persecuted by the more conscientious emperors. Similarly the English industrial magnates of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were quite prepared to allow their workpeople complete liberty of thought and speech, provided they were not expected to grant them the much more important right of *combination*. Trade Unions remained *criminal* organizations until 1824, and *unlawful* ones till 1871, or even later.

Freedom of Combination implies two inseparably connected rights: (1) the right to combine; (2) the right to exclude from the combination those who do not agree with its principles. The former right cannot possibly exist without the latter. Thus, if the Labour Party were compelled to admit indiscriminately to membership and office, not only believers in its principles, but also Conservatives, Liberals, Communists, and Anarchists, it is obvious that it could not continue to be the Labour Party. Similarly, if the Conservative, the Liberal, the Sinn Fein, and the Prohibition parties were compelled to admit to membership and office persons who denied their principles, they could not continue to exist as those parties. The right to associate or combine implicitly contains the right to exclude unsuitable persons from membership, as an essential part of it. Whoever denies the latter, denies the former.

#### MODERNISTS AND THE CREEDS

We are now in a position to understand the exact meaning of the Modernist demand, that membership and office in the Church should be thrown open to those who deny its Creed. *It means that the right to combine is denied by Modernists to orthodox Christians; for obviously, if the orthodox are to be compelled to receive into religious fellowship, and to admit to ecclesiastical office, men of*

unorthodox views, their right, as orthodox Churchmen, to combine on the basis of their orthodoxy is denied.

That the Historic Church—the Church of the Creeds, the Councils, and the Fathers—has always in the past been an association for promoting those beliefs commonly known as orthodox, no one denies. That an overwhelming majority of Christians to-day desire the Church still to continue on the same basis, no one denies either. Nor is it in dispute that believers in the Incarnation and its associated doctrines, as summed up in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, regard the Faith they hold as vital to the very existence of the Christian Religion, and as far more precious to them than life itself. Hence, in demanding that the Creeds of Christendom shall be understood by members of the Church in their ordinary or orthodox sense, orthodox Christians are not claiming for themselves any rare and extraordinary privilege, but only the elementary human right, which is accorded even to Atheists and Anarchists, of professing their own strongly held beliefs in company with those who share them. They do not deny this right to others. They fully recognize the right of those who reject orthodox Christianity to form religious associations of their own, on the basis of their own beliefs, or even on the basis of no beliefs at all, if such a thing is possible. But they do claim that their own consciences shall be respected, and that the same right of association shall be granted to them which is granted as a matter of course to all other men.

#### MODERNISTS AND THE PULPIT

Mr. Hutchinson maintained at Birmingham, as he had previously maintained at Cambridge,<sup>1</sup> that the principle of Freedom of Thought and Speech carries with it freedom to use the pulpits of the Church for the purpose of propagating unorthodox views—even for the purpose of

<sup>1</sup> In his Hulsean Lectures, *Christian Freedom* (1918-1919).

preaching Unitarianism, and denying what from the beginning has been regarded as the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, viz. the Incarnation.

Orthodox Christians do not yield to Mr. Hutchinson in their devotion to the principle of Freedom of Thought and Speech, but neither they nor anyone else (except an exceedingly small section of Modernists) regard this freedom as carrying with it the additional privilege of exercising it everywhere, even in the most unsuitable places.

Surely no one, except a fanatic, would claim that it is involved in the right of Freedom of Speech, that a Socialist has a right to force his way into the Carlton Club and to preach Socialism there, in defiance of the committee; or that a Conservative has a right to preach Conservatism in the National Liberal Club. Yet the claim to use the pulpit of the Church, for the purpose of denying the Incarnation, is essentially a claim of this order. It cannot be maintained that the doctrine of the Incarnation is a detail. By universal admission, it is the most important and most distinctive doctrine of Christianity. In fact, the Church may be regarded—inadequately, indeed, but truly—as an organization which exists for the express purpose of maintaining and propagating it. To tolerate its denial, therefore, would be an act of deliberate suicide on the part of the Church, and is unthinkable.

#### UNITARIANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

It is not possible to represent the difference between those who affirm and those who deny the Incarnation as a mere domestic difference between professors of the same religion. Unitarianism and Christianity are *different religions*, for the simple reason that they have *different objects of worship*. Christianity worships God incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, and pays to the latter, regarded as the God-man, the supreme homage of adoration. Uni-

tarianism not only denies such worship to Jesus, but (quite rightly from its own standpoint) usually regards it as idolatrous and blasphemous.

It is not only the use of Creeds in public worship which renders the union of orthodox Christians with Unitarians in one religious fellowship impossible; *it is the nature of orthodox public worship itself*. A Unitarian could not possibly use the present Prayer Book, for every time he read the *Litany*, or a prayer or collect addressed to our Blessed Lord, or even recited the *Te Deum* or the *Gloria*, he would be guilty (from his own point of view) of idolatry and blasphemy.

Nor would the task of revising the Prayer Book, in order to make it acceptable to Unitarians, be such an easy task as some of those who think with Mr. Hutchinson imagine. Is it likely, is it even *conceivable*, that believers in the Incarnation would ever consent to such a measure? If Jesus Christ is really divine, then divine worship is His *due*, for Christians to pay it is a *duty*, and to omit it from the public worship of the Church which He founded is an impious affront both to Him and to the Majesty of God.

### THE DOGMAS OF SCIENCE

It is believed by many (even by some who ought to know better) that Science differs from Religion (and differs very much for the better) in having no dogmas whatever. Even Prof. Sorley, who is a philosopher, has lately assured us that "the theologian is in fetters, from which the man of science and the philosopher are free."

All the same, science has *numerous* dogmas, which may be conveniently divided (for our present purpose) into two main classes, viz. :

(1) *The dogmas proper*, i.e. those absolutely unchangeable and irreformable principles (corresponding roughly with the doctrines of the Creeds and Councils of the Church), which are regarded as so vital and essential, that

one who denied them would run a serious risk of not being regarded as a scientist at all ; and,

(2) *The secondary dogmas*, which correspond roughly with that body of Christian doctrine which, though not strictly *de fide*, has behind it the general *consensus* of theologians. These secondary dogmas, although in principle capable of revision and even rejection, are nevertheless regarded, for the most part, as so well established and so little likely to be disproved that serious criticism of them is usually discouraged as mere waste of time, or even as evidence of an unduly sceptical temperament. The best established of the secondary dogmas are treated in practice as if they were dogmas proper.

Among the chief *primary* dogmas of science may be mentioned—

(1) The Rationality of the Universe (especially of the physical universe, with which science is chiefly concerned).

(2) The trustworthiness of the intellectual processes of the human mind, regarded as means of attaining objective truth.

(3) The validity of memory, upon which the power of amassing facts and constructing chains of reasoning depends.

(4) The validity of the information conveyed to the mind by the senses.

(5) The objective existence of the external world, which science investigates.

(6) The truth of the first principles of mathematics (including geometry).

(7) The Law of Universal Causation.

(8) The Law of the Uniformity of Nature.

(9) The Principle of Sufficient Reason.

(10) The Principle of the Parsimony of Causes (or Occam's Razor).

These (with a few other far-reaching principles of a similar kind) form what may fairly be called *the Nicene*

*Creed of Science.* They are, like the articles of that Creed, of ecumenical authority; upon them, as upon a firm foundation, the vast edifice of modern science is reared from generation to generation; and an investigator who ventured to question (seriously and practically) even one of them would be regarded as a crank or a fanatic.

It should be particularly noticed, as bearing upon the Modernist contention that all religious knowledge is derived from experience, that not one of these fundamental dogmas of science is derived from experience. Not one of them could possibly be proved by any amount of experience. Each and every one of them is perceived to be true by *intellectual intuition alone*, and *faith* is required if this intuition, which no possible experience can guarantee, is to be trusted. We further perceive from these examples, how false is the contention (urged by many scientists, and even by some philosophers) that science differs from religion in requiring demonstrative proof of its doctrines, whereas religion irrationally bases its doctrines upon mere faith.<sup>1</sup> *As a matter of fact there is no difference between science and religion in this respect.* All the fundamental doctrines of science are based upon faith, not evidence, and if this is also the case with those of religion, religion only conforms to the practice of science.

### THE IMMUTABILITY OF DOGMA

A common scientific (and Modernist) objection to religious dogmas is that believers regard them as *immutable*. This, however, is precisely what is usually (and correctly) believed about scientific dogmas also. Every one of the ten fundamental doctrines, which have been enumerated as forming the basic creed of science, has been

<sup>1</sup> "Scientific men have a way of looking upon belief which is not based upon evidence, not only as illogical, but as immoral. . . . Scepticism is the highest of duties, blind faith the one unpardonable sin" (T. H. Huxley, *Science and Christian Tradition*, pp. 65 and 54).

believed *explicitly* ever since men began to reflect upon the theory of knowledge, and *implicitly* long before that. We may expect with the greatest confidence that all these (and many similar) dogmas will continue to be believed *in the identical sense in which they are now and always have been believed*, as long as the human race endures upon the earth. The tendency to believe them is inherent in reason itself, and the faith which completes the process of belief begun by reason may fairly be called a *rational* faith. Faith goes, indeed, beyond reason, but in the direction in which reason itself points.

### SECONDARY DOGMAS OF SCIENCE

Among the secondary dogmas of science, i.e. doctrines which, though capable in principle of being changed, are nevertheless regarded as so firmly established that this is not likely, may be mentioned the Copernican theory of the heavens, which though not put forward till the sixteenth nor finally established till the seventeenth century, is now considered as so completely demonstrated that it ranks in practice as a primary dogma. Other examples are the law of gravitation and the Newtonian laws of motion, which will hardly be appreciably altered, even if Einstein's Theory of Relativity proves to be true; Dalton's law of chemical combination in multiple proportions; the conservation of matter and of energy; the two fundamental laws of thermodynamics; the Darwinian doctrine of Evolution (in some form or other), and the germ theory of disease due mainly to Pasteur and Lister.

Corresponding in the theological field with these doctrines is the generally accepted teaching of theologians upon such subjects as the Fall, Original Sin, the Atonement, Free Will, Predestination, Grace, the Inspiration of Holy Scripture, Eternal Punishment, the Church, the Ministry, and the Sacraments, concerning which, though

there has always been a considerable amount of practical agreement in the Church, there are no defined or authoritative dogmas.<sup>1</sup> It is acknowledged on all hands that the current teaching of the Church with regard to these and many other subjects may vary within certain limits ; and students of the history of doctrine are aware that it actually has varied, not only in early ages, but even in our own time. This is particularly the case with regard to the Atonement. The fact of it has always been believed by Christians, but no detailed theory of it has ever been officially endorsed by the Church.

### SCIENCE AND DOGMATIC TESTS

It is often stated that dogmatic tests are unknown to science. This, however, is an exaggerated statement. If the doctrine of an accredited teacher of science diverges very widely from the normal, the results are likely to be extremely unpleasant to the teacher.

Thus, if a European professor of astronomy were to reject the Copernican system in favour of that of Ptolemy or of the Hindu sacred books, or were to uphold judicial astrology and teach his pupils to cast horoscopes, he would soon find his position in any modern university untenable. For far less deviations from scientific orthodoxy than this, Paracelsus, Mesmer, Hahnemann, and for some years even Sir William Crookes, suffered something like secular excommunication. If anyone doubts that modern science has dogmas, let him attempt as a professor of chemistry to teach the doctrines of the alchemists, or even of Paracelsus ; or as a physicist the dynamic principles of Aristotle ; or as a physiologist the Galenic doctrine of ' pneuma ' ; or as a surgeon the falsity of the

<sup>1</sup> For example, the Atonement is affirmed only in a broad general sense in the Nicene Creed: " Who *for us men and for our salvation* came down from heaven." The general principle of the Sacraments is asserted in the words: " I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins," but no detailed teaching is given.

Listerian system of surgery ; and he will soon find to his cost that, though the dogmas of modern science are not usually expressed in written creeds, they are at least as definite and their sanctions quite as emphatic as those of religion.

A candidate for a scientific examination who imagines that he can deny in his papers with impunity the most fundamental principles of the science in which he proposes to qualify, will find himself woefully deceived by the result. He will be as surely rejected by his examiners, as an ordination candidate of unusually eccentric views will be rejected by the bishop's examining chaplains.

#### PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF UNORTHODOX DOCTRINE

Much (though not all) of the antipathy which the average scientific man feels towards unorthodox scientific views is derived from the fact that, owing to the numerous practical applications of science, theoretical error may easily lead to injurious and even fatal results. Thus it is undeniable that false engineering theories may lead to the erection of unsafe suspension bridges, false thermodynamical theories to the designing of inefficient engines, false ballistic theories to the construction of unreliable guns, false psychological theories to the adoption of bad systems of education, and false medical theories to the ruin of health.

In all ages the medical profession has upheld a strict system of ' tests ' both of a doctrinal and a practical kind. Recognizing the undeniable principle that wrong medical theory leads of necessity to wrong medical practice, with disastrous results both to the individual patient and to the community, it has deliberately set itself to exclude from recognition as physicians, and as far as possible to debar from medical practice, every species of unorthodox healer. The authorities of the medical profession have occasionally made mistakes. They rejected for nearly a

generation the great discovery of William Harvey. They adhered far too long to the promiscuous use of the leech and the lancet. They rejected for over a hundred years the promising and now fruitful system of psychotherapeutics, of which the half-charlatan half-scientist Franz Mesmer was the despised pioneer. But it is better, upon the whole, that a genuine teacher of truth should occasionally suffer, than that a swarm of quacks and empirics should be let loose to practise on the bodies of mankind.

Similarly, although individual bishops, and even the bench of bishops, are not infallible, it is better, on the whole, that they should exercise a reasonable control over the religious beliefs of ordination candidates, than that the souls of Christian believers should be committed to the care of pastors whose views are fundamentally unsound. If false medical doctrines, when put in practice, tend to the destruction of the body, it seems at least a tenable hypothesis that false theological and ethical doctrines, when put in practice, tend to the destruction of the soul. It is, at any rate, upon this supposition that the Christian community has consistently acted in all ages.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The dogmas of medicine, even when of recent origin, are very strictly enforced. Thus a surgeon who should venture to perform an operation without the use of those antiseptic (or aseptic) precautions which adoption of the Pasteur-Listerian theory of *sepsis* necessitates, would be expelled from the medical profession as a charlatan, and, if his patient died, would probably be prosecuted for homicide. It would be useless for him to plead that he honestly disbelieved the theory in question. The Medical Council would point out to him that this theory is acknowledged to be the fundamental dogma of modern surgery, and that a person who cannot conscientiously accept it ought not to enter the medical profession.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CATHOLIC CREEDS

THE distinction which it is usual to draw between the Church's attitude towards truth and that of secular philosophy, is that whereas both seek truth wholeheartedly, the latter seeks it primarily for the purpose of *knowing* it, the former for the purpose of *practising* it. To use the pregnant Johannine expression, the Church's aim is not merely to know, but also to *do* the truth (John iii. 21; 1 John i. 6).

It follows from this that, whereas a definite creed is not absolutely necessary, in theory at least, for speculative philosophy (though it is a significant fact that the majority even of philosophers belong to schools with definite tenets), it is absolutely necessary for the Christian Church. The Church could only dispense with a Creed at the cost of sinking to the level of a mere debating society, or body of men who, to use St. Paul's expression, are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 7).

I am glad to recognize that not even Modernists usually imagine that the aims of the Church are wholly unpractical, or that it exists only to hazard "guesses after truth." For instance, Mr. Clutton-Brock,<sup>1</sup> who reduces the practical aims of the Church to an absolute minimum, by denying that it is an association for the practice of virtue, or that it has any concern with morality at all, yet admits that it has at least two practical objects, viz. to love and to worship God. Even so,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Clutton-Brock's position is fully discussed in ch. xii

however, it is fairly evident that the Church must have a Creed. It is surely impossible for modern Europeans to worship a being who is not believed to be (1) fully personal, and (2) morally perfect. It matters not in what particular way God's personality is denied, whether by representing Him as "super-personal," a term destitute of meaning, or as "infra-personal," as when He is regarded as a mere influence, or energy, or law, or impersonal spirit of the universe, or abstract first cause, or even as "a power not our own that makes for righteousness." Nor does it matter in what way God's moral perfection is denied, whether in the Hegelian manner, by attributing to Him all the evil as well as all the good in the universe, or in the manner of certain recent 'Immoralists,' who regard Him as "beyond good and evil," i.e. indifferent to morality altogether. In either case it is *strictly impossible* for men of modern mentality to love or worship Him. It is useless to say that they ought. They *cannot*, and there is an end of the matter.

I am glad to notice that there are times when even Mr. Clutton-Brock seems to recognize this; indeed, in one passage he goes so far as to assert that the personality (and apparently also the perfect holiness) of God are fundamental Christian dogmas, which every genuine Christian must necessarily accept.

It seems to me also to follow from Mr. Clutton-Brock's principle that the Church exists in order to *worship* God that the Church must further possess some definite and universally recognized doctrines as to the kinds of worship which He is willing to accept; as, for example, that He desires the Eucharist which His Son commanded to be frequently celebrated in His honour, and that He does not wish to be propitiated with the blood of bullocks and goats.

Moreover, if the *imitation* of God forms any important part of His worship, as most Modernists (including

perhaps even Mr. Clutton-Brock) are willing to admit, it seems certain that the Church cannot dispense with *moral* dogmas, defining in what precise manner the unlimited and absolute moral perfections of God can be successfully imitated on the finite plane of human life. The Church certainly cannot train its members in devotion and virtue without having definite beliefs (i.e. dogmas) as to the nature of devotion and virtue, and (of course) of that God to whom the tribute of devotion and virtue is paid.

In whatever way we consider the matter, if once we admit that the Church has practical aims, and is not a mere futile debating society, we are driven to the inevitable conclusion that it must have a creed. The only question is, What Creed?

#### SUGGESTED MODERN CREEDS

The main function of a Creed is to unite all genuine Christians—or at least as many as possible—in the uniform profession of the essential doctrines of Christianity, in order that they may worship God as one family, and may conduct their warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, not as guerillas but as a united army.

That in the past the Nicene Creed has performed this function with considerable efficiency will not be denied by any who have carefully studied the early history of Christianity. It is an incontestable fact of history that for many generations (in fact until the final separation of East and West in the eleventh century) this Creed united nearly all Christians in all lands in one communion.

Nevertheless, not a few Modernists are of opinion that an entirely new creed, especially one framed by themselves, would be more intelligible and more acceptable to modern Christians, and therefore would be more likely to achieve the main purpose of creeds, viz. the union of as many Christians as possible upon the basis of fundamental Christian truth.

There are, however, three very cogent reasons for dissenting from this view. In the first place, proof is lacking that Modernists possess greater skill in the difficult and delicate art of compiling creeds than the ancient creed-makers.<sup>1</sup> The second is, that Modernists form so very insignificant a fraction of the total number of professing Christians, and diverge so widely in belief from the normal, that they are not representative. In the third place, the vast majority of Christians are so firmly—and indeed passionately—attached to the existing Creeds, that the very idea of superseding them by new ones seems fantastic and chimerical. Even if it could be proved that a new creed is desirable, the vast majority of Christians would consider that the very last persons who ought to be entrusted with its composition are the Modernists.

### THE CATHOLIC CREEDS

The only two Creeds which are indisputably Catholic are the Apostles' Creed, which for many ages has been the official baptismal symbol of the entire West and is informally recognized also in the East, and the fuller Eucharistic or Nicene Creed, which has been authoritatively sanctioned by several Ecumenical Councils, accepted by the entire Catholic Church, and even now, in spite of the unhappy divisions of Christendom, is recited in the liturgy of every orthodox Church both of the East and of the West, with only the small difference that the statement affirming the double procession of the Holy Ghost (a purely Western addition, made without

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Bethune-Baker (a Modernist) says: "It does not seem possible or desirable to revise or re-write any of the ancient creeds"; and he further states that although the compilation of a new creed is perhaps desirable in the abstract, "it would probably be quite impossible to get agreement on any such creed." The Rev. A. Fawkes says: "Anything like a new creed would be a mischievous anachronism."

the authority of an Ecumenical Council) is not accepted in the East.<sup>1</sup>

“It has the merit,” says Dr. Headlam, “of taking us behind all our divisions. Here is a document certainly older than any of the great divisions of Christianity. Here is one that the East and West alike accept. Here is one that the greater number of Churches that date from the Reformation have also received. . . . It has unequalled merit. . . . Is there any other Christian document which more completely responds to the beliefs and ideals of every orthodox Christian? Is there any other document with greater completeness, and yet economy of theology? It says what is necessary. It omits what is unessential. Is there any other document to which a reasonable criticism can make fewer objections?”<sup>2</sup>

It differs from all later confessions, such as the Augsburg, Helvetic, Gallic, and Westminster Confessions, the XXXIX Articles, and the decrees of the Council of Trent, in being the Creed, not of a particular nation or body of Christians, but of the Church Universal, and that in the days of its unity. From this fundamental difference arise most of the other differences; e.g. the Nicene Creed aims at promoting unity, the later confessions at justifying division; the former states only what is essential, the latter descend into detail and include a large number of disputable and highly contentious propositions.

The omissions of the Nicene Creed are hardly less significant than its actual contents. It has not a word to say about the subtle disputes which have vexed the peace of the Church concerning Predestination and Election, Free Will, Grace, the Fall, Original Sin, Eternal Punishment, and the detailed doctrine of the Sacraments. Even of the Atonement (the fact of which is implied) no

<sup>1</sup> The *Quicumque vult* is a dogmatic hymn, not properly a creed. Though it is a most important statement of orthodox belief, it is not of ecumenical authority. Dr. Bethune-Baker, unlike most Modernists, prefers it to the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

<sup>2</sup> *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 232 ff.

definite theory is formulated. Nevertheless this Creed, while omitting all that is not essential, includes practically all that is—quite all, if it is interpreted in the Church's way *historically*, in the light of that Christian and Catholic tradition of which it forms so important a part.

The statement that the Nicene Creed, when correctly interpreted, is an *adequate* as well as a true exposition of the Christian faith has ecumenical authority. The Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) declares explicitly: "These things having been defined by us with all possible accuracy and care, the Holy and Ecumenical Synod hath decreed that it is unlawful for anyone to present, write, compose, devise, or teach to others any other Creed; but that those who dare either to compose another Creed, or to bring forward, or teach, or deliver another symbol to those wishing to turn *to the full knowledge of the truth* from Paganism or from Judaism or from heresy of any kind whatsoever—such persons, if bishops or clerics, shall be deposed, . . . if monks or laymen shall be anathematized."

### THE CREEDS AND MORALITY

Nor are the Catholic Creeds fairly open to the frequent Modernist objection, that they lay inadequate stress, or no stress at all, upon Christian morality.<sup>1</sup>

To pass over the fact that holiness is for Christians part of the very meaning of the word God, and that the Creeds affirm holiness explicitly of the Spirit and by implication of the Father and the Son, there are no less than three credal articles which are concerned with morality. The first affirms that the Church is holy; <sup>2</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> For instance, Mr. Cyril Norwood complains: "The Creeds do not lay stress on positive conduct at any point."

<sup>2</sup> The Church is declared to be 'holy' in the true text of the Nicene as well as of the Apostles' Creed.

other words, that its members are pledged not merely to the practice of virtue in the ordinary sense, but are also bound to aspire after holiness, i.e. moral perfection. The second declares the Church to be the communion of saints, i.e. of the holy. The third asserts that all mankind (and especially all Christians) will one day be judged *according to their works*, for that is the sense in which this article has always been understood, as can be seen from the *Quicumque vult*.

How documents which declare on the face of them that the Church is holy and the communion of saints, and that the eternal destiny of Christians and of all men depends mainly upon the quality of their *works*, can be accused of failing to lay stress upon morality, I for one have never been able to understand. Of all conceivable motives to the practice of virtue, belief in a strict and inevitable *judgment according to works* is assuredly the most efficacious. No one who believes it can possibly place *morality* in any other than the first place of importance. The most charitable assumption to make with regard to those who bring such baseless charges against the Creeds is, that their strong prejudice prevents them from studying their statements with any serious attention.

No one denies that definitions concerning matters of faith are more numerous than definitions concerning matters of morals, but the reason is, not that morality has been thought unimportant, but that there has been much more agreement concerning Christian morality than Christian belief. When moral difficulties arose in early days, as they occasionally did, bishops and councils were not slow to give clear moral guidance to the faithful. For instance, it was defined that monogamy is a fundamental Christian dogma, and that no polygamist, remaining such, could be baptized;<sup>1</sup> that the art of a

<sup>1</sup> A married Christian was also strictly forbidden to keep a concubine or secondary wife (First Council of Toledo, ch. xvii).

gladiator,<sup>1</sup> and the practice of abortion,<sup>2</sup> nay, even that of suicide, which the Stoics and many others of the heathen extolled as a virtue, were murder.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, it must be remembered that the Creeds and Councils were not the only standards of morality in early times. Christians were expected to read their Bibles, especially the New Testament, which is full of moral dogmas. The Sermon on the Mount alone contains hundreds, as will clearly appear, if attention is paid not merely to what is stated, but to what is implied.

### THE AUTHORITY OF THE CREEDS

Modernists attach great importance to religious 'experience' as a criterion of religious truth; indeed, most of them unduly exalt 'experience' at the expense of reason. Valuing experience as they do, they are bound in consistency to attach unique importance to the Catholic Creeds, for it is certain that no Christian documents whatever outside the New Testament are validated by anything like an equal volume of long-continued and varied 'experience.'

The Nicene Creed, with which we are chiefly concerned, is almost entirely composed of doctrines which for nearly two thousand years have been in the very focus of the religious consciousness of the Church. This venerable Creed has been transmitted to us, approved by the authority of several Ecumenical Councils, and by that further authority which in a sense is superior, for it determines whether a Council shall rank as ecumenical or not, "the after-acceptance of the Church." It was

<sup>1</sup> Apostolic Constitutions, viii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> By universal consent, the penance of *murderers* was assigned to abortionists, e.g. by the Council of Trullo, xci.

<sup>3</sup> The First Council of Braga ordains: "If any one bring himself to a violent end . . . no commemoration shall be made of him in the oblation, nor shall his body be carried to the grave with the usual psalmody" (ch. xxxiv).

the one and only official Creed of the Undivided Church. Its supreme authority is still acknowledged by the immense majority of professing Christians, by the Church of Rome, by the Eastern Church, by the Anglican Church, and many Protestant bodies. To base its authority (as so many Modernists do) mainly upon the Anglican Prayer Book and Articles would be ludicrous if it were not lamentable, as exhibiting either a complete ignorance of Church history or a lack of the historical sense equally complete.

The Nicene Creed is thoroughly Scriptural. It contains not a single doctrine which is not *explicitly* taught in the New Testament. Even the consubstantiality of the Eternal Son is taught (as has been shown), not only by St. Paul and St. John, but even by the Synoptics and their sources.

If the authority which validates the Nicene Creed, viz. Holy Scripture, and the past and present authority of the Church Universal is not accepted, the question immediately arises, What possible degree of authority can validate *any* doctrine? The Modernist is continually appealing to 'experience.' Let him weigh well the fact that the doctrines of the Nicene Creed are supported by a volume and weight of 'experience' than which none can be greater, viz. the *consensus sanctorum et fidelium et theologorum* for nearly two thousand years. What modern creed, especially what Modernist creed, has behind it a millionth part of that experience?

By a strange inconsistency, the Modernist, who denies the right of the Church Universal to determine the Christian Creed, does not contest its right to determine the Canon of Scripture. Yet these two rights are inseparable and interdependent. The Church, as everyone knows, existed before any New Testament book had been written, and possessed a defined Creed before there was a Canon of the New Testament at all. Nor is it denied by any, that not the least important of the tests which a book

claiming admission to the Canon had to pass was *the test of orthodoxy*. The application of this test was nearly fatal to the *Apocalypse*,<sup>1</sup> in spite of the fact that it bore the name of a venerated Apostle. It was quite fatal to the Epistle of Barnabas, the objection to which was that it interpreted the Law of Moses allegorically without also interpreting it literally.

The usual view of Christians, that the Faith of the Church should be determined by the corporate voice of the Church, not by individuals, is primitive and scriptural. The promise of the Spirit that should guide into all [the] Truth was made originally, not to individual Apostles, still less to individual Christians, but to the Apostles *collectively*, our Lord thus indicating that it was His will that the Church should determine its Faith *collectively*, acting through its constitutional rulers (John xvi. 13). Upon this principle the Apostles certainly acted at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.) and the later Church wisely followed their example. To allow individuals to determine or interpret the Christian Creed spells anarchy.

### THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

We have now to consider whether the claim of the Catholic Creeds to contain the fundamental and immutable element of Christian belief is well founded, or whether the Modernists are right in contending that some or all of the credal articles are mutable, and as such liable to alteration or rejection, as knowledge advances.

With regard to the doctrine of God, it may be conceded to the anthropologists and advocates of the evolution of religion (though the evidence is by no means so clear or unambiguous as is often supposed) that belief in one only God has usually been reached by gradual

<sup>1</sup> The *Apocalypse* was rejected by many Churches (especially in the East) because it seemed to them to favour Millenarian doctrines of a carnal and unspiritual kind.

stages.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps even the People of Revelation had to pass through the stages of polytheism and monolatry before they attained to monotheism in the strict sense.

But however this may be, belief in the God of monotheism, once attained, is incapable of any fundamental change of meaning, though, of course, it is capable of 'development' by the process of adding details to fill in the sketch already correctly drawn in outline.

By God is meant a Perfect Being, or rather *the* Perfect Being—the Being unique in kind, unlimited in all perfections, eternal, immutable, absolute. As soon as this conception is reached, a limit is also reached which precludes all further change in the idea. Perfection does not admit of degrees, and from the very nature of things there cannot be more than one Absolute. Of course this idea of God can be *developed* to any extent, by ascribing to Him new perfections previously unsuspected or insufficiently appreciated. The Incarnation, for example, manifested two new moral perfections of God, previously quite unknown, not only to the heathen world, but even to Israel, viz. *humility*,<sup>2</sup> and *voluntary submission to suffering for the sake of His creatures*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Although most savage and barbarian races are polytheistic, they usually unite with their polytheism belief in one supreme God, and have done so as far back as our knowledge extends. Accordingly the evidence is capable of three possible interpretations: (1) that monotheism is original, (2) that polytheism is original, (3) that the existing blend of monotheism and polytheism is original. Of a supposed primitive non-religious state there is no evidence.

<sup>2</sup> To the Jews, accustomed to regard God chiefly as absolute monarch (a true but quite inadequate view of His nature), the humiliation of His Eternal Son involved in His becoming man, and especially in His dying on the Cross, was a great stumbling-block (1 Cor. i. 23; Gal. v. 11).

<sup>3</sup> Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and indeed all the ancient philosophers agreed that God is impassible. Christianity accepted the doctrine of the Impassibility of God in the sense that *He cannot be made to suffer by any being lower than Himself*. Nevertheless Christians have always believed that *He can voluntarily lay aside the exercise of His impassibility*, and has actually done so in the Person of His Son, who suffered and died for us.

This new knowledge, however, though exceedingly important, implied no change in the fundamental idea of God. In recognizing God as *the Perfect Being*—a recognition which is certainly as old as the Second Isaiah, and is probably as old as Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 18 ff., xxxiv. 5 ff.) and even Abraham (Gen. xviii. 25)—religion has already assigned to Him in advance all possible perfections, all virtues of a super-eminent kind imaginable and unimaginable, all powers and excellences of every kind to an infinite degree. Therefore, not only is it true that modern Christians, in spite of their two thousand years of additional experience, believe in God in the identical sense in which the Apostles believed in Him, but also that the fundamental meaning of this belief will never vary either in time or in eternity. Even when we see God face to face in heaven, and share His blessedness and drink of His essence, we shall still believe about Him precisely what we do now, namely, that He is *perfect*.

#### CREATION

After affirming the existence of God, and indicating by His titles certain of His chief perfections (notably His infinity, His unity, His personality, and His love), the Creeds proceed to speak of the creation of all things visible and invisible by Him. This doctrine is already implicitly contained in our belief in God. For, in assigning to Him every possible perfection, we necessarily assign to Him the perfection of being the *First Cause*, or (to use theological language) the *Creator* of all things.

Unlike theology and philosophy, which aim at complete and systematic knowledge, the Creeds (true to their principle of confining themselves to essentials) assert merely the general principle of creation, without going into details. They are silent as to whether the world and its inhabitants were created by instantaneous acts, or by a gradual process of evolution, or in some other

way. They do not even exclude (at least expressly) the theory of *eternal creation*, which (although probably in the last resort illusory and self-contradictory) has approved itself at times to speculative theologians as at least possible.

That the doctrine of creation, once attained, does not admit of change of fundamental meaning is obvious.<sup>1</sup> In affirming God to be the actual Creator of actual things, and also the potential Creator of all possible things,<sup>2</sup> we exhaust the two universes of the actual and the possible, and reach a limit.

### THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN

As we have already indicated, the Creeds lay down no detailed doctrine concerning the Fall of Man and Original Sin, nor have any of the Ecumenical Councils recognized by the whole Church<sup>3</sup> dealt with these mysterious subjects. This wise reserve has not been always imitated by later Councils of less authority. The Council of Trent, for instance, has made statements not easy to reconcile with present-day views concerning the descent and origin of Man.<sup>4</sup>

If, however, we confine the dogmas of the Fall and

<sup>1</sup> The increase of our knowledge, in detail, of the actual things which God has created does not alter the meaning of a doctrine which affirms Him to be the Creator of *all* things, known and unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Evil, of course, excepted. There is, however, no such thing as an evil *substance*. Every substance, *qua* substance, is good, and only becomes evil in so far as it is abused. Even Satan has become what he is by the abuse of free-will.

<sup>3</sup> The Ecumenical Councils recognized by East and West alike are seven, viz. (1) Nicæa I, A.D. 325; (2) Constantinople I, 381; (3) Ephesus, 431; (4) Chalcedon, 451; (5) Constantinople II, 553; (6) Constantinople III, 680; (7) Nicæa II, 787. There has been a certain amount of objection in the West to Nicæa II, but the preponderance of opinion is in its favour.

<sup>4</sup> At the same time, theologians of repute, who accept the Council of Trent as ecumenical, are able to write, "An adequate positive definition of Original Sin has not been given by the Church" (Wilhelm and Scannell, *Manual of Catholic Theology*, vol. ii. p. 27).

Original Sin (as we ought) within the limits of what has express ecumenical sanction, we shall find that we are not involved in any necessary collision with present-day thought, and that adjustment between our religious and secular knowledge is not difficult.

*Some* doctrine concerning these unfathomable but most vital subjects there must necessarily be, both to account for the facts of every-day experience and to afford a background and basis for the doctrine of Redemption. It is clearly impossible either for the philosopher or for the plain man to contemplate the ordinary facts of human life and of animate and inanimate nature and to observe with any attention the amount of pain and other evil involved in them—an amount so large that it seems at times (as during the late Great War) actually, to preponderate over good, without becoming convinced that the world is not in that exact state in which its all-holy Creator intended it to be. In particular, it seems impossible to believe that God, who originally made all things good, implanted in human nature tendencies to sin so strong, and powers to resist them so weak, as to result necessarily in the universal sinfulness which is a matter of experience. There must, therefore, have been a *Corporate Fall* of some kind which involved the whole human race, and this the Creeds clearly imply and Christian tradition expressly affirms, though without determining anything definite concerning its nature and circumstances.

It is one of the great merits of the Hegelian philosophy that, alone among modern systems, it treats the Fall of Man seriously. Hegel differs from the Church in regarding the Fall as *necessary*—necessary, partly because (according to him) sin is superior to innocence, and therefore the Fall was a *Rise*; partly also because (according to the principles of his *Logic*) sin is the necessary and only possible transition from innocence to stable virtue.

Hegel is wrong on both points—wrong on the first,

because the *consensus sanctorum* (the highest authority on such a matter) is perfectly clear and unanimous that sin is *not* morally superior to innocence, and did not of *itself* involve a rise; and wrong on the second, because the development of the Pattern Man, Jesus, from innocence to virtue (which represents God's purpose for every man) did *not* take place by way of sin, but only by way of *conflict* with temptation to sin.

Nevertheless, the Hegelian view that Man's Fall was in reality a Rise contains a certain element of truth. It was God's will that man in due time should know what evil is, and should perfect himself through *conflict* with it. Though defeated in his first encounter, and still suffering from his wounds, man has gained a degree of experience, wisdom, and even spiritual strength from his unsuccessful warfare which he could never have gained had he been entirely secluded from temptation. Even Christ's sinless humanity developed and reached its mature perfection in contact with and in continual warfare with evil (Luke iv. 13; xxii. 28; Matt. xvi. 23; Heb. ii. 10, 18; iv. 15).<sup>1</sup>

### REDEMPTION

Human Redemption is regarded by the Creeds as being brought about by the Incarnation of the Son of God and by His atoning death, the latter being regarded not as an isolated event, but as the culminating crisis of His Incarnate Life of self-sacrifice on earth.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> At no period has a literal interpretation of the Biblical narrative of the Fall of Man been regarded as essential to orthodoxy. From the beginning it has been an open question among theologians whether *Genesis III* ought to be regarded as literal history or as history veiled in allegory. The allegorical interpretation goes back ultimately to *Philo Judæus*.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Nicene Creed, Christ was crucified for us (σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν), but He also came down from heaven and became incarnate for us (τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου, καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα).

Atonement is taught by the Church as a fact, but no theory of it has ever been officially adopted or prescribed as necessary.

Redemption is primarily from sin and from spiritual death, and the result of it is remission of sins and eternal life in God. Redemption, like the Fall, is *a corporate act*, though it is necessary for each individual on coming to years of discretion to appropriate it by repentance and faith. It changes the whole status of the human race in the sight of God, and introduces a New and Eternal Covenant between God and the children of men. This is expressed in theology by saying that Christ became not merely *a man* (though this is not false), but also *man* for us, i.e. He assumed the essential humanity of *the whole race*, of which He is the Head. With the same implication of meaning, Scripture speaks of Him as the Second Adam, in whom as its Second Progenitor the fallen race rises once more (I Cor. xv. 20 ff.).<sup>1</sup>

### THE INCARNATION

A similar wise reserve is shown in the credal definitions of the Incarnation. They contain no more, and also not less, than what is necessary. They guard against the purely heathen theories of 'Apotheosis' or 'Adoption' (which are the very negation of a real Incarnation) by making it clear that it is the Son of God who becomes man, not a human person who becomes the Son of God.

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of racial solidarity, though most mysterious, and for that reason often regarded as incredible by nineteenth-century scientists, is by no means out of harmony with the results of recent researches into the relations obtaining between individual organisms and the races to which they belong. The tendency of recent biology certainly seems to be to regard the race as a 'super-organism,' to which the individuals which compose it are united by a bond which, though not physical, may be conceived of as in a sense 'organic.' The best short treatment that I know of this very difficult subject is J. S. Huxley's suggestive book *The Individual in the Animal Kingdom*. M. Maeterlinck's *The Life of the Bee* should also be consulted.

As against Arianism, which denied the Incarnation in another way, by making the Son of God, who became man, a *creature*, the Nicene Creed declares Him to be *consubstantial with the Father*, i.e. of the same nature, essence, glory, and majesty—in fact, *one God* with Him. The doctrine of Arius, that the Son of God is a creature and yet ought to be worshipped, is essentially polytheistic, and the Church in condemning it was clearly combating an attempt to supplant monotheism by polytheism. That the definition of Nicæa saved Christianity from lapsing into Paganism is generally admitted and is absolutely true.

The word *homoousios*, used in the Nicene Creed to express the fact that the Son of God is not a creature or inferior divinity, but is one in nature and essence with the Supreme God, is not found in Scripture, but the doctrine which it expresses certainly is, and that not only in the Fourth Gospel (x. 38 etc.) and in St. Paul (see especially Phil. ii. 6, where the pre-existent Son is regarded as subsisting in the essential form [μορφῆ] of God, and on a footing of equality [εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ]), but also in the Synoptics, where not only are there numerous passages asserting the *superangelic* nature of the Son, but two at least, the Baptismal formula (Matt. xxviii. 19) contained in every ancient manuscript and version, and the Logion, Matt. xi. 27 = Luke x. 22, assigned by critics to the primitive 'Logia' of St. Matthew, which are *decisive* for consubstantiality. A Being who, as stated in Matt. xi. 27, is of so exalted a nature that the Father alone can comprehend it, *cannot* be a creature, but must be divine in the full Athanasian sense.

It appears, therefore, that the Christological doctrine of the Nicene Creed does not in any way (except in expression) go beyond the clear teaching, not merely of the Epistles, but even of the Synoptics. The Synoptic Gospels, not less than the writings of St. Paul and St. John, assert a *consubstantial* Sonship, and also the doc-

trine of our Lord's pre-existence, as the title Son of Man of itself convincingly testifies.

It is one of the most assured results of recent Synoptic criticism (Liberal as well as orthodox) that the title Son of Man implies pre-existence, and that not merely impersonal or ideal pre-existence, but *actual and personal pre-existence in a state of divine glory and majesty with the Father in heaven*.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, if Jesus ever used it of Himself, as the Synoptics testify that He did, then it is certain that He must have believed, not that He was a mere man (as Dr. Rashdall, Dr. Bethune-Baker, and Mr. Major suppose), but that He was a pre-existent Divine (or at least superangelic) Person, sharing as of right the throne and attributes of God, who out of love for us miserable sinners stooped from heaven to become man. Thus the teaching of the Synoptic Christ about Himself corresponds substantially with that of the Johannine.

The only apparent way of avoiding this inference is the quite desperate one of denying that Jesus ever applied to Himself this title, which, according to the Synoptists, was His favourite name for Himself, and which they represent Him as using of Himself no less than seventy-one times.<sup>2</sup>

The Synoptic Gospels lend no countenance to Mr. Major's extravagant supposition that Jesus was only consubstantial with God in the same sense in which every man is or may become consubstantial with God; and that if He really existed at all before His conception, it was only in the same way in which all human souls may be conceived of as so pre-existing.<sup>3</sup>

It lies on the very surface of the Synoptic Gospels, that the pre-existence of the Son of Man is the pre-exist-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> See further, ch. ix, appendices I and II.

<sup>3</sup> The pre-existence of souls was a common Rabbinical doctrine in our Lord's time, and is alluded to in John ix. 2. Among Christians, Origen hazarded the speculation that it may be true, but it has been rejected with practical unanimity in all ages.

ence, not of an ordinary human soul, but of an Awful Superhuman and Superangelic Being, who from the beginning had shared the divine glory and power, who even on earth was able to exercise the divine prerogative of pardon, and who is the destined Judge of quick and dead. The gulf which separates this unique Son of Man from all other sons of men is clearly not finite but infinite.

Modernists profess to believe in the primitive (i.e. the Synoptic) conception of the Divine Sonship and Incarnation of Jesus. In that case, they ought to be willing to accept the statements of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, which do not in substance go beyond that conception. The credal statements are obviously *minimal* ones. They contain none of the later theological and philosophical refinements and developments. Nothing, for example, is said as to the exact relation between the divine and the human natures of Christ, nothing as to the extent and nature of His human knowledge, nothing as to the development of His consciousness and personality. Many important points are left open for reverent inquiry. Indeed, so broad and general is the definition of the Incarnation in the Creeds that it is obvious that it contains nothing which genuine believers in that doctrine will ever find it necessary to question, much less to disavow.

Nevertheless the Catholic Creeds, while omitting all that is not essential to belief in the Incarnation, contain all that is. They make it clear, for example, that by the Incarnation is meant *God becoming Man*, not (as is maintained by supporters of the theory of Apotheosis or 'Adoption') a mere man becoming God. The Nicene Creed teaches quite clearly that the Son of God is a pre-existing Divine Being who "for us men and for our salvation" came down from heaven and was made man in the Virgin's womb. Further, the use of the term *ὁμοούσιος* implies that *the Supreme God Himself* (not any

inferior being or creature) became incarnate for us in the Person of His Son. The Creed also affirms *the unity of the Redeemer's person*, as against all theories of Immanence or Double Personality, which (whatever may be the intentions of the promoters) do in fact deny the Incarnation.

As the credal definition of the Incarnation is thus *a minimal one*, and (apart from the accompanying miracle of the Virgin Birth) hardly does more than explain clearly what genuine Incarnation (as distinguished from Immanence) must always mean in every age, it is clear that the dogma of the Incarnation does not admit of change of meaning. It is capable of development (and of course of denial), but not of change.

#### CENTRALITY OF THE INCARNATION

Without questioning *the truth* of the Incarnation, a question may be raised as to *its centrality and importance*. For instance, the Rev. F. E. Hutchinson, who (in spite of much rash and minimizing language) seems personally to accept it, denied emphatically at Birmingham the right of the Church to treat it as essential by excluding from the teaching office or from membership those who reject it.

It certainly seems at first sight a strange thing that a doctrine which was not always essential to true religion (as before Christ it obviously was not) should be essential now. Nevertheless, the analogy of science shows us that many scientific doctrines now regarded as essential (e.g. the Law of Gravitation and the Heliocentric Theory) were not always so regarded, for they were not always known. Similarly, it is a perfectly reasonable position to take up, that though the Incarnation was not an essential doctrine before it was revealed, *it has been so ever since*.

One thing is perfectly evident, that if the Incarnation is a fact at all, it is a very important fact—more impor-

tant than any other in the entire history of the world, and one which throws more light upon the true nature of God than all other facts put together. That the Awful and Omnipotent Creator of all things, King of the Ages, to whom eternal blessedness and impassibility belong as of right, should condescend to exhibit such virtues as humility and self-sacrifice, and out of love for sinners should deign to take their nature upon Him, and work for years as a village carpenter, and be scourged and reviled and spit upon, and finally crucified as a criminal by His own creatures, is so *amazing* a fact that those who believe it may surely be excused if they make it *the very basis of their religion*, and form themselves into a religious community (such as the Catholic Church is and has always been) *for the express purpose of proclaiming it to the world*. That, believing this, they should regard it as *essential*, and should refuse to consider as belonging to their fellowship any who do not believe it, is not only natural, but *inevitable*.

Another reason why the doctrine is essential is that it *defines the object of worship*. Christians have not the same object of worship as other monotheists, for though all monotheists worship God, they do not all worship God incarnate. For Christians to worship Jesus of Nazareth is a plain duty; for other monotheists it is a sin. Consequently, the objects of worship being different, the religions are different, and religious union between those who affirm and those who deny the Incarnation is out of the question.

### THE JUDGMENT TO COME

Another theological article of the Creed which has clearly remained unaltered in meaning since the apostolic age is that which affirms the Judgment to come. The Creed asserts only the fact of the Judgment (which it implies will be mainly according to works), and is silent

as to the manner, thus excluding from the region of faith all those symbolical and picturesque accompaniments with which apocalyptic imagination has delighted to clothe the spiritual fact which alone the Creeds affirm.

The doctrine of a Judgment to come (as defined in general principle only in the Creeds) needs no long defence. The belief in a final and perfect judgment of some kind seems to be necessarily involved in the idea of God as the Moral Ruler of the Universe. If He is this, He must one day deal with men according to their true characters, and must intervene to secure the final triumph of good over evil. That He will exercise this judgment through His Incarnate Son is congruous with the whole idea of the Incarnation ("The Father . . . hath given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the [*or a*] Son of Man" (John v. 27; cf. also ver. 22).

It is sometimes alleged that the doctrine of a present and continuous judgment in this life, upon which the Fourth Gospel lays particular stress, is inconsistent with and excludes the doctrine of a Final Judgment at the end of the age, but that is not the view taken by the Evangelist himself. His reiterated teaching about "the Last Day" (vi. 39, 40, 44, 54; xi. 24; xii. 48), when the dead shall rise from their graves and shall come to judgment, "they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation [*literally* judgment]" (John v. 28-29), is perfectly explicit, and in full accord with Synoptic teaching. So also in his First Epistle the writer speaks, quite in the Synoptic manner, of "the Day of Judgment" (iv. 17), and of Christ's manifestation as Judge at the *Parusia* or Second Coming (ii. 28). We see, therefore, that the usual Modernist theory that the Fourth Evangelist "spiritualizes the crude Synoptic conception," and denies it as a fact of history, is in flagrant contradiction to the evidence, and can only be carried through by the usual Modernist device of expurgating the Gospel.

A little reflection will show that the doctrines of a present and of a future judgment do not really contradict but rather supplement one another. Undoubtedly God rewards and punishes men here and now, partly through the laws of nature, partly through the judgments of human society, partly through special providences, partly by the voice of conscience. No one denies that every day in the ordinary course of nature God rewards virtue and punishes vice. But what candid mind can possibly maintain that He does this *adequately*, or that He makes the full judicial distinction between the good man and the bad man which perfect justice requires? What, for instance, is to be said about the case of the good man who becomes insane, or is tortured for years by cancer or arthritis, or dies a martyr in God's cause; or about the contrary case of the bad man who flourishes like a green bay tree, amasses wealth by doubtful means, lives in health, luxury, and pleasure, and dies a Lord of Parliament, full of years and undeserved honours? Surely the fact is notorious, and can be denied only by sophistry, that the present judgments of God upon good and bad men, though real, are imperfect, and that they require to be supplemented (if the perfect justice of God is to be vindicated) by a *Final Judgment*, in and through which ideal justice will be meted out to every individual, virtue will be adequately rewarded, vice adequately punished, and good will finally triumph over evil. In spite of all attempts to prove the contrary, it is *absolutely impossible* to establish God's perfect justice by showing that He has established general laws with a general tendency to produce justice. Perfect justice means *rendering to every man precisely according to his individual deserts*, and since this is not done here and now in a natural way, it is certain (on the assumption that God is perfectly just) that it will be done hereafter in a supernatural way. We thus see that the dogma of the moral perfection of God logically involves two other

dogmas: (1) that of a future life, (2) that of a future judgment.

### THE FUTURE LIFE

The Creeds assert only the general principle of a future life, speaking of it as "the life of the world to come" and "the life everlasting," and abstain from mentioning details. Consequently, this article of the Faith must necessarily be believed in the same general sense in all ages, and that, not merely by all Christians, but by all theists. As Human Immortality is a truth, not only of Christianity, but also of reason or natural religion, there is no occasion to dwell upon it here at length.

### THE HISTORICAL ARTICLES

Several articles of the Creeds affirm only ordinary historical facts, and therefore do not call for extended comment. Thus, obviously, the statements that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried" are incapable of difference or change of interpretation. They can, of course, be *denied*, as in fact they are by Prof. W. B. Smith, J. M. Robertson, A. Kalthoff, A. Drews, and other adherents of 'the Mythical School' of criticism; but the critics who thus deny them, deny them *in the same sense* in which ordinary Christians affirm them.

It is a peculiarity of all doctrines affirming historical facts, that though they are capable of denial, they are not capable of development. Thus the truths that Julius Cæsar was assassinated in 44 B.C. and that the battle of Hastings was fought in A.D. 1066 are not merely immutable in meaning but are also incapable of any development whatever. Doctrines concerning the causes, the effects, the significance, and the importance of these events are capable of endless development, but not the bare statements that they once happened. As this is

generally admitted, or not seriously denied, there is no need to enlarge upon it here.

### SYMBOLICAL INTERPRETATION

It is the contention of all Modernists that some at least of the articles of the Creeds ought to be 'symbolically' interpreted; but there is less agreement than might have been expected as to what 'symbolical' interpretation is.

For instance, the French school of Laberthonnière superposes the 'symbolical' interpretation upon the historical, insisting that the ordinary interpretation of each article must be accepted before any attempt is made to determine its further 'symbolical' meaning.

This is the proper historical meaning of 'symbolical' interpretation. Our Lord, for example, interpreted the Old Testament in this way. He found a symbolical meaning in the *historical fact* that Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (John iii. 14); and St. Paul recognized in *the actual historical persons* Sarah and Hagar symbols of the difference between the Law and the Gospel (Gal. iv. 21 ff.). So firmly established in primitive times was the principle that the symbolical interpretation of a document ought to be based upon, not substituted for, its literal meaning, that the venerable Epistle of Barnabas was finally excluded from the Canon for no other obvious reason than that it interpreted the Law of Moses symbolically, and did not also interpret it literally.

English Modernists, however, with one consent demand that the symbolical interpretation of the Creed, which they advocate, should be *substituted for*, not based upon, its literal and historical meaning. The more extreme of them have even of late begun to claim the right to apply this 'symbolical' interpretation to *the whole* of the articles of the Creed. With this new claim we shall have

to deal in the last chapter. For the present the discussion will be confined to the narrower claim to interpret symbolically only *two* articles, viz. those which affirm the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of our Lord.

The current Modernist teaching is that the 'symbolical' interpretation of these articles involves (1) a positive and (2) a negative element. As to what the positive element is, there is a singular want of agreement, but the most influential view seems to be that the Virgin Birth when symbolically interpreted means the Incarnation; and the Resurrection, Human Immortality. Thus to interpret them leads to an awkward duplication, for both these doctrines are taught literally without symbolism in other articles.

As to the negative element there is more agreement. It is held by nearly all that, according to the 'symbolical' interpretation of these articles, the Mother of Jesus was not really a virgin when she bore Him, and that His buried body never rose. It appears, therefore, that whatever of a positive nature the 'symbolical' interpretation may involve, it involves at least *the denial* of these articles in the only sense in which they have ever as yet (as even Modernists admit) been understood.

The objection of orthodox Christians to the 'symbolical' interpretation of these articles is not that it is symbolical, but that it is new. It has been a fixed principle of Christian belief from the beginning, and is clearly laid down in the New Testament,<sup>1</sup> that Christian *dogma* (as distinguished from Christian theology or philosophy) is *immutable*; and that though it is capable (in principle at least) of 'development,' it is by no means capable of change; and that consequently all the articles of the Creeds without exception ought to be believed by Christians *in the identical sense in which they were first imposed as articles of faith*.

Accordingly, if an article of the Creed bore originally

<sup>1</sup> See ch. ii.

a symbolical sense, it ought also to be understood symbolically now, and *vice versa*. What is objected to is not symbolism or metaphor *in itself*, but *change of meaning*. Undoubtedly there is much metaphor in the Creeds. For instance, they use words properly descriptive of human relationships (*viz.* Father and Son) to describe the nature and relationships of the First and Second Persons of the Trinity; they also apply to the Third Person a name which means literally 'wind' or 'breath.' The First Person is also said to "beget" the Second. All these expressions are metaphors, or contain a large metaphorical element, and this metaphorical meaning or element is *original*. If any Christian in any age had ventured to give a crudely literal interpretation to any of these words, he would have been regarded as having ceased to be a Christian altogether.

#### THE MODERNIST ARGUMENT

The only real argument advanced by Modernists in favour of permitting their proposed 'symbolical' interpretation of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of Jesus, is their statement that the Church has already sanctioned symbolical interpretation in the case of four articles which (it is alleged) in early days were always understood literally: *viz.* (1) the Resurrection of the Flesh, (2) the Descent into Hell, (3) the Ascension into Heaven, and (4) the session at the right hand of God.

As is well known, the Apostles' Creed speaks of "the Resurrection of the Flesh" (*carnis resurrectionem*), and Canon Glazebrook maintains, in *The Faith of a Modern Churchman* (p. 78), that the translation "the resurrection of the body," which the modern Anglican Church has sanctioned in the Catechism and Daily Offices, implies a change from a materialistic to a more spiritual view of the resurrection of Christians.

There is little need to dwell at length upon so flimsy

an allegation. It is *certain* that in the Prayer Book the two phrases mean precisely the same thing, for every Churchman at his Baptism and on his deathbed is required to express his faith in "the resurrection of the flesh," and it is ridiculous to suppose that he is expected to profess his faith in something quite different, and virtually to deny the Creed of his Baptism, every time he attends Matins and Evensong.

The use of the word 'flesh' (*σάρξ*) in the sense of *body* is fully established in the New Testament. For example, St. Peter applies it to our Lord's buried body ("My flesh shall dwell in hope"; "He was neither left in hell, nor did His flesh see corruption," Acts ii. 26, 31), and many other instances might be quoted.<sup>1</sup>

There is no evidence whatever that "the resurrection of the *flesh*" (or even of "*this flesh*," a phrase also used in early times) was ever understood by orthodox theologians in a materialistic sense. The *identity* of the risen body with the natural body has, of course, always been maintained, but there has never been any defined doctrine as to the exact nature of the identity. All orthodox theologians have held with St. Paul that 'flesh and blood,' in their natural and unglorified condition, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. xv. 50), and that the Resurrection involves a supernatural metamorphosis or transformation into a spiritual and glorious body. The Church has never taken the view (common among ancient Jews and modern Mahometans) that at the Resurrection men will rise to a natural life, material-

<sup>1</sup> In at least the following passages *σάρξ* indicates the body in whole or (occasionally) in part: 1 Cor. v. 5; vii. 28; xv. 39 ff.; 2 Cor. vii. 1; v.; Gal. iv. 13, 14; Eph. ii. 11; v. 29; Phil. i. 22, 24; Col. i. 24; ii. 1, 5, 13; 1 Pet. iii. 18; iv. 1, 6; cf. Matt. xix. 5, etc. As distinguished from *σῶμα*, which emphasizes *organization*, *σάρξ* lays stress on the *material* of the body, but it indicates the same *object*. Other New Testament meanings of *σάρξ* are (1) human nature regarded in its weakness and mortality ('flesh and blood'); (2) the sinless human nature of Christ (John i. 14; and vi. *passim*); (3) the sinful impulses of human nature (a specially Pauline use)

istically conceived. The chief reason why Millenarianism was condemned was that it was considered to have this tendency. Even the second-century Fathers, who, in opposition to the Gnostic view that matter is essentially evil, were compelled to lay polemical stress upon the resurrection of *the flesh*, were careful to insist that the resurrection involves a miraculous transformation. Irenæus, for example, says expressly: "It is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body. . . . For these animal bodies . . . succumb to death: then rising through the Spirit's instrumentality, they become spiritual bodies, so that by the Spirit they possess a perpetual life" (v. 7, 2). There is not a particle of evidence that the reality of the change to a spiritual body at the Resurrection has ever been denied by orthodox Christians anywhere.

With regard to Canon Glazebrook's assertion (now ungraciously modified but not fully withdrawn, in *The Letter and the Spirit*) that the clause "He sitteth at the right hand of God" was among those "which were unquestionably believed by the early Church to be literal statements of fact," and that consequently the primitive faith of the Church was the heresy of Anthropomorphism, it will be sufficient to quote the words of St. Augustine: "To think of God the Father as though He were circumscribed within a human form, so as to imagine Him with right hand or left," is "to be guilty of the impiety which the Apostle execrates in those who changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the similitude of corruptible man. Such an image of God it is unlawful to place in a Christian temple; much more abominable is it to place it in the heart" (*De Fide et Symbolo*, xiv).

#### THE ASCENSION AND DESCENT INTO HELL

More plausible, but not better founded, is the assertion of Canon Glazebrook and others that modern

Christians no longer understand the doctrines of the Ascension and Descent into Hell in their original sense. "These clauses," says he, "have no literal meaning except for those (if any remain) who regard the earth as the fixed centre of creation, with a hollow space underneath for Hades and a solid vault overhead." Or as Canon Streeter puts the matter, the Ascension implies the belief that heaven is "a definite region locally fixed above the solid bowl of the skies" (*Foundations*, p. 132).

These assertions are made with more confidence than knowledge. My own patristic reading is fairly wide, but nowhere in antiquity have I been able to find the least trace of any such view. It is, of course, true that many ancient Christians did so localize heaven (though it is remarkable with what reserve most of those who seem supporters of this opinion express themselves, when they come to define their belief closely), but of the view that this opinion alone is orthodox and alone sanctioned by the Creed I can find no trace whatever. Ancient Christians were everywhere allowed the same liberty of speculation on such obscure matters as we enjoy now, and they made liberal use of it.

Our first witness shall be a representative of conservative orthodoxy, that redoubtable *malleus hæreticorum*, St. Jerome. The strictly local view of heaven, so far from being an article of the Faith for him, is the height of folly and absurdity. Commenting on St. Paul's expression, *stultiloquium* ("foolish talking"), Ephes. v. 4. he speaks first of the nonsense often talked by men of science, who ought to know better, about physical questions; and then proceeds: "Nonsense is also talked in the Church. For example, if anyone thinks that heaven is curved like an arch, deceived by a phrase of Isaiah which he fails to understand, and that a throne is placed in the heavens, and that God really sits upon it, like an Emperor and Judge; and that the angels stand round to obey His word of command and to be

sent on different missions, [he is talking nonsense]." If the orthodox Jerome could call the literalistic view of heaven nonsense, it is clear that it cannot have been in his day an article of faith.<sup>1</sup>

We will next quote a writer of more liberal tendency, Origen, who, commenting on our Lord's words, "I am not of this world," observes: "Our Lord and Saviour clearly points out a certain world besides this visible one, which it is difficult to describe and make known." He then discusses and rejects the view that it is identical with the Platonic World of Ideas, and proceeds: "There is no doubt, however, that something more glorious and excellent than this present world is pointed out by the Saviour, at which He exhorts and encourages believers in Him to aim. But whether that world which He wishes to be understood is divided and far separated from this one, either by situation or nature or glory, or whether it is superior in glory and quality, but confined within the limits of this world (which to me also seems more probable), is nevertheless uncertain, and, in my opinion, is an unsuitable subject for human thought and speculation."<sup>2</sup>

St. Augustine may perhaps be numbered among those who took a more local view of heaven, but how little importance he attached to the idea of locality in this connexion may be gathered from his comment on the article "He ascended into Heaven." "But where," he says, "and in what manner the Lord's body is in heaven, it is utterly vain and idle to inquire; *only we must believe that it is in heaven* [tantummodo in cœlo esse credendum est]. For it is not for our feeble intellects to discuss the secrets of the heavens, but for our faith to entertain high and honourable thoughts of the dignity of the Lord's body." He goes on to assign a purely spiritual

<sup>1</sup> *Comm. in Ephes.*, Bk. III, c. 5. This interesting quotation was brought to my notice by the Dean of Christ Church.

<sup>2</sup> *De Principiis*, Bk. II, ch. 3.

meaning to the left and right hand of God, and to reject literalism in all such matters as impious.<sup>1</sup>

Even in the Nicene Creed itself the expression "came down from heaven" is used of the pre-existent Son of God in a purely non-local and mystical sense; *and this expression* (κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν) *cannot possibly have a local meaning.* How thoroughly well established in orthodox use at this period was the mystical and non-local use of 'ascend' and 'descend' may be illustrated by a quotation from Rufinus's Commentary on the Creed: "We [i.e. the orthodox] speak of 'things below' and of 'things above'; for, shut up in the narrow circumference of the body, we are confined within the limits of the place which is appointed to us. But to God, who is everywhere present, what is 'below' [infernum], or what is 'above' [supernum]?"<sup>2</sup> The same mystical sense is found in the New Testament, e.g. in John iii. 13, "No one hath ascended into heaven except *He that came down from heaven*, even the Son of Man [which is in heaven]";<sup>3</sup> also in vi. 33, 38, 42, 51. It is, in fact, a commonplace in the theology of all ages.<sup>4</sup>

We see, therefore, that the non-local sense of 'ascend' and 'descend,' implying transition only, not physical movement, so far from being purely modern, is treated as a theological commonplace in the fourth century, is found still earlier in the New Testament, and actually occurs in the Nicene Creed in the expression "came down from heaven." The presumption accordingly is that the closely analogous expression "ascended into heaven" should also be interpreted mystically, as indicating a non-spatial transition or translation of our

<sup>1</sup> *De Fide et Symbolo* (chs. 13, 14).

<sup>2</sup> Ch. 29.

<sup>3</sup> If the bracketed words are genuine (as they probably are, for they have excellent second-century attestation), they contain a further illustration of the same doctrine.

<sup>4</sup> See especially, F. H. Chase, *The Creed and the New Testament*, pp 16-21,

Lord's humanity into heaven. This non-spatial interpretation is not, of course, the only possible one—the Creed wisely does not attempt to define the mysterious nature of the ascent; but the evidence, taken as a whole, suggests that the non-spatial meaning was in the minds of the compilers, and that those who adopt it to-day are in full harmony with the best theological thought of the fourth and fifth centuries.

With regard to the Apostles' Creed, the Western evidence of Jerome, who rejects the spatial view with derision, and of Rufinus, who treats the mystical view as familiar to the faithful, shows clearly that that *natural*—though, of course, not the necessary—interpretation of this Confession also in its references to the descent into hell and the ascension into heaven is the non-spatial one. Indeed, it is strictly impossible for a believer in the accepted doctrine of the spirituality of the soul to understand the descent into hell in a fully literal sense, for this would imply that the human soul occupies space and is capable of physical movement—in other words, that it is not spirit, but matter. Of course, *to the pictorial imagination of believers in all ages*—in this as much as in any other—heaven is a place above and hell a place below the earth; but a man's pictorial imagination is a very different thing from his intellectual belief. Although believers have always pictured and spoken of heaven as 'above' the earth, the more refined theory of a *supra-local* heaven has always been influential and often dominant. The *existence* of heaven, not its locality, has always been what Christians have been required to believe, and the customary way of speaking of the Ascension as a 'going up' to heaven no more implies the view that heaven is locally above the earth, than the expression 'going up to London' implies belief that London is the highest place in England.

The question is frequently asked, Why, if the transition from earth to heaven was non-local, did the Lord's body

visibly ascend? The answer is that the visible ascension was an outward and visible sign and proof of the true and mystical ascension imperceptible to human senses. It supplemented the bodily resurrection, by offering ocular objective proof that He who on earth had lived as a mere village carpenter and had died a criminal's death had in truth been exalted to the throne of the universe, and had become "Lord of all." If the man Jesus had merely vanished mysteriously after His last interview with the Apostles, as He had done on previous occasions, the evidence for His heavenly exaltation (and by consequence for His deity) would have been distinctly weaker.

#### THE CONCEPTIONS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

The original conceptions of heaven and hell have developed greatly during Christian history, but they have not changed their fundamental meaning. Heaven has always meant the highest possible degree of blessedness attainable by creatures. This conception is clearly of an absolute character, and as such changeless. From time to time as human thought matures, new kinds of blessedness find place in the Church's current teaching about heaven (an important development of this kind took place when Origen hazarded the speculation that the bliss of the redeemed will consist largely in the successful cultivation of philosophy and natural science), but the original idea of heaven as a state of perfect bliss provides for unlimited developments of this kind. Modern Christians believe, just as ancient Christians did, that heaven is a state of *supreme blessedness*, and that it is constituted mainly by the *vision of God*. Similarly hell (*gehenna*) has always meant a final, adequate, and perfectly just retribution—a retribution worthy of God and worthy of the sinner who suffers it. Its exact nature has never been an article of faith, never has its funda-

mental meaning been altered, because, as the moral sense of Christians has developed, more refined ideas of what constitutes perfect retribution have become associated with it.

### THE RESURRECTION

The most important and also the most difficult question which the records of Christian origins propose to the critic is, how it came about that an obscure and uneducated Palestinian peasant, whose attempts to teach religion did not meet with even local success, for His own nation rejected Him and caused Him to be condemned to a servile death by crucifixion, came within a few months of that unhappy event to be adored as God by strict monotheistic Jews who had known Him familiarly "in the days of His flesh," and after a lapse of less than four centuries by the great majority of civilized men—men, moreover, who despised the race and the civilization from which He sprang. It is plain that no ordinary, but only a most extraordinary cause can account for facts so astonishing.

The answer which Modernist as well as orthodox Christians give to this question is, that on the third day after His death this crucified criminal in some real sense *rose from the dead*, and, appearing to His dispirited followers, succeeded in persuading them not only that He had *survived* death in the sense in which the martyred Socrates had survived death, but that He was *Death's Conqueror*, and that to Him had been assigned almighty power over the universe, including power at the Last Great Assize to judge men and angels, and to assign to them their eternal recompense.

That most representative Modernists as well as all orthodox Christians regard the Resurrection of Jesus as His *conquest* over Death, and not simply as His *survival* of it, is stated quite unambiguously by so trustworthy an authority as Canon Streeter. While claiming a general

licence for himself and his fellow-Modernists to deny that the buried body of Jesus ever rose, he yet states with emphasis that this liberty ought only to be accorded to a clergyman, "provided always [that he] is a sincere believer in the Divinity of our Lord, and in the reality of His personal conquest over death," thus making (1) the true Divinity of our Lord, and (2) His real conquest over death, essential principles of genuine Modernism.<sup>1</sup> Upon these points he has the support not only of the moderate and nearly orthodox school of Laberthonnière, which is inclined to accept even the bodily resurrection, but as regards the second point even of Le Roy,<sup>2</sup> and as regards the first of Loisy.<sup>3</sup>

### THE ORTHODOX THEORY

The *effect*, therefore, of the Resurrection of Jesus, according both to Orthodoxy and Modernism, was that the disciples of Jesus believed (1) that He had conquered death; and (2) that He is God and ought to be adored as such. The question immediately arises, which of the two theories assigns a cause *adequate* to produce these acknowledged effects?

That the orthodox view (supposed true) is adequate, is generally admitted even by Modernists, for it affirms all that they affirm, *and more*. It affirms (1) that Jesus believed and taught His own Divinity; (2) that the bodily resurrection of Jesus (which, according to ancient as well as to modern ideas, was an amazing miracle) set the seal of divine approval upon His teaching, of which His own Divinity formed part; (3) that the Apostles accordingly believed, not merely in His survival of death, but in His unique *conquest* over it, and also in *His Divinity*; and (4) that this faith was further confirmed by the dramatic miracle of the Bodily

<sup>1</sup> *Restatement and Reunion*, p. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 177.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 19.

Ascension of Jesus, which gave complete assurance to those who witnessed it that He who on earth was rejected by men had been exalted by God to the throne of the universe.

That the orthodox theory is fully adequate to account for the facts is shown also by actual *experience*, for it was undoubtedly this theory, not the Modernist one, which in fact converted Europe. Whether the Modernist theory (had it existed) would have done so, is a fair matter for argument; the efficacy of the other needs no proof of any kind: it is a simple fact.

### THE MODERNIST THEORY

The Modernist theory of the Resurrection is (1) negatively that the buried body of Jesus did not rise, but "saw corruption" like other bodies, and (2) positively that the soul or spirit of Jesus survived death and manifested itself to the Apostles in an objective but purely spiritual manner, or else that God sent "a telegram from heaven," i.e. wrought in the minds of the Apostles a strong internal conviction that the soul of Jesus had conquered Death, and was now with Him in heaven, and was divine.

The latter alternative is so unsubstantial a basis for beliefs so momentous that we need not delay over it. It is quite true that men do sometimes feel a strong internal conviction (for which they can assign no reason) that certain external events have happened or will happen (as, for example, that an intimate friend has just died in Australia, or that they themselves will die next week), but such convictions, even when intensely strong, are so frequently belied by events, that no reliance can be placed upon them. If the Apostles' belief in Christ's conquest of Death, and His Deity, rested only upon such subjective conviction, and not upon objective evidence, then its basis was so frail that no one except

themselves could reasonably be expected to attach any importance to it.

### THEORY OF OBJECTIVE VISIONS

A better case can be made out for the theory of objective visions, which is the usual one with Modernists as with Liberal Protestants. Objective visions (if their objectivity can be clearly proved) do undoubtedly afford evidence of *survival*, and are thus evidence of *human immortality*. It was in this light that the ancient world usually regarded them; and therefore, if the Apostles had been able to produce convincing evidence of the *objectivity* of their visions of the risen Jesus, they would undoubtedly have convinced an average heathen audience—even an audience of philosophers—that their late Master, Jesus, *had survived death*.

That entertaining but unreliable author Philostratus informs us that after the death of the philosopher Apollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of Christ, discussions arose among his disciples as to the truth of human immortality, and in particular as to the truth of the survival of Apollonius. All declared themselves convinced that so holy and good a man must have survived death—all, that is, except a certain young man, the Thomas of the company, who refused to believe. Then (so the story runs) the soul of the sage appeared to the young man, assuring him of his personal survival and of the truth of the immortality of the soul, and proceeded to recite to him certain verses of his own composition bearing upon Immortality. The young man was convinced by the apparition, and thus all the disciples of Apollonius were happily united in a firm belief in the continued existence of their Master (*Life of Apollonius*, viii. 31). I am not here concerned with the *truth* of this story (Philostratus, in my opinion, is a most untrustworthy witness), but only with *the inference* which the disciples of Apollonius drew from this strange mani-

festation. What they concluded was, not that Apollonius was God or a god, or that he had conquered death, but *only that he had survived it*. Similarly, the average heathen, on hearing from the Apostles their story of the appearance of *the spirit* of Jesus after his death, would have considered indeed that it proved that Jesus had survived death in the sense in which Apollonius and Socrates had survived death, *but not in any other*. They would have regarded it as quite absurd to base upon so ordinary an event as the appearance of a disembodied spirit, conclusions so far-reaching as that the man who thus manifested himself had conquered death or was one with the Supreme God. That Jewish hearers would have taken the same view is clear from Josephus, who mentions one or two cases of such *post-mortem* apparitions, without attaching any special importance to them.

Nor would the ancient hearers of the Apostles have been more impressed, even if they had been further assured that the spirit of Jesus appeared (as, according to Canon Streeter's revised view, it actually did) in "a spiritual body," having no connexion with the buried body. They would have replied at once that, if it had appeared at all, it was obvious that it must have done so, for inasmuch as the human soul is immaterial and invisible, the soul of Jesus could hardly have become perceptible to the senses of the Apostles without undergoing a certain degree of 'materialization.'

#### PROOF OF OBJECTIVITY

The important thing to realize is that neither according to ancient nor modern ideas is the appearance of a disembodied or partly 'materialized' spirit (or of what seems to be such) either a supernatural or a very unusual event. A few ancient 'psychical researchers' (Phlegon, for instance) who were interested, collected and investigated remarkable ghost stories in much the same spirit

in which the modern Society for Psychical Research collects and investigates its numerous instances of 'phantasms of the dead'; but they did not regard them either as miracles or as particularly remarkable. Whether they were right or wrong does not concern us. It is plain matter of history that the average first-century heathen or Jew no more took ghosts seriously than the present-day Englishman.

One important conclusion clearly emerges from the painstaking researches of the Psychical Research Society into many hundreds of cases of 'phantasms of the dead,' viz. *the extraordinary difficulty of proving objectivity in any instances whatever*. 'Phantasms' frequently occur as the result of subjective causes alone, and the difficulty of distinguishing between these and 'objective' apparitions is enormous. Even when there is reason to suppose that the cause of the 'phantasm' does not lie in the observer's own mind, it is often possible to suppose that the cause is intense concentration of thought upon the dead person *by some other living mind*, with the result that the 'phantasm' of the dead man appears to the observer by a process of 'thought-transference.' Attempts to prove the 'objectivity' of phantasms by the use of the other senses always end in failure. The 'phantasm,' when pursued, usually retreats, and if driven into a corner, either vanishes or offers no resistance to the touch.

If now we suppose that a 'phantasm' of Jesus, whom the Apostles knew quite certainly to be dead, did actually appear to them, we know from psychological considerations alone, quite apart from the Gospel narrative, that their first theory would have been that they saw a ghost; and if the apparition, on their attempting to handle it, had vanished, or offered no resistance to their touch, they would have come to one of two conclusions: either that it was an unreal appearance—a phantom that mocked their hopes (the more natural and plausible

supposition); or else that it was a real objective appearance of *the spirit* of Jesus sent to comfort them in their sorrow. If they took the latter view, they would have concluded indeed that the spirit of Jesus had survived death (a belief that they would probably have held in any case), but certainly not that He had *conquered* Death, still less that He was God. Even if they had been so illogical as to draw these two last inferences, their hearers, whether Jews or heathens, would certainly not have accepted them.

It is useless for Modernists to argue that *they ought to have accepted them*. The fact remains that they would not. Nor is there any difference in this respect between ancient and modern mentality. By no normal person either in the apostolic age or in this would the mere appearance of the disembodied spirit or 'phantasm' of a dead man be regarded as evidence that the man in question had conquered death or was divine.

### THE BODILY RESURRECTION

On the other hand, both in ancient and modern times *the raising of the dead*—the actual reanimation of a corpse—has always been considered *the miracle of miracles*, a stupendous act of wonder in which the finger of God is most clearly discerned. Only the greatest of the Jewish prophets were believed to have raised the dead. The wandering magi of antiquity, who made no difficulty about calling up spirits, even those of mighty heroes, for a few obols, made no pretence of raising dead bodies. The credulous and marvel-loving Philostratus hesitates to attribute a miracle of resurrection even to his favourite hero Apollonius (*Life*, iv. 45). Even in the most superstitious parts of the modern East, where magic is firmly believed in, and powers almost of omnipotence are attributed to magicians and jinns, there is one power withheld from them, *the power to raise the dead*. Every

reader of *The Arabian Nights* is familiar with this. If, therefore, the Apostles were in a position to assert, not such a commonplace event as the appearance of Christ's disembodied spirit, but *the rising of His crucified body from the tomb*, then their message may well have had the world-shaking consequences which we know in fact it had. Every Jew who believed it would regard it as a direct sign from heaven that God had vindicated the maligned character of Jesus, and had set the seal of divine approval on His teaching of which His divinity formed part,<sup>1</sup> and likewise every heathen would have confessed that if the Resurrection of Jesus was a fact, then indeed He was the Conqueror of Death, and might well be the Only-begotten Son of the Supreme God, as the Apostles declared. Given the bodily resurrection of Jesus, the events which followed among the disciples and among the Jews and in the heathen world are naturally explained; given only the 'spiritual' resurrection, as understood by Modernism, they are an insoluble enigma.

#### NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

Besides not explaining the facts, the Modernist theory of the Resurrection has the additional disadvantage of contradicting the evidence. The end of the earliest Gospel, *Mark*, is lost, but the writer's emphasis upon the emptiness of the tomb, and the angel's words, "He is risen; He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him," leave no doubt whatever as to his view of the Resurrection (xvi. 6). The other three Gospels similarly emphasize the emptiness of the tomb, and in *Luke* the risen Lord carefully sets Himself to remove the first impression that He was a spirit: "Handle Me, and see;

<sup>1</sup> It should be particularly noted that *to Jews* the Resurrection and even the Ascension of Jesus were only evidences of His Divinity, if His Divinity formed part of His teaching, as according to the orthodox view of the matter it did. Favoured individuals had been raised from the dead in Old Testament times.

for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.' . . . And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish [and of an honeycomb]. And He took it, and did eat before them'' (xxiv. 36 ff.). On the day of Pentecost, St. Peter proclaimed that the holy flesh of the Messiah did not see corruption (Acts ii. 24-32), and St. Paul at Pisidian Antioch lays equal stress upon the resurrection of the Lord's incorruptible flesh (xiii. 30-37). If it be objected that we have not here a verbatim report of St. Paul's words, the reply is that, if not, we have something better, viz. a *specimen sermon* placed in his mouth by his trusted disciple St. Luke, who had heard him preach upon the Resurrection of Jesus hundreds of times, and was perfectly familiar with his views on the subject.

The contention of Canon Streeter that, because in 1 Cor. xv. the Resurrection of Christ and that of all Christians are compared together, *therefore they are alike in all respects*, is so unsubstantial that it is hard to regard it as serious. It altogether ignores the *evidential* aspect of Christ's Resurrection, which in early days was its chief one. Christ rose, not primarily to illustrate the nature of the resurrection-bodies of the saints (though the resemblance is undoubtedly close, for the result in both cases is a spiritual, not a natural body),<sup>1</sup> but to afford conclusive evidence of His own triumph over Death, of His Divine Sonship, and of the truth of His teaching. Of all this, a further significant proof was afforded by His Bodily Ascension, an almost necessary corollary of His Bodily Resurrection.

Whatever theories may be hazarded of the true nature of the Resurrection, it is an incontestable fact of history that what the Apostles themselves believed was that *the*

<sup>1</sup> The traditional view is that at the moment of resurrection the natural body of Jesus was transformed into a spiritual body, and afterwards, for the purpose of manifesting itself, 'accommodated' itself to the earthly senses of the Apostles. It ate, not as needing food, but to afford a convincing sign of its objectivity as body, not spirit.

*crucified body of Jesus rose from the tomb*, and not less so that the preaching of this doctrine (and no other) converted the civilized world to belief in Christ's conquest of death and in His divinity. It is a further fact of history hardly less evident that, human nature being what it is and has been, the preaching of no other doctrine could have had that effect.

It follows (upon the supposition which Modernism as well as Orthodoxy accepts, that God willed the world to accept these two doctrines) that He actually raised His body from the tomb.

The other alternative (just possible in the abstract but hardly in the concrete), that God so ordered the circumstances of the Resurrection (e.g. the emptiness of the tomb and the character of the appearances) that they *mised* the Apostles into believing that the body of Jesus had risen, plants a lie at the very heart of God's greatest revelation to mankind, and denies in effect that He is the Truth. Even an enlightened heathen like Plato, who indulged earthly rulers with the use of prudential lying, refused to believe that God could deceive in this way. The Platonic Socrates says distinctly: "No motive can be imagined why God should lie. . . . The superhuman and the divine is absolutely incapable of falsehood (*πάντη ἄρα ἀψευδὲς τὸ δαιμόνιον τε καὶ τὸ θεῖον*)."

## APPENDIX

### THE VIRGIN BIRTH

AFTER having proved the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus to be a fact of history, we are under no logical or practical obligation to prove at length either His Bodily Ascension or His Virginal Conception. The logical and practical 'coherence' of these three doctrines is acknowledged to be so close that (so far as I am aware) no one in our day who acknowledges any one of them rejects either of the others.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless as the Virgin Birth has been much discussed recently in connexion with Modernism, it seems desirable not to ignore the subject altogether.

#### THE MIRACLE OF THE CONCEPTION OF JESUS

The Virginal Conception of our Lord is denied by Modernists as part of their scheme for eliminating all miracle from His life. The strange thing is that they do not perceive that, if the Incarnation is a fact, *the conception of Jesus, whether His mother was a virgin or not, was a divine miracle.*

A well-established law of nature, invariable in our experience, leads us to expect that the child of two human parents, begotten in the ordinary way, will be purely human. If (as Modernists as well as orthodox Christians admit) the result of the marital intercourse of Joseph and Mary was not a purely human but a *divine*-human offspring, then we have to assume an interference with the physical and psychical order of the universe (in other words, a physical and psychical miracle) quite as undeniable as the Virgin Birth itself. We have also to admit a *moral* miracle, not less contradictory to universal experience, for whereas in all other cases in human history the union of the sexes has produced a *sinful* offspring, in this particular case it produced one that was *sinless*.

It seems, therefore, that, even on the Modernist theory, the

<sup>1</sup> In earlier days, before the matter had been thoroughly thought out, this was not the case. Thus Paulus, and I believe also Comte, who denied all the other Gospel miracles, affirmed the Virgin Birth.

Conception of Jesus was a *miracle*—a physical, psychical, and moral miracle. Accordingly, if we have in any case to accept a miracle, it seems only reasonable to accept that form of the miracle which is attested by evidence (that, namely, which is defined in the Catholic Creeds), rather than that which is not.

#### THE MIRACLE HELPS FAITH

Modernists usually contend that the Incarnation is to them, and ought to be to others, as easily credible without the Virgin Birth as with it; but the fact remains that it is not. For nine out of ten ordinary men in this, as in every other age, the outward sign of the Virgin Birth makes the Incarnation far easier to believe, and that for an obvious reason. If the Incarnation was a fact, it follows, of course, that the personality of Jesus was both continuous and also discontinuous with ordinary human nature—continuous, because He was true and perfect man, and discontinuous, because He was true and perfect God. The sign of the Virginal Conception emphasizes both these aspects—continuity, because the Redeemer took true human nature of the substance of His Mother, and discontinuity, because the usual order of nature was visibly interrupted by the circumstance that He had no human father.

#### ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Not only logic, but also history shows that there is a most intimate connexion between the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation and the doctrine of His Conception by a Virgin. The oldest deniers of the Incarnation that we know, the first-century Ebionites, who denied our Lord's Divinity, and the equally early Docetæ, who denied His humanity, were united in their denial of the Virgin Birth, and it was against them, as affording a safeguard for the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation, that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth was elevated to dogmatic rank and included in the earliest draft of the Apostles' Creed, which can hardly be later than about A.D. 100, for it was already familiar to Ignatius (about A.D. 110).

Later history tells the same story. The Unitarians, for example, originally believed the Virgin Birth, but they have gradually become conscious that their denial of the Incarnation necessitates its abandonment. Similarly, the recent abandonment of the doctrine of the Incarnation by the bulk of the Liberal Protestants of Germany was prepared for by the denial of the Virgin Birth, and the insistent demand that

the article of the Creed which affirms it should be 'symbolically' understood.

#### EVIDENCE FOR THE DOCTRINE

The Liberal Protestant denial of the doctrine (which preceded and was the historical cause of the Modernist denial) was largely based upon faulty criticism of the New Testament. Recent German Liberalism, following Baur, has uniformly regarded the Third Gospel (which contains the chief evidence for the doctrine) as so obviously late and unhistorical, that the question of its genuineness has not even been thought to require discussion.

Since, however, Harnack has succeeded in *demonstrating* ('demonstrating' is not too strong a word) that both this Gospel and Acts are genuine works of Luke, the companion of Paul, and many Liberals have signified their adherence to his view, the question must be seriously faced by Modernists, whether St. Luke in his Birth narrative is not after all telling the strict truth.

St. Luke most certainly visited Jerusalem at a date early enough to enable him to acquire trustworthy information. He appears to have been in Judæa during the two years of St. Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea (A.D. 56-57). At this time the Virgin herself may very well have been still alive. He stayed 'many days' with Philip the Evangelist, one of the Seven, who is clearly one of his chief authorities for the early history of the Church of Jerusalem (*Acts* xxi. 8). He had met James and the elders of Jerusalem (xxi. 18). He knew certain women who had accompanied our Lord during His ministry, notably Joanna (Luke viii. 2-3, xxiv. 10), whom our Lord had healed, who had ministered to Him of her substance and had visited His tomb, and who, it is generally acknowledged, was one of his chief informants.

The question now arises, from whom did St. Luke derive his Birth narrative? and careful readers of the Gospel can hardly be in doubt how to answer it. Unobtrusively, but quite clearly, the author indicates by his allusions to the Virgin's personal thoughts and feelings<sup>1</sup> that he derived his information directly or indirectly from her. This is the opinion, not only of orthodox critics, but also of so strong

<sup>1</sup> "She was troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be"; "But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart"; "And His mother kept all these sayings in her heart" (i. 29; ii. 19, 51). It is even more certain that the intimate details of Mary's visit to Elizabeth and of the infancy and boyhood of Jesus must have proceeded from Mary as their source.

a Liberal as Harnack: "From Luke ii. 19, 51," he says, "it follows that the stories are regarded as derived in the last instance from St. Mary herself. . . . There can be little doubt that St. Luke regarded them as proceeding from St. Mary; for his practice elsewhere shows that he could not have himself invented a fiction like this" (*Date of the Acts and Synoptic Gospels*, p. 155).

The author, then, quite clearly intends his readers to understand that he obtained his Birth story directly or indirectly from Mary. We have therefore to choose one of two alternatives—either that the story is true, or else that Mary, or some intermediate informant (Joanna perhaps), or the evangelist himself, are untruthful witnesses. No genuine Christian who has once clearly grasped the new situation brought about by the proof of the authenticity of St. Luke's Gospel will hesitate as to his choice.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE SILENCE OF THE APOSTLES

The earliest preaching of the Apostles dealt only with the words and works of Jesus from the date of His Baptism by John to His Resurrection [and Ascension]. That is the actual scope of our oldest Gospel, *Mark*, and we possess an early saying of St. Peter's to the same effect (*Acts* i. 21-22).

That the doctrine of the Virgin Birth formed any part of the *public* preaching of the Apostles during St. Mary's lifetime is exceedingly unlikely. Common prudence would suggest that so sacred a mystery should not be exposed to the derision of vulgar minds. What abominable imputations upon the Virgin's character were actually made by the unbelieving Jews and heathen when they came to hear the story is known to us from the *Talmud* and from Celsus (see Origen, *Contra Celsum*, i. 22). Harnack is quite right in insisting that the Apostles may have had many other reasons than ignorance for their silence about the matter, and that it is hazardous to assume ignorance even in the case of *Mark*, our earliest evangelist. It is certainly remarkable that St. Mark (who does *not* record the miraculous Birth) represents the men of Nazareth as saying, "Is not this the *carpenter*?" whereas Matthew (who *does*, and therefore has no fear that his readers will draw a false inference) gives what is probably the more accurate version, "Is not this the carpenter's

<sup>1</sup> Modern critics prefer St. Luke's to St. Matthew's account of the Birth, because (1) it is Mary's account, and (2) it is almost or quite first-hand. St. Matthew's account is ultimately Joseph's, but it had probably passed through several hands before it reached the evangelist.

son?" Baur noticed this, and Hilgenfeld (after Baur) remarks, "Mark does not tolerate the paternity of Joseph even in the mouth of the Nazarenes."

Now that the genuineness of St. Luke's Gospel is widely accepted, it has become more than hazardous to attribute to St. Paul ignorance of the Virginal Conception. At whatever date St. Luke wrote his Gospel, he certainly collected his materials at a very early period. It is, therefore, unreasonable to suppose that St. Paul (at any rate, when he wrote his later Epistles) was ignorant of a fact which was well known to his disciple. His failure to mention it in his Epistles is not even a difficulty. Of all the events of our Lord's life he mentions only five: the Institution of the Eucharist, the Death, the Burial, the Resurrection, and the Ascension.

That the author (whoever he was) of the Fourth Gospel not only knew but also believed the Virgin Birth is increasingly acknowledged in Liberal circles. Even those who consider Harnack wrong in accepting the remarkable reading in *John* i. 13, which has the strong second-century support of Justin, Irenæus, and Tertullian, and which expressly affirms the miracle [ὁς . . . ἐγεν[ε]ν ἡθῆ],<sup>1</sup> are usually willing to concede that the author obliquely alludes to and endorses it, for he speaks of the supernatural birth of Christians in terms which suggest that he is comparing it with the supernatural birth of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

### THE CREED AND THE VIRGIN BIRTH

It was probably not until definite heresy had arisen with regard to our Lord's Person that the doctrine of His Virginal Conception attained that position of central importance in the religious consciousness of the Church which it has ever since retained. The circumstances of its elevation to full dogmatic rank are fairly well known.

After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 there arose in Peræa, and presently spread to other places, a Judaising sect of Ebionites (or Peratici), who denied the divinity of Jesus, and with it its outward token, the Virgin Birth.<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr speaks of them as "men of our [or of *your*, i.e.

<sup>1</sup> Zahn and Peake also accept this reading. The fullest and best discussion of it that I know is in Zahn's Introduction to his Commentary on St. John.

<sup>2</sup> See this well argued by B. I. D. Smith, in *The Parting of the Roads* (edited by F. J. Foakes-Jackson), p. 263; also by F. H. Chase, in *Belief and Creed*, pp. 66 ff.

<sup>3</sup> A more orthodox school of Ebionites, afterwards called Nazarenes accepted these beliefs.

the Jewish] race, who admit that Jesus is the Christ, while holding Him to be man of men." <sup>1</sup> Irenæus tells us that they agreed in Christology with Cerinthus and Carpocrates, regarding Jesus as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary by natural generation. <sup>2</sup> Tertullian says that they allowed Jesus to be nothing more than a Solomon or a Jonah. <sup>3</sup>

Of the Ebionites and Ebionizers of the Apostolic Age we know most about Cerinthus, who once at least visited Ephesus, where he was opposed by St. John. According to Irenæus, Cerinthus taught that Jesus was a mere man, begotten in the course of nature by Joseph and Mary, but that He differed from other men in being more righteous, prudent, and wise than they. After His Baptism, 'the Christ' descended from the Supreme Ruler upon Him in the form of a dove, and He thereupon proclaimed the Unknown Father, and worked miracles. But before the Passover 'the Christ' departed from Him, and only the man Jesus died upon the Cross and rose again, the heavenly 'Christ' remaining impassible, as being a spiritual being. <sup>4</sup>

Putting together our somewhat fragmentary information, we may be reasonably certain that during the period A.D. 70 to 100 there came into existence two main types of Ebionizing heresy: one which was *adoptionist* or *electionist* in principle, and regarded Jesus as a man who was permanently exalted to become the Son of God at His Baptism and was in a manner deified; and another which was *immanentist*, and maintained that Jesus was a man upon whom "the Christ" (or Spirit or Logos) of God descended at His Baptism, and having remained within Him during His ministry, deserted Him before His Passion, leaving Him mere man as before. Both these types of Ebionism denied His birth of a Virgin, and regarded Him as only "man of men" before His Baptism.

As orthodox Christians reflected on these and kindred heresies, they realized more clearly than before the intimate connexion obtaining between the historic fact of the Virgin Birth and the orthodox doctrine of Christ's person. The 'Adoptionists' or 'Electionists' maintained that Jesus had *become* the Son of God at His Baptism. Some possibly postponed His 'adoption' till His Ascension. In any case their theory was, not the orthodox one that God had become

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogue with Trypho*, xlvi. The reading being doubtful, it is uncertain whether Justin classed them as Christians or Jews.

<sup>2</sup> V. i. 3 compared with I. xxvi. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *De Carne Christi*, xviii.

<sup>4</sup> I. xxvi. 1.

man, but the quite different one that a man had become God (or in some vague sense 'divine'). It was vital, therefore, for Orthodoxy to maintain that Jesus had been the Son of God *from the first moment of His earthly existence*. If for a single moment (even in His mother's womb) He had ever been mere man, then He could not possibly have pre-existed personally as the Eternal Son of God.

The historical fact which clearly and unambiguously carries back the Divine Sonship of Jesus to the very beginning of His human existence, and so makes a real Incarnation possible, is His *Virginal Conception*; accordingly, belief in this, even before the first century closed, became the touchstone of orthodoxy.

It is remarkable how early it was taken for granted, both by defenders and opponents of Orthodoxy, that the Virgin Birth was the significant symbol (and even to some extent the proof) *of the pre-existence and divine personality of the human Jesus*. For example, all through Justin's Dialogue with the Jew Trypho, it is assumed as self-evident by both disputants that Justin's doctrine that Jesus was born of a Virgin implies *a high Christology* (viz. the pre-existence and divinity of Jesus, in other words, the Incarnation of God); and that the denial of it implies *a low Christology*, viz. the doctrine that the human Jesus had been 'elected' or 'adopted' to be the Messiah or Son of God, a supposition which Trypho at times declared himself not altogether disinclined to entertain. Still earlier than this, in *The Apology* of Aristides, we find the pre-existence and divinity of Jesus very closely connected with His birth of a Virgin.<sup>1</sup>

#### THEORY OF APOTHEOSIS

The advocates of the lower types of Christology discreetly veiled their novel theories under the fair-sounding and Scriptural titles of "Election" and "Adoption." But the orthodox perceived from the first that the whole idea of a man becoming God is Pagan, not Christian, and involves, when logically thought out, the heathen abomination of apotheosis and creature-worship. Apotheosis was repugnant, not only to their religious feelings, but also to their reason. It flagrantly contradicted three of the fundamental attributes of God, as then conceived—His Completeness or Perfection, His

<sup>1</sup> "The Christians derive their race from the Lord Jesus Christ. He is Himself Son of God on high, who was manifested of [by] the Holy Spirit, *came down from heaven*, and being born of a Hebrew Virgin, took on His flesh from the Virgin, and was manifested in the nature of humanity the Son of God."

Immutability, and His Eternity. To admit that God had assumed into His 'Substance' a Being who was not God before, was to admit that the Divine Substance is capable of increase, and therefore imperfect and mutable. To admit that Jesus was God now, without having always been so, was to deny that God is eternal. Accordingly Adoptionism (i.e. Apotheosis) was rejected with contempt as being irrational, and with horror as involving the blasphemy of creature-worship.

### THE DOCETIC HERESY

It was perceived also that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth was a valuable weapon against the opposite type of heresy of the Docetæ, who also denied it. Docetism, which is alluded to in the latest books of the New Testament (2 John 7; cf. 1 John iv. 2), and by Ignatius (A.D. 110), became the accepted theory of nearly all the Gnostics of the second century. It is the theory that Jesus was a divine, or at least a celestial, being who (owing to the inherent evil of matter and His unwillingness to abandon His divine impassibility) did not really become man, but only assumed a phantom or 'seeming' body (hence the name, Docetism), which was entirely unreal, could not be handled, and (above all) could not suffer.

The Docetæ, like the Ebionites, denied the Virgin Birth of Christ. Some, like Basilides<sup>1</sup> and Marcion,<sup>2</sup> denied Him any birth at all, even a 'seeming' one, and represented Him as appearing suddenly on earth in the outward appearance of an adult. Others, like Valentinus, admitted an 'apparent' Birth, but regarded His mother as the mere channel by which He passed into the world ("like water through a pipe"), without partaking of her substance. All denied that He took human flesh of His earthly mother.

Against such false teaching, as subversive of a real Incarnation as Ebionism itself, the Church insisted that the Redeemer took human flesh and human nature in the womb of His mother Mary of her substance, and is thus as truly consubstantial with us through His human conception, as He is consubstantial with God through His eternal generation.

Accordingly it was against Docetic as well as Ebionite

<sup>1</sup> " He taught that the Saviour was not born, was incorporeal without shape, and was only apparently a visible man " (Irenæus, i. 24. 2).

<sup>2</sup> Marcion taught that the Saviour descended suddenly in a phantom body and began to teach at Capernaum (Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, iv. 7). He omitted the Birth narrative from his mutilated version of St. Luke, the only Gospel which he received.

denials of the Incarnation that the dogma of the Virgin Birth was polemically directed in the first instance, and inserted in the earliest draft (not later than A.D. 100) of the Apostles' Creed. It was contained in the Creed of Ignatius (A.D. 110), who frequently lays stress upon it, and also of Aristides, and from at least A.D. 100 was the orthodox watchword against the errors of the day. As Dr. J. A. Robinson remarks: "Everything that we know of the dogmatics of the early part of the second century agrees with the belief that at that period the Virginité of Mary was a part of the formulated Christian belief. Nor need we hesitate . . . to give the doctrine a place in the Creed of Aristides."<sup>1</sup>

### THE VIRGIN BIRTH TO-DAY

The Ebionite peril, to guard against which the doctrine of the Virgin Birth was originally inserted in the Creed, has not yet left us. Indeed, there has lately been a remarkable recrudescence of 'Adoptionist' theories identical in principle and sometimes even in detail with those of the early centuries. With these we shall have to concern ourselves in the final chapter. It is sufficient here to remark that in this as in the primitive period they are usually associated with denial of the Virginal Conception of our Lord, and that the article of the Creed which affirms it to be an historic fact remains to-day as valuable a safeguard of the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation as it was then.

<sup>1</sup> See his edition of *The Apology of Aristides*, p. 25.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS OF MODERNISM

THE most disquieting feature of the Modernist movement—disquieting even to some of those (Bishop Henson, for instance) who until recently were among its most prominent adherents—is its steady and now even rapid ‘drift to the left’ in its attitude (1) towards the Creeds and the dogmatic principle, (2) towards the Person of Christ, (3) towards the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and (4) towards the binding and immutable character of Christian morality.

This ‘drift,’ long denied, or attributed, when undeniable, to irresponsible and unrepresentative extremists only, is now openly acknowledged, and even gloried in. So distinguished a Modernist as Prof. Bethune-Baker said quite openly at the Cambridge Conference: “We must absolutely jettison the traditional doctrine that His [Christ’s] personality was not human, but divine. . . . I do not for a moment suppose that Jesus ever thought of Himself as God.”

### EARLIER ATTITUDE TOWARDS CREEDS

Only a few years ago the accepted Modernist standpoint (in England at any rate) was that creeds are good in principle, and that the existing Creeds, the Apostles’ and the Nicene, are admirable confessions of faith. All that was desired, even by the Churchmen’s Union, was permission to understand two articles only, those affirming our Lord’s Birth of a Virgin and His Resurrection, in a ‘symbolical’ sense, which, we were assured, would preserve their full ‘spiritual value.’

## PRESENT VIEW OF CREEDS

Within the last three years, however, a complete revolution of opinion has taken place. It is now the accepted Modernist position that creeds are bad in principle, and even the minority of Modernists, who are willing to acquiesce in their use, do so, for the most part, only on condition that they shall cease to be used as 'tests.' Since it was entirely to serve as 'tests' of corporate and individual orthodoxy that creeds first came into being, and since this is still their chief and almost only function, it is evident that even this second more moderate demand is equivalent in effect to a demand for their entire abolition.<sup>1</sup>

As it is difficult for the ordinary Christian to believe that so extreme a policy of negation is seriously advocated by reasonable men, it is desirable to exhibit a few extracts from recent utterances (all within the year 1921) of representative Modernists. "I should keep the *Te Deum* and drop the 'Three Creeds,'" is the pronouncement of Dean Inge. "[The Creed] certainly should not be used as a test of individual orthodoxy, either for laity or ministers," is the opinion of the Rev. C. H. S. Matthews. "I submit that the whole idea of *Credenda* to be required of members of Christ's Church is foreign to the mind of

<sup>1</sup> It was entirely as 'tests' that creeds came into being in the first instance. This was the case even with the earliest recorded creed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Western text of Acts viii. 37); also with the Apostles' Creed, which from the first was an abjuration, not only of heathenism, but also of Ebionism and Gnosticism; and with the Nicene Creed, which was polemically directed against Arianism in the first instance, and in its complete form also against later Christological heresies. The Western including the Anglican Church stresses the *individual* assent of every adherent, by adopting the form "I believe" instead of the Eastern "We believe." At Baptism each candidate is required to express his individual assent (in person or by proxy) to each article of the Apostles' Creed recited separately; and the dying Christian is examined by his parish priest as to his faithful and detailed adherence to the Creed of his Baptism. No part of the Church—certainly not the Anglican—has ever taken the view that the Catholic Creeds are less binding on the laity than on the clergy.

Christ. . . . No intellectual agreement among the disciples of Christ is to be expected. Our age is not only incompetent to revise or rewrite the Creeds, it even questions the rightfulness of a formula as a test of membership," says Rev. F. E. Hutchinson.<sup>1</sup> "A creed should not be regarded as a 'test' which must be accepted by individuals, whether laity or clergy, as a condition of membership or office," is the present judgment of the Rev. C. W. Emmet.<sup>2</sup> "A credal formula is neither necessary nor desirable," writes Dr. Bindley. "It does not seem possible or desirable to revise or rewrite any one of the ancient Creeds, nor to continue to use them for any other purpose than as devotional canticles and historical landmarks," says Prof. Bethune-Baker. "I look upon their proper use as devotional; certainly not as a test. The world is ripe, and over-ripe, for the abolition of religious tests," says Mr. G. G. Coulton. "It ought to be left entirely to the individual to adjust himself, as best he may, to particular doctrines. He ought not to be asked, do you believe this point? do you believe that?" says the Rev. N. E. E. Swann.<sup>3</sup>

But perhaps the most instructive recent statement is that of the Rev. H. D. A. Major, whose representative character, as editor of *The Modern Churchman* and Principal of Ripon Hall, will not be denied. Writing to correct what he regards as a 'curious misrepresentation' contained in a recent public speech of my own delivered in London,<sup>4</sup> he gives a thoroughly typical and almost authoritative statement of the present Modernist attitude towards dogma: "Where he [the Modernist] differs from

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Freedom*, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Emmet has somewhat 'drifted' since 1918, when he wrote: "There are many who are asking themselves whether we are wise in continuing to use them as tests. The question is a difficult one, and cannot be discussed here" (*Conscience, Creeds, and Critics*, p. 78).

<sup>3</sup> Most of the above quotations are from *The Modern Churchman* for January and February 1921.

<sup>4</sup> Reported fully in *The Church Times* of June 24, 1921.

the traditionalist," says Mr. Major, "is in claiming the right and duty under the progressive revelation of the Holy Spirit to reinterpret and even *to reject any statement in the Creed* which may become incredible as the result of reverent research."<sup>1</sup>

### MR. MAJOR'S PARADOXES

I thank Mr. Major for his correction of my public statement, which, coming from so good an authority, I of course accept; but I am sorry to say that its effect is to make the Modernist position even worse (from my point of view) than I had previously imagined. For if Mr. Major's words are to be construed literally (as he assures us that he intends),<sup>2</sup> then it follows, from the principle laid down by him, that the Modernist claims liberty to reject *any* statement in the Creed:

(1) That the Modernist claims liberty to deny the existence of God; (2) and His Personality, (3) and His love for humankind, (4) and His Incarnation in the Person of His Son, (5) and the historical existence of such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, (6) and human immortality, (7) and the holiness of the Church, (8) and the need of a holy life for Christians.

Or to put the matter positively, the Modernist claims liberty (according to Mr. Major) to teach (1) Atheism, (2) Pantheism and Materialism, (3) God's indifference to the needs of His creatures, (4) Unitarianism and kindred forms of Humanitarianism, (5) the mythical theory of the origin of Christianity, (6) the doctrine that the soul perishes with the body, (7) the doctrine that the Church exists for the encouragement of vice, also to advocate (8) Polygamy, the Community of Wives, Antinomianism, and the ethics of the 'left-hand' worshippers of Siva and Durga.

All these consequences follow logically and *necessarily*

<sup>1</sup> *The Modern Churchman* for July 1921 (italics mine).

<sup>2</sup> See *The Modern Churchman* for October 1921.

from Mr. Major's principle, and unless they are admitted his principle is false.

#### MR. MAJOR'S PROVISOS

Although these consequences have been pointed out to Mr. Major in the pages of *The Modern Churchman*, he adheres firmly to his principle ("the sentence quoted by our correspondent expresses our conviction exactly"), but insists strongly on the sufficiency of his safeguards.

What are these safeguards? They are that the denials in question must be made (1) under a conviction of "the progressive revelation of the Holy Spirit," and (2) as "the result of reverent research."

Mr. Major has read the records of the Church to very little purpose if he is not aware that practically every heretic in history—including every *immoral* heretic—from Simon Magus in the Apostolic Age to the Shakers in this, has claimed that his research was 'reverent' and that he was specially guided by the Holy Ghost.

To omit multitudes of earlier instances, it is a notorious fact that within the memory of men now living, *polygamy* was introduced into the State of Utah as the result of a supposed 'revelation' made to the American, Joseph Smith, on July 12, 1843 (this 'revelation' being also a 'progressive' one, for it contradicted the revelation of the original Book of Mormon, published in 1830); also that the Englishman, Henry James Prince, founder of the Agapemonites, claimed to be the earthly organ of the Holy Ghost, and pleaded in defence of his polygamous 'spiritual marriages' and of his luxurious and voluptuous 'abodes of love' a direct revelation from the all-holy God. Prince, like Smith, upheld the principle of 'progressive' revelation, for he acknowledged the reality (albeit the imperfection) of the older revelation given to the world by Jesus Christ.

Among the heathen also the most vicious and even criminal practices are justified as divine and holy. Thug-

gism, suttee, and human sacrifice are all justified by supposed revelations. Even the 'left-handed' worshippers of Siva claim that their bestial orgies are 'holy,' and attribute 'holiness' to their god.

If, therefore, it is to be left to the individual to decide whether or not his research is 'reverent' and 'holy,' the evidence of history (as well as logic) assures us that Mr. Major's provisos are entirely illusory. If, on the other hand (following the Apostle's injunction),<sup>1</sup> he admits that, not the individual, but *the Church in its collective and authoritative capacity* must decide whether or not the research is 'reverent' and 'holy,' then he abandons his principle of individual liberty and asserts that of ecclesiastical authority.

#### HIS PRINCIPLE SELF-CONTRADICTORY

Mr. Major's principle has the additional disadvantage (as the discerning reader will have already noticed) of being radically incoherent and self-contradictory. For on the one hand it affirms the right of the Modernist to deny *any* article of the Catholic Creed, and therefore to deny the existence of the Holy Ghost and of divine revelation, whereas on the other hand it requires him to affirm the reality of both, for it requires him to reach his results under a conviction of "the progressive revelation of the Holy Spirit."

The effect of this contradiction, which is flagrant, is, of course, to undermine Mr. Major's whole position. For if it is lawful to require a Modernist to believe in the Holy Ghost and in revelation (and Mr. Major admits that it is), then no reason can be offered (in principle at least) why he should not also be required to believe in God the Father,

<sup>1</sup> St. John says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." He also insists upon the application to all supposed revelations of the *dogmatic test* of agreement with the orthodox faith: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God," etc. (1 John iv. 1 ff.).

and in the Son of God, and in the Incarnation, and in the Resurrection and Ascension, and in the life of the world to come—in fact in the entire Creed. If once the *principle* of dogma is admitted (and Mr. Major admits it), then it is most unreasonable to confine its application to two articles of faith only—articles, moreover, which have hardly any meaning, if divorced from the body of the Christian faith, of which they form part.

### CREEDS OR NO CREEDS ?

Mr. Major objects to the title of this book (*Creeds or No Creeds ?*), as falsely implying that those who think with him aim at the abolition of creeds.<sup>1</sup>

In order to give the reader an opportunity of forming his own judgment upon the matter, I transcribe *verbatim* Mr. Major's own concrete proposal: "Will they [the orthodox] concede to modern Churchmen the right to modify the use of the Creeds, and to *produce, if they will, alternative Creeds for use in parishes where they are desired by the parishioners*, provided always that this is done in a wise, loving, and orderly fashion, and with the authority of the Bishop?"<sup>2</sup>

The word 'Creed' has a perfectly definite meaning, consecrated by centuries of use. It means a confession of faith, *not* of a local Church, still less of a particular diocese or parish, but of *the Church Universal*, defining the minimum amount of belief which justifies a man in calling himself a Christian and claiming membership in the Historic Church. Of such Creeds there is (in the full and official sense) only one, viz. the Nicene;<sup>3</sup> and this has been declared by a succession of Ecumenical Councils to be both necessary and sufficient. For many ages past

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal* for January 1922.

<sup>2</sup> *The Modern Churchman* for September 1921, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> The Apostles' Creed, originally the baptismal creed of the Roman Church, is now accepted by the whole West, and *informally* acknowledged in the East.

every religious body claiming membership in the Church Catholic has recited it in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and its abandonment as necessary by the Church of England or by any other religious body would be equivalent to resignation of membership in the Church Universal.

### THE TEST OF DISCIPLESHIP

The Rev. F. E. Hutchinson, with whom I had the pleasure of discussing the subject at Birmingham, and whose sincerity and self-sacrifice<sup>1</sup> in the cause of what he regards as 'Christian Freedom' every orthodox Christian respects, agrees with Mr. Major that all dogmatic tests ought to be abolished, but sees more clearly than he that a 'test' of some kind there must be, if the Church is to stand for any principle whatever.

He proposes, therefore, to substitute for Creeds a declaration of *Discipleship of Jesus*. "Why ask for unity," he writes, "in anything else but a confessed discipleship of Christ? The Church of Christ has no right, indeed, to ask for less, but has it the right to ask for more?"

This test is perhaps not quite so undogmatic as it looks, for literally interpreted it requires adhesion to two dogmas of very great importance: (1) that Jesus once existed, and (2) that we know enough about His life and teaching to become effectively His disciples.

Insistence upon these two dogmas would certainly exclude from Church membership a considerable number of devout and well-meaning men who regard themselves as Christians, *e.g.* W. B. Smith, A. Drews, A. Kalthoff, Loman, Pierson, Naber, and Dr. Anderson of Dundee. But since Mr. Hutchinson is "for excluding none" and for "unconditional fellowship," he would probably explain his formula to mean that it pledges those who accept it to

<sup>1</sup> He resigned the valuable living of Leyland in 1920 for conscientious reasons.

become *disciples of the character delineated in the Gospels*, leaving it an open question whether it is historical, or literary only.

We may take it, therefore, that Mr. Hutchinson's test is strictly non-dogmatic, and intended to admit everyone into Church fellowship who *says* that he is a disciple of Jesus. If the Church, not the individual, is to decide whether a man is a genuine disciple or not, then clearly some *standard* of discipleship must be fixed, defining what minimum amount of conformity to the theological and moral doctrines of Jesus constitutes a disciple, and this would be to assert *dogmas*.

It might be thought that the Church could impose a moral without also imposing a dogmatic test, but this also is impossible, for every moral test implies a moral dogma. For instance, it would be impossible to exclude even a thief or a polygamist from communion without asserting that honesty and monogamy are Christian *dogmas*.

#### ADMISSION OF UNITARIANS

One immediate result of the adoption of Mr. Hutchinson's 'discipleship' formula would be the admission of Unitarians to membership and office in the Church; and this is in fact Mr. Hutchinson's avowed objective. All Unitarians regard themselves as 'disciples of Christ,' and would subscribe his formula without difficulty.

This proposal involves *a complete revolution in ecclesiastical policy*, even from the Modernist point of view. Only a few years ago we were continually assured by representative Modernists that the alleged tendency of the movement towards, at the very least, *toleration* of Unitarianism was imaginary; and that they, equally with the orthodox, regarded the Incarnation as *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*. All this is altered now. Many leading Unitarians see no difference at all between the Christology of the Cambridge Conference

(which will presently engage our attention) and their own. Mr. Major himself admits that the charge of Unitarianism is "serious." "It stands," he says, "upon a different footing. It is a serious one, and deserves serious attention. A well-known Unitarian layman recently wrote of the principal speakers at the Cambridge Conference, that he could not see where their position differed from his own. . . . I do not doubt that a number of Unitarians believe that Modern Churchmen ought, on moral grounds, to secede from the English Church and join the Unitarian body" (*Hibbert Journal*, January 1922).

These Unitarians may possibly be wrong upon the exact point at issue (though they are unquestionably good judges), but, at any rate, it is clear (1) that the attenuated Christology of the advanced Modernists is so much like Unitarianism that typical Unitarians mistake it for such, and (2) that advanced Modernists no longer regard the Incarnation as an *essential* doctrine to be insisted upon at all hazards.

#### EFFECT ON WORSHIP

The effect (or the antecedent condition) of admitting Unitarians to Church membership would not be confined to the abolition of the Creeds, but would involve the radical transformation of the Church's worship.

Consistent Unitarians, as is well known, regard Jesus of Nazareth as a mere man, and His worship as idolatry. Consequently, in order to render the worship of the Church acceptable (or even possible) to them, it would be necessary, not merely to abolish the Creeds, but to excise from the Prayer Book every reference to the Deity of our Lord, every act of prayer and worship addressed to Him, and every act of homage to the Holy Trinity. Thus it would be necessary to omit the entire Litany, which consists wholly of invocations of the Trinity and of our Blessed Lord, the whole of the *Te Deum*, which consists almost entirely of acts of devotion to the Trinity

and the Incarnate Son, and of course the Lesser Litany and *Gloria Patri*; also to recast in drastic fashion the collects and prayers, which are full of allusions to the Incarnation and the Three Divine Persons; indeed, it would probably be necessary to rewrite the Prayer Book from cover to cover in order to adapt it to Unitarian worship.

The question is, do Modernists seriously regard these changes as desirable or possible? and further, do they realize what the consequences would be? Both reason and experience inform us, that it is both psychologically and theologically impossible for orthodox Christians and Unitarians to worship together, and that for the conclusive reason that the former regard it as an absolute duty to offer to Jesus an adoration which the latter regard as a sin. It follows that the immediate result of admitting Unitarians into the Church would be to drive every sincere believer in the Incarnation out of it, leaving it a purely Unitarian and Modernist body. Is this what the Modernists really desire?

#### ADMISSION OF AGNOSTICS

Not only all Unitarians, but also a large number of Agnostics, Pantheists, and even Atheists would be both able and willing to pass Mr. Hutchinson's elastic test of 'discipleship.'

Of course, for many years, owing to natural conservatism, the abolition of dogmas would not produce its full effect. Probably during the lifetime of the men who initiated the non-dogmatic revolution, applications for Church membership from agnostics and still more from atheists would be rare. Nevertheless, as soon as it was fully realized by the public mind (as it would be in a generation or two) that all dogmatic tests had been entirely abolished, not a few of those agnostics and atheists who respect Jesus as a supreme moral and social

reformer and as the greatest of all benefactors of our race would declare themselves 'disciples' and crowd into the Church. Those who are familiar with the work of the various 'Ethical Societies' scattered up and down the country are aware of the *deep veneration* (no weaker phrase is adequate) with which many of their members (even the most agnostic) regard our Lord. This feeling is shared even by some among the English and Scottish Communists. I have before me, as I write, the number of *The Communist, An Organ of the Third (Communist) International* for June 11, 1921. Of its eight pages, five are devoted to the glorification of Jesus as the perfect communist and ideal proletarian agitator. Speaking with some knowledge of the advanced thought of this country, I am able to state positively that a very considerable section of the better type of agnostics would be ready and even anxious to unite with a Church that had sincerely renounced dogma, on the basis of 'discipleship of Christ.' They regard Jesus as hampered indeed by the conditions of His time, and as sharing some of its foolish superstitions (such as belief in God and human immortality), but on the ethical, the social, the humanitarian, and the political side they are willing to declare themselves His sincere and enthusiastic disciples. Comte, who was an atheist, would have accepted with joy the 'discipleship' test.

I cannot see how, on his principles, Mr. Hutchinson can reject such men. He cannot require them to believe even in God and in human immortality, for that would be to assert two important dogmas. If he were to attempt it, they would plead (in the words of his book) "not to be excluded for any defect of belief, so long as they still look to Christ for the inspiration of their lives."

#### EFFECT IN THE MISSION FIELD

In the mission field the insufficiency of the non-dogmatic principle becomes (if possible) even more evident.

I am entirely unable to see, for instance, how the Church can ever hope to make headway against polytheism, degraded ideas of divinity, idolatry, such moral abuses as the organized prostitution of the heathen temples, and such abominations as human sacrifice, cannibalism, abortion, and infanticide, unless it teaches definitely, dogmatically, and uncompromisingly, (1) that there is only one God, (2) that He is morally perfect, (3) that idolatry is sinful, (4) that chastity is a necessary virtue, and further that (5) human sacrifice, (6) cannibalism, (7) abortion, and (8) infanticide are deadly sins, involving perdition. I feel sure that Mr. Hutchinson, equally with orthodox Christians, desires these false beliefs and degrading practices to be ended. He owes it, therefore, to his fellow-Christians to explain how, without breach of the non-dogmatic principle, it can be done.

It seems to me that the missionary of a non-dogmatic Church (say in India) is likely continually to find himself not merely in difficult but even in *impossible* positions. For example, if an inquiring heathen comes to him, and says, "Our wise men tell us that there are thirty million gods, how many does your Church believe in?" is he to answer, "My Church, having adopted the non-dogmatic principle, has no opinion upon this important subject; but, if I may venture to give you my private opinion (which you must take for what it is worth, and not as in any way involving the Church), there is only one"?

Or if another inquirer comes and asks, "What does the Church teach about Jesus Christ? Is He God Incarnate, and therefore to be adored, or is He a mere human prophet like Mahomet, and therefore only to be obeyed?" is the missionary to answer, "I deeply regret that my Church has no opinion to offer upon this vital matter. In my personal belief, He is God Incarnate, and therefore you ought to adore Him; but my reverend brother in charge of the next mission station unfortunately teaches that He is a mere man, and that the practice of wor-

shipping Him is sinful—is in fact the very sin of heathen idolatry from which I am anxious to reclaim you”?

Or to take as a last example a moral problem. Suppose that an Indian prince with a hundred wives, who has been refused baptism at the neighbouring station of the Orthodox Church on the ground that monogamy is a Christian dogma, comes to the station of the non-dogmatic Church, declaring himself and his wives ‘disciples of Christ’ and demanding baptism. It seems to me that the prince’s action (which is a conceivable and even likely one) places the missionary in an awkward dilemma. Either he must baptize the prince and his hundred wives, and so betray the moral standard not merely of Christianity but of civilized man; or else he must admit that the non-dogmatic principle is false, and that monogamy is after all a fundamental dogma of Christianity.

#### NON-DOGMATISM AND SYNCRETISM

We are not even yet at the end of the difficulties of working the non-dogmatic principle. As every student of ancient Church history and of modern missions knows, one of the greatest difficulties of the missionary is to guard against *syncretism*, i.e. the tendency of the average heathen attracted to Christianity to content himself with merely adding Jesus as an extra divinity or teacher to those he already possesses.

Almost immediately, therefore, the non-dogmatic missionary will be faced by the problem, Am I to interpret the formula of discipleship in an *inclusive* or an *exclusive* sense? in other words, Am I to require my heathen converts to *renounce* Hinduism and Mahometanism and Buddhism and Confucianism and every other non-Christian system, or can I permit them to *combine* discipleship of Christ with discipleship of the Hindu doctors, of Mahomet, of Buddha, and of Confucius?

For the orthodox missionary the problem does not exist. It is self-evident, both to him and to every

heathen whom he instructs, that inasmuch as there is only one God, and Jesus Christ is His sole incarnation, the claims of Jesus on the believer are necessarily *exclusive and unique*.

But this is not so evident either to the undogmatic missionary or to his converts. If Jesus is only a human prophet like Mahomet (and the undogmatic missionary cannot affirm authoritatively that He is more), then it seems hardly reasonable to limit all wisdom and all prophetic inspiration to Him. A Mahometan convert may very plausibly argue, that He is more likely to attain to the fullness of truth by combining the teaching of both prophets, than by becoming a disciple of Jesus alone. He will assure the missionary that he has learnt already from the Koran that Jesus is the greatest of all prophets except Mahomet, and that He was born of a Virgin and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven (miracles which the missionary, being a Modernist, probably rejects), and, further, that he has come to believe (since hearing the missionary) that Jesus is a prophet as great as or even greater than Mahomet. Under the circumstances, he asks for permission to become a Christian without ceasing to be a Mahometan, and he promises, if allowed to do so, to endeavour to spread a knowledge of Christ among his fellow-Mahometans, and to work for 'reunion' (or rather 'union') between the Christian and Mahometan Churches. I do not see how the plea of the Mahometan can be effectively resisted, except by asserting either (1) the Deity of Jesus, or (2) at least His practically exclusive possession of divine truth, both which assertions are *dogmas*.

The missionary of a really non-dogmatic Church would soon receive attractive proposals of union from the doctors of Hinduism. The Hindu and the Christian Trinities would be identified. The neglected worship of the first person, Brahma, the Creator (who would be identified with the Father of Jesus), would be revived. In deference to Christian sentiment, the non-human incarnations of

Hindu mythology (the Fish, the Boar, and the Man-lion) would be dropped, and Jesus of Nazareth would be recognized as the last (and probably the greatest) incarnation of the god Vishnu, sharing this honour with the heroes Rama and Krishna and the wise teacher Buddha. The moralities of the two religions would also be adjusted and combined. The moral standard of Hinduism would be slightly levelled up, that of Christianity very much levelled down, and the general result would be—*Paganism as before.*

I do not contend that these results would actually happen, because I regard it as much more probable that the missionaries of the non-dogmatic Church, before they had been in India long, would be converted to Orthodoxy ; but I do contend such things would happen *if the non-dogmatic principle were strictly adhered to.* There is one, and only one effective barrier against syncretism, and that is the fearless assertion of positive dogma.

#### NON-DOGMATISM AT HOME

At home the non-dogmatic principle, if seriously adopted, would produce results hardly less grotesque.

We may ask Mr. Hutchinson to solve the following problem, adhering strictly to non-dogmatism. A bereaved husband, in deep sorrow, comes to a parish priest of the (now) non-dogmatic Church, and begs him earnestly, as a minister of the Church of God, to assure him that his wife still lives and that he may hope to meet her again.

Is he really to say (as he must if he adheres strictly to principle), " You address me as a minister of ' the Church of God.' You forget that since the great Modernist Reformation the Church has renounced all dogma, and does not believe in God. You also ask me in the name of the Church to assure you that your wife still lives. If I did so, I should be asserting another dogma, viz. human immortality, a thing no less impossible. Of course, if you merely ask me, as a man and a brother, to

comfort you with these assurances, I will do my best ; but I regret to say that in my official capacity as a minister of the non-dogmatic Church, I have no comfort whatever to offer you " ?

If Mr. Hutchinson replies that he expects a little common-sense to be used in carrying out his principle then the obvious retort is that this is only another way of saying that the principle is so unsound that he relies upon common-sense not to carry it out consistently. If space permitted, hundreds of other striking instances could be given where the strict application of the non-dogmatic principle leads to absurdity.

#### NON-DOGMATISM AND LIBERTY

Mr. Hutchinson champions " Christian freedom," but it is a freedom so unequally distributed that the individual Christian gets the whole of it and the Church none at all. It is like the ' liberty ' of anarchism, which asserts the unlimited liberty of the individual citizen, but denies the State liberty even to punish crime. Mr. Hutchinson's conception of ' liberty ' works out in practice as a liberty of licence for the individual Christian and abject slavery for the Church. However much the Church may desire to teach some important doctrine—e.g. the Existence of God or the Immortality of Man—it is prevented by this principle from doing so. On the other hand, this one-sided principle allows the individual Christian to deny every article of the Christian Faith and every principle of Christian morality.

Whether this state of things is really ' freedom ' or anarchic individualism may be left to the judicious reader to decide.

#### THE NEWEST CHRISTOLOGY

As a typical example of ' the drift to the left ' in Christology we may instance Dr. Bethune-Baker, who, as Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, is entrusted

with the responsible task of instructing candidates for ordination in Christian doctrine.

In his case we see a steady and most lamentable declension from the full orthodoxy of his really beautiful essay on "Christian Doctrines and their Ethical Significance" in *Cambridge Theological Essays* (1906), in which he maintains the vital and necessary connexion between the standard of Christian morality and the orthodox doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity as defined in the Catholic Creeds, and his complete *volte-face* at the Cambridge Conference of Modern Churchmen (1921).

As late as 1918 he could still write, "No one who does not retain the conviction that found expression in the doctrine of the Incarnation can justly call himself a Christian," and even, "I much prefer to state my own beliefs, 'theological' and 'Christological,' in the terms of the Athanasian Creed. It is the only Creed that precludes the tritheistic ideas always latent in the faith of Christians, and really states the Trinitarian—that is the Christian doctrine of God. . . . To the trained theologian its assertions on these points ring as true to-day as ever" (*The Faith of the Apostles' Creed*, p. 67). This book, however, already contained indications of what was coming, as, indeed, did his earlier pamphlet *The Miracle of Christianity* (1914), which, while maintaining strongly that the Incarnation is a fundamental Christian dogma, yet suggested (with an inconsistency which has ceased to excite surprise in the case of a Modernist) that Unitarians should be admitted into the Christian ministry.

A further stage of declension is represented by his sermon before the Churchmen's Union in 1920, in which he urged it to "take action . . . to put an end to the 'articling' which pursues the clergy all their lives, and to put the emphasis on the living contents of faith, rather than on belief as to facts in the past."<sup>1</sup>

He now speaks of his earlier view of the Person of

<sup>1</sup> See *The Modern Churchman* for August 1920.

Christ (which he had not quite abandoned even in 1918) as "only a bridge from the past to the present, and we ought perhaps to be content if most of our [Modernist] friends get on it and stay there safely, refusing to follow the more active among us, who are exploring the country beyond."

His present view he expressed at Cambridge as follows: "We must absolutely jettison the traditional doctrine that His [Christ's] personality was not human but divine. To our modern categories of thought such a statement is a denial of the doctrine of the Incarnation. . . . I can make no use of the traditional beliefs in either His miraculous birth or His personal pre-existence. . . . I do not for a moment suppose that Jesus ever thought of Himself as God. Jesus was *ἄνθρωπος τέλειος*, the actualized ideal of man, man at the end of his evolution, complete."

Dr. Bethune-Baker explicitly repudiates the doctrine of his earlier work, *The Faith of the Apostles' Creed*, that in Jesus a Divine Person became man (which is what is ordinarily meant by Incarnation), in favour of the quite different one that perfect humanity is essentially divine, and that Jesus was divine merely because He realized human perfection.

This is obviously a doctrine, not of Incarnation in any accepted sense, but of *the Divinity of Man*. The Professor denies that it is a doctrine of Apotheosis (though it obviously closely resembles it), and affirms that his real meaning is that the humanity of Jesus is divine "in virtue of its constitution *capax Dei*."

*Capax Dei* means "capable of receiving God," and if literally understood, implies the *immanental* doctrine, that Jesus was not actually God, but a man in whom God supremely dwelt. Several statements in the paper favour this view, e.g. "When I say that the man Jesus is 'God,' I mean that He is for me the index of my conception of God. . . . It is not from anything that I know beforehand about God that I infer that Jesus is God incarnate.

I know almost nothing about God's character apart from Jesus. But I attribute to God the character of Jesus. I say my conception of God is formed by my conception of Jesus. . . . So Jesus is the creator of my God." These expressions all favour the view that Jesus is merely one in whom God supremely dwells, and who supremely reveals God. Perhaps the fairest thing to say is that the Professor oscillates so uncertainly between the two views that it is hardly safe to decide which he intends to affirm. A similar confusion between identity and immanence marks the paper of Dean Rashdall; but as the subject has already been fully discussed (see especially pp. 142-149), I do not propose to deal with it again.

It ought to be added that Dr. Bethune-Baker takes a decidedly pantheistic view of the relation between God and man ("the Creator is not separated from His creatures . . . [Creatures] are . . . as necessary to the existence of God as He is to theirs. Neither is complete without the other. . . . In us He lives and moves and has His being"), and that he denies the doctrine of the personal Trinity ("The pre-existence of the Son is not really 'personal' in the sense in which popular religion understands the term").

#### THEOLOGY OF THE CAMBRIDGE CONFERENCE

In a recent well-informed and almost authoritative summary of the teaching generally approved at the Girton Conference,<sup>1</sup> we learn that "the difference between God and man is one of degree and not of kind"; that "the 'Substances' of the Deity and of the Humanity [of Christ] are not two, but one"; that "Perfect Humanity is Deity under human conditions"; that "the Deity of Jesus is to be seen in His Perfect Humanity"; that "Jesus does not unite to God those who are *different* from Him, but those who are essentially partakers of the Divine Nature"; that "He renders possible the attainment of

<sup>1</sup> By H. D. A. Major in *The Modern Churchman* for September 1921.

Divine Sonship by every man"; and that the essential message of Modernism to the world is, not the orthodox doctrine that God humbled Himself to become man, but the quite different and in fact opposite doctrine of "the fundamental and essential unity of human nature and divine nature."

The advanced school, as represented by Mr. Major, no longer even makes a pretence of accepting the Catholic Creeds in anything approaching their orthodox sense. These Creeds, regarded as 'tests' or even as authoritative documents, are forthwith to be scrapped. Their recitation is no longer to be required in parish churches. Their place is to be taken by new 'creeds' composed by individual incumbents and sanctioned by individual bishops. But I need not continue. "The drift to the left," so long denied, is now trumpeted to the world.

Canon Glazebrook is quite clear that the original Christology of the Church was 'Adoptionist,' and that its source was (in no inconsiderable measure) the heathen doctrine of Apotheosis. "The ancient Greeks and Romans," he declares, "paid homage to many heroes or demigods, who by their virtues or their services to humanity had obtained seats among the gods of Olympus.<sup>1</sup> . . . Can we be surprised if the early Christians, although they were Jews by race and education, were disposed . . . to follow the line which was suggested by Greek story?" He comes very near to attributing this heathen doctrine to St. Luke. "At any rate," he urges, "there are two speeches of St. Peter's, reported by St. Luke, which come very near to describing Jesus as a man who by His good deeds had achieved divinity" (Acts ii. 22 ff., x. 38-42).

<sup>1</sup> Later on he tells us, with the usual Modernist inconsistency, that Greek tradition, so far from closely associating the divine and the human natures, "represented God and man as belonging to *two different orders of being, so contrasted and opposed that they could have no natural relation.* He also makes the amazing statement (if any statement made by him could amaze) that St. Paul teaches the docetic heresy in Phil. ii. 7-8 and also in Rom. i. 3-4.

Mr. Major completes Canon Glazebrook's fancy picture of primitive Christology by a confident but quite unproved assertion that "to every modern student of the New Testament whose eyes are not holden by dogmatic tradition it is clear that there are at least three Christologies (or theories of the Person of Christ) in the New Testament: the 'Adoptionist' Christology of the First Church at Jerusalem, the Pre-existent-Christ Christology of St. Paul, and the Logos Christology of the Fourth Gospel. Primitive Christians were free to hold any of them or even to try to hold all three together, and yet remain full members and accredited ministers in the Church of Christ" (see Appendix II of this chapter).

The pantheistic tendencies of Dr. Bethune-Baker and Mr. Major were reproduced in most of the papers, and sometimes found almost grotesque expression. It seemed to be generally agreed that the 'substance' of God, which not only all Christians, but all philosophers except pantheists have hitherto regarded as absolutely one and indivisible, is capable (like matter) of indefinite division into parts, and that in consequence it is possible for a being to be *part* of God without being *the whole* of Him. At any rate, I can attach no other meaning to the extraordinary confession of faith of Mr. Nowell Smith (Headmaster of Sherborne): "I assent to the proposition that Jesus is God, yet God in that proposition is to me an adjective. Whatever Jesus means by calling Himself Son of God, or by saying (if He did say), 'I and my Father are one,' it is clear that He did not mean that He was identical, or (to use a metaphor again) coextensive, with God." To Prof. Bethune-Baker, the substance of God, though spiritual, is apparently as indefinitely divisible as so much air or water. For instance (comparing the Divine Substance with water), he calls it "the infinite reservoir of consciousness from which our own *trickling streams* are drawn and fed."

Perhaps the most negative paper of all was that of

Canon Tollington, who, in spite of his profession "to keep definitely clear of Pantheism," nevertheless writes: "I see no gain in contending that in Jesus God came Himself into our world, with the implication that it is not as 'Himself' but in some other manner that He comes, when :

' On the glimmering limit far withdrawn,  
God makes Himself an awful rose of dawn,'

or when He reveals Himself to us as the 'Divinity which shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will.' " We need not be surprised, therefore, that a writer who draws so nebulous a distinction between God and the universe, and between the nature of Christ and that of other men, finds the deep humility of orthodox worship distasteful. For Modernists, he declares, "the cringing of the slave is gone. 'Spare us, good Lord'—what a conception of the divine nature does this imply!"—a sentiment rebuked with great (but not too great) severity by Bishop Henson.

#### MR. MAJOR'S CHRISTOLOGY

Mr. Major, for once, failed to be modern, and went back for his Christology, not, as might have been expected under such circumstances, to the New Testament, but to the third century, reproducing (unfortunately without any acknowledgment of his great obligations) not only in principle, but also to a large extent in detail, the well-known heresy of Artemon and Paul of Samosata.

Paul of Samosata (1) denied the personal pre-existence of Jesus: "He did not exist before Mary, but received from her the origin of His being." So Mr. Major contends that if Jesus pre-existed at all (which is doubtful), He pre-existed as all human souls pre-exist, and not as a Divine Person destined to become man ("Wordsworth's *Ode to Immortality* teaches that every human infant brings this pre-existent knowledge with it into this world at its birth. It is an attractive thought"). (2) As to the Personality

of Jesus, Paul contended that He was a man in the ordinary human sense, not a Divine Person who had become man. So Mr. Major insisted: "The consciousness of Jesus was a full human consciousness, and . . . it was not supernatural or miraculous in any sense that cannot be attributed to a human personality." (3) According to Paul, the Logos and Spirit of God dwelt in Jesus, as in other men, but in a supereminent degree. This is also Mr. Major's opinion. (4) Paul denied the Personal Trinity, regarding God as one Person (or as Dr. Rashdall prefers to say "one mind") and the Logos and Spirit as impersonal powers or faculties of that Mind. Upon this point Mr. Major is not perfectly explicit, but it is unlikely that he would dissent from the general judgment of the Conference that the 'Personal' Trinity is an antiquated (or perhaps even a modern) orthodox fiction. (5) Paul held that the human and the divine 'substances' are so closely allied that the former may pass into the latter by a process of 'development.' Thus he taught that the man Jesus, by a process of gradual development and growth in holiness, and as a reward of transcendent merit, was completely deified (*ἐξ ἀνθρωπων γέγονε θεός . . . ἐκ προκοπῆς τεθεοποιῆσθαι*). Similarly Mr. Major affirms that "the 'Substances' of the Deity and of the Humanity are not two but one," that "Perfect Humanity is Deity under human conditions," that "there is not a vast gulf between the Divine Nature and Human Nature," and that by a "process of purification illumination and development" all men equally with Jesus are capable of "sharing in all the *πλήρωμα* [fullness] of the Divine Nature." (6) Both authorities agree with orthodoxy in affirming the sinlessness of Jesus.

The only difference of any importance between the Christology of the Samosatene and that of Mr. Major is one that is favourable to the heresiarch, for whereas the Samosatene affirmed the Virgin Birth, Mr. Major denies it.

Mr. Major, however, while he accepts, also 'develops' this ancient heresy.<sup>1</sup> It is implied in Paul's system (as Mr. Major rightly recognizes) that, the difference between God and man being one of degree, not of kind, the difference between Jesus and His followers is also one of degree, not of kind, and that therefore Jesus is not divine in any 'unique' sense, but that, on the contrary, every Christian is already 'potentially' just such another son of God, and may confidently expect one day to become fully 'consubstantial with God,' or 'divine' in the very same sense in which Jesus now is. Mr. Major is very emphatic upon this point ("Jesus . . . renders possible the attainment of the ideal of Divine Sonship by every man. We, human beings, have the ineffable and incomprehensible privilege of being potentially sons of God, and of becoming 'fellow-heirs with Christ,' and finally of sharing in all the *πλήρωμα* of the Divine Nature"); but I doubt whether the Samosatene (although it is logically involved in his system) would have admitted it. His acceptance of the Virgin Birth suggests the 'uniqueness' of Jesus, and had he denied this 'uniqueness,' his followers would probably have deserted him. The most likely view is that Paul accepted, along with the heathen doctrine of Apotheosis, the doctrine of 'grades' of divinity, and regarded Jesus as exalted to a higher 'grade' of divinity, than will ever be attained by any other mortal.

I doubt also whether Paul would have gone quite so far as Mr. Major in the identification of the divine and the human substances of Christ. Instead of saying baldly with Mr. Major, "The 'Substances' of the Deity and of

<sup>1</sup> Our chief authorities for Paul and his doctrine are Eusebius vii. 27-30 (where the epistle of the bishops who condemned him is quoted); the remains of the proceedings and acts of the Council of Antioch which condemned him, collected in Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. iii. pp. 287 ff. (of which not the whole is trustworthy); Epiphanius, *Contra Hæreses*, lxxv. (to be read with caution); and scattered references in Athanasius, Hilary, Gregory of Nyssa, and other Fathers.

the Humanity are not two but one," he would have said that the human substance of Jesus was *so similar and closely allied* to the Divine Substance, that it was capable of passing into and becoming it. By drawing a stronger distinction than Mr. Major between the substance of the Creator and the substance of creatures, he would have been able to affirm the doctrine of creation in a somewhat more orthodox sense.

### CANON BARNES'S VIEWS

In justice to the Conference, it seems desirable to give some account of the teaching of its most orthodox member, Canon Barnes, who was prominent both as the reader of an interesting paper and as the eloquent preacher of the final sermon. Canon Barnes spoke as an Evangelical ("I am an Evangelical; I cannot call myself a Modernist. As you know, I answer all the questions just asked in the old way"); nevertheless ordinary Evangelicals may be pardoned if they feel that the quality of his Evangelicalism has suffered some deterioration owing to the company which he has lately been keeping, especially when they notice that he closed his 'Evangelical' sermon with an earnest appeal for funds for the support of that institution (Ripon Hall) over which Mr. Major presides, instructing candidates for ordination how "to adjust their orthodoxy to the orthodoxy of the future" rather than of the past, or (as it would seem more appropriate to say, considering the nature of Mr. Major's actual opinions) to that heresy of the past which he hopes will become the orthodoxy of the future.

Even so comparatively friendly a critic as Dr. Foakes-Jackson doubts the proof quality of Dr. Barnes's Evangelicalism, and, indeed, considers that every genuine Evangelical would repudiate it. "The tone of [his] paper," he says, "is one of pious rationalism disguised in beautiful language"; and commenting on his description

of the personality of the historical Jesus, he remarks, "The portrait is that of a religious genius, obviously human, and the terms employed strike one as slightly patronizing."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Barnes's contribution to the orthodoxy of the Conference was to identify Jesus with the Holy Spirit: "Can we say further, that He [Jesus] was central as Redeemer and Saviour? I think that we are forced to do so if, and only if, we accept St. Paul's identification of the living Christ and the Holy Spirit;" "We identify the Lord with the Spirit;" "When after death His human limitations were transcended, the living Christ became one with the Holy Spirit;" "In the end I feel no hesitation in affirming that Jesus rose from the dead to become the Living Christ, One with the Holy Spirit."

Before we can venture to claim Canon Barnes as even in principle a supporter of the orthodox theory of a Divine Incarnation, as distinct from and opposed to the heterodox theories of Immanence Pantheistic Identity, and Apotheosis, which dominated the Conference, we have first to assure ourselves of two points: (1) Was Jesus, in the Canon's view, identical with the Holy Spirit from the moment of His Conception,<sup>2</sup> or only from His Resurrection? and (2) Is the Holy Spirit, in the Canon's view, a personal or an impersonal being?

Two of Dr. Barnes's expressions ("After death . . . the living Christ *became* one with the Holy Spirit," and "Jesus rose from the dead *to become* one with the Holy Spirit") might easily be taken to imply that Jesus did not become identical with the Holy Spirit *until His Resurrection*, in which case they affirm, not the Incarnation of God, but (as Dr. Foakes-Jackson evidently thinks they do) the apotheosis or deification of a mere man. Moreover, not a single expression in his paper shows clearly and un-

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal* for January 1922.

<sup>2</sup> Canon Barnes, I am glad to say, adheres to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

ambiguously that he regards the Holy Spirit as personal, or indeed as anything more than the Redeeming Power of God.

But, giving Dr. Barnes (as is only fair) the benefit of the doubt on both points, let us see what we can make of his theory of the Incarnation.

The first thing that strikes an orthodox Christian, Evangelical or other, is that the Canon's theory appears to assert that the Third, not the Second, Person of the Holy Trinity became man, a view neither Evangelical nor orthodox. The other alternative, that he identifies the Second and Third Persons, is equally heterodox, for it reduces the Trinity to a Duality. Satisfactory criticism of his statement is difficult, because he does not make it clear which of these two views, or what other view, he holds.

He asserts, however, with great confidence (though without giving any reasons) that St. Paul supports his theory of the identity of Jesus with the Holy Spirit, evidently referring to the well-known passage 2 Cor. iii. 17-18: "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," etc. Here he is on particularly treacherous ground, for this passage, so far from being clear, is perhaps the most obscure, both in grammar and meaning, in the whole New Testament. The word 'spirit' (*πνεῦμα*) itself is a very nest of ambiguities. For example, the substance of God being 'spirit' (John iv. 24), it follows that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are all alike 'spirit.' There is also the human 'spirit,' which is usually identified with the 'soul' (Luke i. 47, etc.), but by St. Paul sometimes distinguished from it, in what sense is not clear (1 Thess. v. 23). Finally, St. Paul uses 'spirit' in a special 'moral' sense, meaning the human spirit as guided and influenced by the Holy Spirit. In all these seven distinct senses (and more might be mentioned) 'spirit' was in Jesus.

One really hesitates to offer a decided opinion upon the exact meaning of a passage of such appalling ambiguity

(perhaps the view that ' Spirit ' is the pre-existent Son of God who became incarnate in Jesus is as good as any <sup>1</sup>), but whichever of the several fairly reasonable and probable interpretations be adopted, *one thing is perfectly certain*, that St. Paul *neither* asserts in it an incarnation of the Holy Ghost, *nor* identifies the Holy Ghost with the Son of God. This is absolutely certain, because at the close of the Epistle which contains this passage there occurs *a quite unambiguous statement* that the three Persons of the Trinity are distinct (" The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you "). Since, therefore, St. Paul continually in his writings affirms that *the Son* became incarnate, and, moreover, distinguishes the Spirit from the Son, it follows that he *denies* Dr. Barnes's doctrine of the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit.

One of the leading principles of the scientific interpretation of documents is to interpret what is ambiguous in the light of what is clear. Canon Barnes exactly reverses this principle. Instead of interpreting what is ambiguous in the light of what is clear, he interprets what is clear in the light (or rather darkness) of what is ambiguous.

#### THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE ARGUMENT

To proceed now to the fuller discussion of the important issues raised by the Cambridge Conference, it seems desirable to begin by laying down certain agreed principles. Unless disputants start from common principles, they will never agree. It will not be necessary to lay down more than the following, few, if any, of which will be challenged by any considerable number of Modernists :

(1) That Christian and philosophic tradition is right in regarding God as the absolutely Perfect Being.

<sup>1</sup> This is a by no means unusual manner of expression. For instance, we read in the so-called Second Epistle of Clement, " Christ, the Lord who saved us, first being Spirit, then became flesh (*ὡν μὲν τὸ πρῶτον πνεῦμα, ἐγένετο σὰρξ*)," ix. This usage is frequent in Tertullian.

(2) That the true nature of God cannot be inferior to the highest idea men can form of it.

(3) That of two views ascribing to God, the one an inferior, the other a superior degree of Perfection, we must choose the latter.

(4) That since Christianity is primarily an *ethical* theism, greater weight ought to be attached to *ethical* than to purely metaphysical arguments.

(5) That the logical principles of common-sense, especially the law of contradiction, are trustworthy, and that consequently any doctrine which contains a plain contradiction must be false.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it should be remembered that we are dealing with mysterious subjects, hard to grasp clearly, and that we should therefore be careful not to mistake mere difficulties or paradoxes for contradictions. The created universe is so extremely mysterious and involves so many *apparent* contradictions, that we ought not to be surprised if we find mysteries and apparent contradictions in God.

#### THE PERFECT BEING OF ORTHODOXY

The first question for solution is, whether the orthodox or the semi-pantheistic Modernist view of the Divine Nature harmonizes better with the accepted principle that God is the absolutely Perfect Being.

The orthodox view, which ascends in the line of prophecy at least to the Second Isaiah, and which has the independent support of the accepted philosophic tradition, may be briefly stated as follows :

The nature of God is spiritual (i.e. rational and moral, not material) ; also infinite, self-existent, self-sufficing, absolute,

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that not even Hegel (as superficial students of his system sometimes imagine) really denied the principle of contradiction. In fact he used it continually to demonstrate the falsity, or partial falsity, of ordinary 'finite' beliefs. Hegel often found contradictions where they do not exist, but that is another matter altogether. He assumed and worked with the principle of contradiction from the beginning to the end of his *Logic*.

and supremely blessed. He has His being beyond space and time in eternity, by which is meant duration, not only without beginning or end, but also without succession or change. His 'substance' or 'essence' is one and indivisible, admitting (as being absolutely perfect) of neither addition, diminution, nor change. It is also 'unique,' for although akin to that of creatures made in His image, it differs from theirs, not merely in degree, but in 'kind.' As the Perfect Being, God possesses not merely potentially, but also 'actually,' all possible perfections, moral, intellectual, and metaphysical, and that from eternity and to an infinite degree.

As Creator, He is the source both of the existence and also of all the perfections exhibited by creatures. The highest of these perfections (e.g. the 'pure' perfections of wisdom, love, justice, power, free-will, self-consciousness) He possesses 'actually' and 'eminently,' for they are all potentially infinite and worthy of Him. The lower of creaturely perfections, which are not worthy to be ascribed to Him literally, may be ascribed to Him 'equivalently.' For instance, although it is not possible to ascribe the virtue of 'courage' literally to God, we may be certain that there belongs to His nature some 'equivalent' higher perfection, which is the 'ground' of it. Indeed, we may almost venture to assert that at the creation He exhibited something like courage, for He certainly 'took risks' for noble ends, when He created beings gifted with free-will.

In relation to creation, God is both transcendent and immanent. His Immeasurable Being transcends it to an infinite extent. It is not in the least degree necessary either to His Perfection or His Blessedness. Indeed, the whole of it, vast and glorious as it is, exhibits only an infinitesimal fraction of His unlimited Majesty and Perfection. Not for His own sake, but for that of His rational creatures, did He call the world into being. Creatures great and small owe their existence, not to any need of self-expression on His part, but to His pure bounty and benevolence. They need Him, but He does not need them.

The sum of the power and perfection manifested in creation is not to be thought of as something added to or subtracted from the unlimited power and perfection of God. Just as the

power of the magistrates of an absolute earthly monarch is not power added to or subtracted from the monarch's power, but is *that very power exerted in a particular way*, so, when God created the world, He did not part with, but *exercised His power in a particular way*, and that, not for His own sake, but for that of His creatures. The act of creation made Him neither more or less powerful, nor more or less perfect than before.

As immanent, God sustains the world, and is its principle of life and rational order. So completely is it dependent upon Him, that were His sustaining will even for a moment withdrawn, it would be instantly annihilated.

All wisdom and knowledge, as well as power, are His. His omnipotent will can achieve all that is metaphysically and morally possible; His freedom is limited only by His Perfections.

But the most admirable and adorable of all His attributes is His Holiness or Moral Perfection, which is unbounded. He hates evil with an infinite hatred, and loves good with an infinite love. Every 'pure' moral perfection is His infinitely and absolutely. For instance, He is perfectly just, and is the just Judge of all creation. But above all He is Love. He loves His rational creatures as their Father in heaven, and wills their temporal and eternal good.

It is true that the higher creatures, such as angels and men, are akin to Him, and made in His image, but between them and His immeasurably transcendent Being yawns a gulf which even the Incarnation, though it bridges, cannot fill. To Him, the Infinite and Absolute Good, is due from creatures a love, and adoring homage, to which no limits whatever can be set.

### THE GOD OF MODERNISM

The Modernism of the Cambridge Conference exaggerates the doctrine of the divine image in man into a doctrine of 'the Divinity of Man,' i.e. an actual or potential *identification* between God and man. Thus we are informed that :

(1) "Creatures are as necessary to the existence of God

as He is to theirs. Neither is complete without the other"; that

(2) "The 'Substances' of the Deity and of the Humanity are not two but one"; and that

(3) "Jesus does not unite to God those who are by nature different from Him, but those who are essentially partakers of the Divine Nature."

## I

If "creatures . . . are as necessary to the existence of God as He is to theirs," and "in them He lives and moves and has His being," it follows that both His existence and His perfection *are absolutely dependent upon creatures*, and that He advances towards perfection in and with them. It follows further that *He is not yet perfect*, partly because the creatures which are necessary to His perfection have not yet all been created, partly because even the most excellent of them (men, for instance) are extremely imperfect. All men are more or less sinful, and some of them—tyrants and adulterers and murderers, for instance—are exceedingly sinful. Accordingly, until the rational part of creation becomes "perfect after its kind," i.e. sinless and morally excellent, it is a plain contradiction to maintain that a God who is dependent upon creatures can be perfect in any sense at all.

Modern thought regards the world as evolving and progressing, and orthodox Christians unite with Modernists in hoping that its present extremely unsatisfactory condition—a condition so unsatisfactory that at times, as in the late Great War, moral evil seems actually to outweigh moral good—may improve, and that good may win a decisive triumph over evil. But until it does, it is not even plausible to maintain that a God dependent upon creatures is perfect.

We may concede to the Modernists that their God is evolving with the world (upon which He is dependent)

towards a greater degree of perfection, and that, like Mr. Wells's 'finite God,' He is 'doing His best' under difficulties; we may go further, and grant that He is even aiming at that standard of 'absolute' perfection which the God of Orthodoxy possessed from eternity; but it is scarcely possible to concede that a God whose perfection depends upon creatures can hope ever to reach so exalted a standard.

## II

The theory that God is able to be or to become perfect, without having been so always, violates one of the most fundamental laws of all thinking, the principle of causality. This principle (as already explained <sup>1</sup>) requires us to assign to every effect, not merely a cause, but an *adequate* cause, i.e. a cause at least equal, both in magnitude and excellence, to its effect. It is not sufficient to attribute to God originally only 'potential' perfection, if He is to realize it actually. To be something actually is far more excellent than to be something only potentially. For instance, it is far more excellent to be an actual saint than a potential one, i.e. a sinner; and to be an actual mathematician than a potential one, i.e. a person unskilled in mathematics. Similarly, if the Modernist God is ever to realize actual perfection, it is not sufficient to endow Him originally with mere 'potential' perfection, which of course implies actual imperfection. Just as water cannot rise above its source, nor ignorance generate knowledge, so it is impossible for a God who was not perfect originally ever to become so. The Modernist God, as we have seen, is not yet perfect. It follows rigorously that He never can become so.

## III

It is not my intention to maintain that Modernists do not actually worship the same God as orthodox Christians.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 180-183.

As a rule, in spite of their pantheism, they do in practice (and especially in devotion) regard their God as the absolutely Perfect Being. Nevertheless, it is by no means clear that they have any *intellectual* right to do so.

If we adhere strictly to the principle that God is the Perfect Being, and that a Being that is not absolutely perfect cannot be God, it follows logically that so imperfect a being as the God of Modernism, who is dependent on creatures, not only is not God now, but that He never can become so. In strict logic—I do not say in Modernist devotion and practice—the Modernist God is only a *demiurge*. He is not unlike a Gnostic demiurge of the better type, i.e. a being, not actually evil, but only imperfect, and for whose general inefficiency and futility at least this excuse may be urged, that He means well and according to His lights is doing His best. During the present vogue of ‘finite Gods’ He may continue to find admirers, but His present popularity can hardly last long.

#### IV

We now come to the statements that “the ‘Substances’ of the Deity and of the Humanity are not two but one,” and that “Jesus does not unite to God those who by nature are different from Him, but those who are essentially partakers of the Divine Nature.” Broadly speaking, these are assertions of the doctrine of “the Divinity of Man” and denials of “the Incarnation of God.”

Much was said at Cambridge—much that was more eloquent than clear—about this “Divinity of Man.” Canon Glazebrook, for instance, was eloquent in his appreciation of the following dictum of “a serious thinker” :—“The error [of Dr. Denny, i.e. of Orthodoxy] does not spring from maintaining the divinity of Jesus, but from denying the divinity of man.”

Two theories were propounded at the Conference (and often confused together, as if they were identical) as to

the exact nature of this 'divinity' or 'consubstantiality' of man. One theory was that this 'consubstantiality' is at present only potential, not actual. Human nature, though very nearly, is not yet quite God. It is, however, capable of becoming so in the future. When it has undergone 'a process of purification, illumination, and development' (according to one authority, an 'immense' process), then it will become fully 'divine' and 'consubstantial with God,' in the very sense in which the humanity of Jesus now is.

This theory (though usually veiled under such specious titles as 'adoption' or 'election')<sup>1</sup> is, of course, nothing else than the purely Pagan doctrine of Deification or Apotheosis, which, as we have seen, the ancient Church condemned in the person of Paul of Samosata as a heathen abomination. We shall here consider it, however, on its merits, without prejudice.

The other view was that man is even now consubstantial with God, but that the 'substance' of God in Him has either not yet attained or has deteriorated from its due divine perfection. Discipline and moral effort and grace will have the effect of improving its quality, so that there is reason to hope that at least in heaven it will gain or regain its proper divine purity. This theory, though closely akin to, is not identical with the theory of Apotheosis. It affirms, not that man will one day become God, but that he is God now, even while he is sinning. *He is, however, God in an imperfect or undeveloped condition.*

This theory denies the doctrine of creation, because it denies that the Creator and the creature are different substances. It regards God as 'projecting' creatures from His 'substance,' which substance, as thus projected, undergoes a certain deterioration, and is liable to imper-

<sup>1</sup> Canon Glazebrook, more candid than some, illustrated it by the appropriate lines of Horace :

*Hac arte Pollux et vagus Hercules  
Enisus arces attingit igneas.*

fection and sin. This was also the theory of the second-century Gnostics, who regarded the Ultimate Reality as 'projecting' from His being various orders of emanations or 'æons,' in whom His substance suffered deterioration, but remained capable of redemption and restoration. This theory we shall also consider without prejudice.

## V

The doctrine of Apotheosis offends against reason in more ways than one. For example, (1) It regards God as imperfect in Himself, and as gradually advancing towards perfection by assuming into His substance multitudes of finite beings, upon whom (as we have seen) His own perfection is dependent. (2) It denies the immutability of the Divine Substance, which, on this theory, is receiving continual accretions. (3) It denies God's eternity, for all the creatures assumed into His substance had a beginning: hence part of His substance is eternal and part is not. (4) Since the creatures assumed into God are only parts and not the whole of Him, it follows that the substance of God is divisible like matter, which involves a denial of its spirituality.

It should be mentioned, however, to the credit of the special form of Apotheosis taught by Modernism, that it does not involve (like the theory of the essential 'Divinity of Man') the blasphemous doctrine that God can sin. It teaches on the contrary that man cannot become 'consubstantial with God' unless or until he is free from sin.

## VI

The alternative theory that man, even in his present imperfect condition, is already in fact and in principle consubstantial with God, involves many of the metaphysical absurdities of the theory of Apotheosis, and this

moral one in addition, that God sins in and with man. For if man is even now consubstantial with God, it follows that the substance of God lies, thieves, bears false witness, is guilty of cruel and lustful acts, and provokes aggressive and devastating wars.

In whichever of these two ways the theory of human 'consubstantiality' is held, it involves palpable contradictions of the principle that God is the Perfect Being. It is for Mr. Major and his friends to choose upon which horn of the dilemma they prefer to be impaled. Each alternative lands them in absurdities.

#### EFFECT ON CHARACTER

Taking the Modernist doctrine in its less offensive form, that in which it does not attribute sin to God, let us estimate its probable effect upon character.

Modernists will probably admit that next to divine charity, humility is the most distinctive and fundamental of all Christian virtues, and that pride is among the most Satanic of vices. By becoming man, as the *Magnificat* teaches us, God "hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek." The heathen usually exalted pride (or something very like it) almost to the pinnacle of the virtues. To Aristotle, for instance, "high-mindedness" (*μεγαλοψυχία*) "seems to be the crowning grace of the virtues."<sup>1</sup> We ask, therefore, in which direction does the Modernist doctrine seem to lead? in the direction of heathen pride, or in the direction of Christian humility?

A caustic but perfectly just critic once said of Hegel, that his mission in life was to persuade the young men of Germany that they were God, and that the young men found it exceedingly pleasant. In a similar way, the Modernist doctrine of 'the Divinity of Man'—even His potential Divinity—ministers far more to pride which is

<sup>1</sup> *Nic. Eth.* iv. 3.

heathen than to humility which is Christian. Orthodox Christians meditate continually upon the distinctive articles of their faith, and are made humble by doing so. As they compare their own imperfections and sinfulness with the awful and unapproachable holiness of God, and of that Sinless One who bought them with His Precious Blood, their cry is, "God be merciful to me a sinner. Spare me, a poor wretched creature, who, though through grace Thy son in the Beloved, am yet but dust and ashes in Thy sight." Canon Tollington may call this 'cringing'—"the cringing of the slave"—but at any rate it is humility. The Apostles (who had not the advantage of acquaintance with advanced Modernist views) positively *gloried* in calling themselves and their converts slaves (*δοῦλοι*)—slaves of God and of their Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Personally, I prefer to 'cringe' with the Apostles and the saints of all ages,<sup>1</sup> than to exalt myself with the members of the Modernist Conference, not one of whom has disavowed Canon Tollington, and of whom some have even warmly defended him.<sup>2</sup>

We may fairly ask, would Modernists be equally humbled if they were to meditate daily on the distinctive articles of *their* creed, as, for example, that "Creatures are as necessary to God as God is to creatures;" "God cannot become perfect apart from man, and therefore not apart from me;" "God is not yet, and perhaps never will be perfect;" "Though I am not God yet, I shall be presently;" "Jesus is the consubstantial Son of God, but so also am I, or at least shall soon become so."

It seems to me that these beliefs make far more for heathen pride than for Christian humility, and that those who entertain them will often succumb to the temptation of anticipating, by interior acts of self-complacency, the coming era of their complete deification.

<sup>1</sup> See I Pet. ii. 16, Rom. i. 1, Jas. i. 1, Jude 1, Rev. i. 1, and many other passages.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, *The Modern Churchman* for October 1921, p. 357.

## EFFECT ON WORSHIP

The effect on worship of the doctrine of ' the Divinity of Man ' remains to be considered. The object of Christian worship is, of course, God, including (on the orthodox theory) God incarnate as Jesus Christ.

On the Modernist theory, however, millions of rational creatures (angels and men) are or will be consubstantial with God, equally with the Redeemer—indeed, since the angels have never sinned, it seems probable that they are even now consubstantial, and hence fit objects of worship. But however that may be, one thing is perfectly evident, that when hereafter all rational creatures shall have attained their perfection in heaven, the object of worship will not be merely the Triune God and His Son Incarnate, but also *millions upon millions of finite creatures who like ourselves will have then attained to like consubstantiality with Jesus.*

It is impossible to avoid this absurd conclusion by insisting, with Mr. Nowell Smith, that such consubstantial creatures are only *parts*, not the whole, of God, and that it is the whole of God, not His parts, which is the object of worship. For, in the first place, this view that God consists of parts, involves a plain contradiction ; and, in the second, even if it is correct, it is quite impossible to worship a whole without worshipping every one of its parts. *If even a single part is omitted*, the whole is not worshipped. Consequently, it follows with logical rigour (if the Modernist premisses are correct) that the eternal employment of Christians in heaven will consist in the worship (1) of the Trinity, (2) of the angels, (3) of one another, (4) of *themselves*.

I desire those numerous Modernists who accuse orthodox Christians of *Tritheism* to ask themselves seriously these three questions : (1) whether their own system, if logically carried out, does not amount in practice to *Unlimited Polytheism* ; (2) whether the doctrine that a

necessary part of our worship in heaven will consist in the worship of *one another and ourselves*, makes for human humility; and (3) what the Apostles and the primitive martyrs who died in torments rather than worship deified creatures would have thought of the Modernist doctrine.

### THE INCARNATION

We proceed next in order to inquire whether the Orthodox or the Modernist theory of the Incarnation assigns greater perfection (especially *moral* perfection) to God, and therefore accords better with the fundamental belief of all genuine theists that God is *the Perfect Being*.

It will be necessary to consider distinctly and separately the three chief varieties of the Modernist theory, viz. (1) the theory of Immanence, (2) the theory of Apotheosis, and (3) the theory of the natural and essential 'Divinity of Man.'

According to the orthodox theory, God, without ceasing to be God, became also man in the Person of His Son as the historic character Jesus of Nazareth. As contrasted with Modernism, Orthodoxy holds (1) that God became man, not that God dwelt in a man, or that a man was or became God; (2) that *Godhead entire*, not a part of God, became man; for inasmuch as the Divine Substance is indivisible, it subsists whole and entire in each of the Three Persons, and therefore, when the Son of God became man, *Godhead entire* became man, and consequently in Jesus "dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9).

It should be further observed that the Incarnation of God involved "a coming down from heaven," or (to interpret the metaphor) an actual *humiliation* of God, i.e. a voluntary abandonment (in the human sphere) of the exercise and enjoyment of His attributes of glory, majesty, omniscience, omnipotence, impassibility, and blessedness, not, however, of His sinlessness or inerrancy. In becoming man, God took to Himself *as His own*, human

consciousness, human will, human weakness, human sorrow and pain, even human death. In the Person of His Incarnate Son (i.e. in His own Person), He hungered, thirsted, was weary, was betrayed, mocked, spit upon and scourged, was nailed to the cross, died, and descended into hell. Though impassible (i.e. unable to be caused to suffer by creatures), God by His own voluntary act and out of tender love for sinners became man, and as man suffered the extremity of torture, and finally died to atone for sin. That is orthodox Christianity. That is what it means now to every genuine Christian. That is what it meant to St. Paul, who in what is perhaps his earliest Epistle cried from his heart, "That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith—the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me";<sup>1</sup> to St. Peter, who knew himself redeemed "not with corruptible things, . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot";<sup>2</sup> and to St. Thomas, who, when bidden thrust his hand into the pierced side, cried in adoring love, "My Lord and my God."<sup>3</sup>

In the view of orthodox Christians, the Incarnation of God and its associated doctrines of Atonement and Redemption have a spiritual and moral value which is absolutely infinite. There is no other doctrine like it in heaven or in earth, and there never can be any. And therefore every soul that believes it, cries with the seer of the *Apocalypse* in a rapture of thanksgiving: "Unto Him that loveth us, and washed<sup>4</sup> us from our sins in His own blood, and made us to be a kingdom, even priests unto His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."<sup>5</sup>

God was adored as the Perfect Being both by Jews

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. i. 18 ff.

<sup>3</sup> John xx. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Or, loosed. The reading is doubtful, the ancient authorities being very equally divided.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. i. 5.

and by philosophers long before His Incarnation ; nevertheless until that event actually happened, no adequate idea could be formed of the depths of moral perfection that lay hid in God. In the Incarnation *the unimaginable* happened : the Absolute Lord of the Universe, to whom blessedness and adoration and homage belong as of right, made Himself a servant, did menial work, washed the disciples' feet, and finally died (as man) a criminal's death upon the cross—died, we are told, with words of pardon on His lips for His murderers, died, as man, for man's salvation.

God thus clearly manifested, and that to an infinite degree, the two supreme virtues of (1) self-sacrificing and redemptive love, and (2) self-abasement and humility. Neither of these perfections had ever before been ascribed to Him by anyone. The Jewish prophets (and occasionally heathen philosophers) had indeed ascribed to Him the love of *benevolence*, but never that of self-sacrifice. As for humility, so far was anyone from ascribing this to God, that pride (or at least *μεγαλοψυχία*) would have seemed to the ancient world a more appropriate characteristic. In becoming man and laying down His life for us, God has manifested to the world heights and depths of moral perfection undreamed of by men or angels.

We have now to compare the *infinite* degree of moral perfection implied in the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation with that degree of it implied in the Modernist doctrine.

(1) According to *Immanent Modernism*, Jesus was not actually God, but only a man in whom God supremely dwelt. It follows that God neither became man, nor did He suffer—not at least in His own Person. It is true that He dwelt in a person who suffered. But He also dwells in other martyrs, less fully indeed, *but in precisely the same manner, viz. that of Immanence, not of Incarnation.*

Immanentism allows God to feel the pain of *sympathy*,

but that differs *toto cælo* from the pain of direct personal experience. From the point of view of Immanentism, the suffering of God in sympathy with the suffering of Jesus may be compared with the suffering of a sympathetic friend who stands by the cross of a crucified man, and must be contrasted with that of the victim.<sup>1</sup>

(2) In considering the theory of Apotheosis, two varieties should be distinguished: one which regards Jesus as becoming God at His Resurrection, the other at His Baptism.

In the former case, Jesus was not yet God when He suffered, and therefore God did not suffer, except by sympathy.

In the latter case, Jesus was actually God when He suffered, and consequently God suffered—it remains to be determined in what sense.

To solve this problem, we must remind ourselves that though, on this theory, Jesus was God, He shared or will share this privilege with thousands of millions of other men, who equally with Himself are destined to Consubstantial Sonship.

Now, it is plainly impossible to hold that all these will become *God entire*, even if we hold that they will all become *entirely God*. For if they will all become God entire, it follows that in the future there will be not one, but *thousands of millions* of beings, who will all be equally eternal, infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, absolute, and self-existent, which is an absurdity.<sup>2</sup> Both common-sense and philosophy assure us that there can be only *one* such being.

It remains, then, that they will become finite parts of God,<sup>3</sup> and if so, comparatively unimportant parts, partly because there are so many of them, and partly because

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller discussion, see above, pp. 142-149.

<sup>2</sup> Part of the absurdity is that these deified creatures, being *entirely God*, are *eternal*, i.e. have no beginning. And yet, having once been creatures, they are *not* eternal, for they had a beginning.

<sup>3</sup> Even this is an absurdity: see above, pp. 321, 339.

each of them individually must be infinitely less than their Original Source or First Cause.

The statement, therefore, that God suffered in (or as) Jesus, although it is true, amounts only to this, that an unimportant and indeed quite insignificant fraction of Him suffered, for Jesus was only one among millions of actual or potential 'consubstantial sons of God.'

In contrast with this minimizing (and indeed trivial and almost meaningless) theory of the Incarnation, Orthodoxy teaches quite definitely that *God entire*—the whole substance of God—became man in the Person of His Eternal Son, and (as man) suffered and died for us. It therefore assigns to God *an infinitely greater degree of moral perfection* than Modernism, which teaches that only an insignificant fraction of Him thus suffered.

The necessary conclusion is that the Modernist theory is false, and the Orthodox theory true—or at least *the truest yet*.

(3) We need not criticize in detail the more definitely pantheistic theory of the *natural* or *essential* 'Divinity of Man,' for it is obviously open to similar (and indeed to even greater) objections.

### THE HOLY TRINITY

No speaker at the Cambridge Conference (with the possible exception of Canon Barnes) supported the orthodox doctrine of the Personal Trinity, and several of them branded it as Tritheism or Polytheism. Dr. Rashdall, greatly daring, even denied its orthodoxy, and went so far as to attribute to the more philosophical of the Greek Fathers, and even to that mirror of orthodoxy, the Angelical Doctor, an *impersonal* view of the Trinity. Limits of space prevent me from dealing with the Fathers<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From what is said in Appendix I to this chapter, the discerning reader will perceive the probable reason of Dr. Rashdall's misunderstanding of the Greek Fathers. Their teaching is profound, many-sided, and far from easy to interpret.

and the Schoolmen, but it is necessary to offer a brief proof that the doctrine of a Personal Trinity is taught in Holy Scripture.

It cannot be reasonably denied (nor is it denied, to the best of my knowledge, by any critic who counts) that in the Pauline theology the pre-existent Son of God, who became man for human redemption, is (1) a personal being, and (2) the object of His Father's love. He is "the Son of His Love" (Col. i. 13), whom, though the Father loved Him so dearly, He nevertheless "spared not to send" and to deliver to death for the salvation of sinners (Rom. viii. 32). This Son is also the object of an *equal* love, for even before the universe existed (*πρὸ πάντων*) He was *equal with God* (*τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ*), was the 'image' (*εἰκὼν*) of the invisible God, and shared His 'essential form' (*μορφῇ*, not *σχῆμα*); being also His associate and agent in the work of Creation (see Phil. ii. 5 ff.; Col. i. 13 ff.; 1 Cor. viii. 6, etc.). The teaching of *Hebrews* is precisely similar.

To St. John also "the only begotten Son" (*or* God only-begotten), who is in the bosom of the Father (John i. 18), and whom the Father 'gave' to Incarnation and to Death (iii. 16-17), is clearly a person. It is quite clearly to *personal* pre-existence that our Lord refers in the words: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (xvii. 5).

In the Synoptics also the Son of God is plainly a personal being, as for instance in Mark xiii. 32, "But of that day and hour knoweth no one, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (knowledge and ignorance can only be predicated of *persons*); and not less so in the pre-synoptic source, *the Logia*, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any the Father save the Son" (Matt. xi. 27, Luke x. 22). The words of the Father used at the Baptism also imply the personality of the Son ("My *beloved*

Son"), and almost certainly *pre-existent* personality ("εὐδόκησα, I was well pleased," Mark i. 11). The title 'Son of Man' applied so continually by our Lord to Himself also implies personal and not merely ideal pre-existence, and that in a state of heavenly glory and majesty. This is now so generally admitted that there is no need to discuss it at length.

The doctrine of the *personal distinction* of the Son from the Father, even in His pre-existent condition, is thus the clear doctrine of Scripture, and it is not vitally necessary to decide the question whether certain Fathers and whether St. Thomas Aquinas accepted it. Holy Scripture is a much better authority. Nor need I prove at length (now that the *principle* of a distinction of persons in the Godhead is established) that the Holy Ghost is a person. A person obviously transcends in dignity any power or influence to an infinite extent, and therefore to suppose that in the two great Trinitarian formulas of the New Testament (Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14) a mere power is correlated with two Persons, is to suppose what is unreasonable and improbable. Besides, personal attributes are continually assigned to the Holy Spirit in Holy Scripture. For instance, in John xiv. 16, Jesus (who is certainly a person) is one advocate and the Holy Spirit is another (cf. also xiv. 26, xv. 26, xvi. 7; Rom. viii. 26; Eph. iv. 30; etc.).

#### GOD AS LOVE

The essential nature of God is love (1 John iv. 8, 16). That is His crowning perfection, and he who denies it is not a Christian or capable of appreciating Christian arguments. The main question, therefore, before us is this: Does the doctrine of a Personal or that of an Impersonal Trinity attribute to God a greater perfection of love?

The answer can hardly be doubtful. According to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, God is Perfect Love, because His love expresses itself in the love of three

infinite, coeternal, and coequal *Persons*. According to the Modernist doctrine, God's love (so far as it depends on Himself) is the love of *impersonal powers*, and since powers are infinitely inferior in dignity to persons, it follows that the kind of love possible to the God of Modernism is infinitely inferior to that possible to the God of Orthodoxy.

It is open to the Modernist to reply, that God has Himself to love, and He is a Person.<sup>1</sup> This raises the question whether *self-love*, which Modernism ascribes to God, is or is not higher than the *unselfish love* which Orthodoxy assigns to Him.

The question is not a *metaphysical* one, to be wrangled over by logicians, but a purely *moral* one, to be decided by the moral and spiritual consciousness of mankind. And there can be no doubt whatever that the *consensus sanctorum*, and the *consensus fidelium*, and also the unsophisticated moral consciousness of mankind, affirm the truth of the following moral propositions: (1) that the social life is *in itself* more excellent than the solitary life; (2) that unselfish love of others is more excellent than mere self-love; and (3) that love of others which reaches the height of *absolute self-sacrifice* is supremely excellent.

Upon purely metaphysical questions the *consensus sanctorum* is, of course, of little authority, but upon moral questions, such as these, its decisions are unchallengeable, for no higher authority exists upon earth.

Now, the doctrine that God is a Trinity of Persons enables us to attribute to God a kind of love which satisfies all these moral requirements. For (1) it teaches that God is a *perfect society of persons*, not a solitary unit; (2) that His love is not mere self-love, but a love of other persons; (3) that His love reaches the height of absolute self-sacrifice, for each Person of the Trinity gives Himself

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine that God is a *Person* is (as Prof. Webb reminds us) not orthodox, but Unitarian. The Catholic doctrine is that God is *personal*, in fact *tripersonal*.

wholly and unreservedly in love to each of the others, and loses Himself in order to find Himself again in the others in a perfection of self-surrender and self-immolation (if the word may be reverently used) which earthly self-sacrifice, even at its highest, cannot perfectly reproduce.

(4) Again, perfect love is only possible between equals, and in this respect also the love of the God of Trinitarianism is perfect, for it is between equal Persons. Finally, God's love is (5) *eternal*, for the three loving Persons are co-eternal; and it is also (6) *independent of creatures*. It existed in full perfection before creatures were called into being, and were all creatures annihilated would remain as perfect as before.

#### MODERNISM AND THE LOVE OF GOD

In almost every respect the love of God, as understood by Modernists, is inferior to the love of God as understood by the majority of Christians. Thus (1) it is comparatively selfish, for it is love of Himself regarded as one Person, not love of other persons. (2) If God is regarded as loving His own 'distinctions,' then these are mere powers, not persons, and are incapable of receiving or returning real personal love. (3) He is able to love creatures, but since even the highest of these are finite and immeasurably below Him in nature and dignity, His love of them is a love of inferiors, and as such very far from perfect. To suppose that God could become perfect love by loving creatures, is like supposing that a lonely philosopher, in search of a like-minded philosophic friend, could adequately satisfy his love by loving numerous small children, or by adding largely to the number of his domestic pets. In denying to God the love of *equal persons*, Modernists *necessarily* deny the perfection of His love, and make it inferior to our best thought of it, which is a contradiction of reason.

Modernism lays great stress upon God's love of creatures, but even in this respect the orthodox doctrine is superior.

For it affirms what Modernism denies, viz. His Incarnation, Passion, and Atoning Death, which are the greatest of all possible proofs of His love for His creatures.

Finally, Modernism denies both the eternity and the self-sufficient character of God's love. It makes His love *dependent upon creatures*, and therefore obviously not eternal. For even if *some* creatures have existed from eternity, this is obviously not true of all of them.

Modernism has much to say about 'the Image of God,' but Orthodoxy takes both a deeper and also a more practical view of the nature of this 'Image.' For whereas Modernism regards man as created in the Image of a solitary Individual or Person, Orthodoxy regards him as created in the Image of a Perfect Society of Persons, and discerns in the Godhead itself the perfect ideal of the Family and of the State.<sup>1</sup>

#### MODERNISM AND THE MORAL LAW

The older Liberals, Broad Churchmen, and Modernists were firmly persuaded that, whatever might happen in time to come to Christian theology, Christian morality at any rate was unassailable. They were as firmly persuaded as any traditionalist that the moral teaching of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels and as generally interpreted by the tradition of the Church (which in this matter they did not challenge), is absolute and final. Even such very unorthodox thinkers as Rousseau, Goethe, Schopenhauer, John Stuart Mill, and Matthew Arnold took up this position, nor did Prof. Gardner in his earliest important Modernist work (1899), so far as I have noticed, depart from it in any way.

But for some years past the Modernist 'drift to the left' has been almost as evident in matters of morals as in matters of theology. Thus Prof. Gardner in a later work (1918) draws attention to the fact that there is now

<sup>1</sup> The metaphysical difficulties of Trinitarianism are discussed in Appendix I to this chapter.

far less agreement about Christian ethics than about Christian doctrine; for whereas, with regard to the latter, there is "already a considerable consensus of opinion among the more liberal-minded," with regard to the former "there is little agreement even as to first principles."<sup>1</sup> At the Girton Conference also, although the subjects of discussion were not ethical, the Rev. J. C. Hardwick insisted strongly: "We have to realize . . . that there are divergencies of opinion about the content of the Christian ethic itself. We have not forgotten the dissensions which arose recently about the Christian attitude towards war. Property, punishment, marriage—these words, and others like them, contain fertile seeds of controversy."

The firm grasp of moral principles possessed by the older Liberals and Modernists was a legacy from orthodoxy, and quite out of harmony with their general position. The chief aim of Modernists, as such, is to undermine the authority of dogma, and it is impossible to do this in the sphere of theology without also doing it in the sphere of morality. The principle of dogma is one and indivisible, and every successful assault upon it in any one field shakes it in every other.

The Modernist theory of knowledge is obviously antagonistic to any stable system of morality. For it is clearly impossible to declare all human knowledge relative, symbolical, provisional, and mutable, without extending the principle to knowledge of the moral law. Hence complete uncertainty is introduced into ethics.

### THE FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Despairing of attaining objective moral truth either from Revelation or from Reason, Modernism is forced (as we have seen) to base its ethics upon *psychology*, i.e. at bottom upon *subjective feeling*; for just as psychological

<sup>1</sup> *Evolution in Christian Ethics*, pp. vi and 17.

theology deals, not with God, but with man's religious sentiments, so psychological ethics deals, not with the objective moral law, but merely with man's moral sentiments and feelings. It does not even *profess* to deal with anything more ; nor could it possibly do so, without ceasing to be psychology.

Granted, however, that Modernism is compelled to base its ethics upon psychology, it would still be possible to minimize the evil by selecting from the half-dozen or so of competing systems one in tolerable harmony with Christian principles, e.g. that of Wundt or of J. Ward. Unfortunately Modernists—not all, of course, but very many of them—show a decided proclivity for the most unbalanced, the most repulsive, and the most unchristian of them all, the Freudian, of which the only important recommendation seems to be that it is the latest.<sup>1</sup> All other psychological systems, however erroneous their final conclusions may be, do at least take as their starting-point the mentality of the normal adult. Prof. Sigmund Freud, with perverse unwisdom, bases his system mainly upon pathological cases of sexual abnormality and even perversion, from which he draws sweeping conclusions, which he applies without discrimination to the normal subject—a proceeding quite as unscientific as would be that of an anatomist who should attempt to construct a system of normal morphology from data obtained from the dissection of monsters.

According to Freud, sex-feeling plays the dominant rôle in human life. It is active (in extremely repulsive forms) even in the youngest infant, and practically all other springs of human activity are derived from it, and can be reduced to it.

Freudism is definitely hostile to the principle of bodily self-control, which, under the name of temperance, was recognized even by the heathen as a cardinal virtue. It

<sup>1</sup> I do not deny that *detailed* truths of importance can be learnt from Freudism ; it is only as a *system* that I am challenging it.

teaches that the forcible control of the sexual passion by the virtuous will leads to nervous disorders and dangerous 'mental tension,' and is therefore evil. Its more thorough-going adherents tend to regard even the most degrading and unnatural forms of sexual licence with toleration, if not with approval. Those misguided persons, so much in evidence at present on committees dealing with venereal disease, who regard chastity as hardly a virtue (or at least hardly a possible one), who instead of wishing to teach young men to be pure (which in their view is unreasonable) desire rather to teach them how to commit fornication with physical impunity, base their attitude psychologically and philosophically upon Freudism.

The Freudian principle that the control of impulse and passion is bad, once admitted, cannot be confined to the sphere of sex. The other great elemental passions, such as anger, revenge, hatred, jealousy, selfishness, ambition, pride, and acquisitiveness, also lead, when forcibly controlled, to painful 'mental tension,' and therefore ought also (if the Freudian principle is true) to be indulged, rather than checked. In fact the logical and also the practical result of Freudism, if given free play, is to invert the root-principle of morality as hitherto understood, and to make man, not the lord, but the slave of his passions. A morality which is based upon Freudian principles logically developed, must soon fall below the level, not merely of Christianity, but even of respectable heathenism. Space forbids a full exposition and criticism of the elaborate Freudian system, but the interested reader will find a useful (if brief) discussion of it in Prof. W. McDougall's *Introduction to Social Psychology*, ch. xv, pp. 385 ff., and a much fuller one from a definitely Christian standpoint in F. W. Foester's *Marriage and the Sex Question*. Foester, though a German Protestant, adheres strictly to the orthodox Christian tradition.

## MODERNISM AND SEXUAL MORALITY

Sexual morality is at present the storm-centre of opposed views in sharp conflict, and public opinion, and even the views of moral experts who are not also definite Christians, are in a chaotic condition. The Church, therefore, which alone can give help, for it alone has a definite, logically coherent, and authoritative body of doctrine on the subject, requires at this moment the effective help of all its members. By some Modernists this help is given. Orthodox Christians, who are fighting an uphill battle against the spirit of the age in defence of chastity and of the permanence of wedlock, acknowledge with gratitude the articles that used often to appear in *The Modern Churchman* (and still do so occasionally) in defence of both these principles. But the present situation is ominous. All earnest effort in these directions is now usually regarded by Modernists as obscurantist ecclesiasticism. "We must move with the times" is the watchword. Christian and Church unanimity could not be secured recently in opposing even so frankly Pagan a divorce bill as Lord Buckmaster's. The Modernists in Convocation moved for an inquiry, on the avowed ground that these matters were still open for discussion by Christians. Articles are now freely admitted into *The Modern Churchman* advocating the principles and practices of Neo-Malthusianism,<sup>1</sup> which in the past have been associated mainly with atheism,<sup>1</sup> which are condemned by Christian tradition and sentiment, also by the unsophisticated conscience of the plain man, and which not only the Roman Church, but also two Pan-Anglican Conferences have declared to be repugnant to Christian morality.

The moral consequences of Neo-Malthusian principles

<sup>1</sup> It was not taught by Malthus, who advocated (where restriction was necessary) the orthodox principle of virtuous self-control. It was first taught in England in a pamphlet entitled *The Fruits of Philosophy*, imported from America by Chas. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, then an associate of his.

are exceedingly far-reaching. Christian moralists in the past have laid great stress upon the need of control by the rational will of the sexual impulse, both within marriage and outside it. They have taken it for granted that Christians, assisted by grace, can exercise such control. [Neo-Malthusianism breaks down *within marriage* the principle of virtuous self-control, and by necessary inference breaks it down *outside* also, and erects sexual incontinence into a principle. Every experienced parish priest who gives due attention to the guidance of individual souls knows by this time that Neo-Malthusian teaching is producing an ever-increasing demoralization among young unmarried women of all classes, including the highest, and that the knowledge of how to sin without loss of character is being spread abroad with fatal effect. /

#### MODERNISM AND MORAL AUTHORITY

But we are concerned mainly with the attitude of Modernism towards *morality in general*, which in many respects is disquieting.

In 1918 there appeared a semi-official Modernist manifesto, entitled *Faith and Freedom*, edited by the Rev. C. H. S. Matthews, upon which *The Modern Churchman* bestowed unstinted praise. The editor assigned the responsible task of presenting to the public the Modernist view of "The Church and Morality" to Mr. A. Clutton-Brock, well known as a literary critic, as the author of several theological works, and as a collaborator with Canon Streeter in the volume *Immortality*.

Mr. Clutton-Brock lays down four fundamental positions:

(1) "That the Church should have no morality, and should not lay down any rules of conduct";

(2) "That the superiority of the Church [to the State], if it have a superiority, lies in this, that it has no laws and no morality";

(3) "That a Church should confess itself unfit to make any conditions whatever of membership";

(4) And that, consequently, it should retain in its fellowship, and admit to its sacraments, the very worst of sinners, however unrepentant and hardened in their sin.

The last position is so amazing, so contradictory to the old Broad Church insistence upon morality, and so shocking to the moral sense, I will not say of a Christian, but of a respectable Pagan, that (lest I should seem to do injustice to the writer) I will quote verbatim one of several passages in which he asserts it.

“Will no Church,” he says, “will not the Church of England ever dare to affirm that it is a Church, just because it has no status, no laws, no morality, no power of judgment, but only a common desire to know and love God? The Church which first makes that affirmation, will draw men to it, as no Church has ever done; it will live as no Church has ever lived. For it will welcome all sinners, as being itself sinful, *without asking questions of them*. It will know that to refuse its sacraments to any sinner, *however open in his sin*, is as if a doctor were to refuse help to a patient because he is very sick. ‘I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance’ were the words of Christ,<sup>1</sup> and should be the words of the Church. Besides, what is the Church, to say that one sin is worse than another? The State deals with the sin, but the function of the Church is to deal with the sinner, and it cannot condemn any one man as being worse than another.”<sup>2</sup>

If such had been the moral teaching and practice of the apostolic and primitive Church, the heathen world would have regarded the moral standard of Christianity as lower than its own. The Pagan standard was not high, but even the priests of the heathen mysteries did usually require

<sup>1</sup> The reader will notice Mr. Clutton-Brock’s amazing misinterpretation of the words of Christ. Christ required sinners to repent. The Modernist Church is not to require sinners to repent, but to admit them to the sacraments *without repentance*.

<sup>2</sup> Pp. 274 ff. (italics mine).

*some* degree of moral fitness in those whom they initiated. We read, for example, that the hierophant of Eleusis drew the line at Nero—an act of courage worthy of a Christian bishop. If Mr. Clutton-Brock had been true to his principles, he would have admitted even that monster, unrepentant and unreformed, to the Christian Eucharist.

Mr. Clutton-Brock, without intending it, has done at least one valuable service to orthodoxy. By carrying out the non-dogmatic principle to its logical conclusion, he has reduced it to absurdity. Those Modernists who, accepting his principle, fail to follow him to his practical conclusions, are convicted thereby of deficiency, either of logic, or of the courage of their convictions.

#### THE NEED OF AUTHORITY

Nearly all men who are not Modernists realize the absolute need (if civilization is not to dissolve into chaos) of maintaining the principle of religious and moral authority, which is the main objective of Modernist attack.

There is a general consensus of opinion among modern psychologists (confirmed by the independent opinion of most parish priests) that the savage and destructive propensities of human nature are as strong (or almost as strong) in the most advanced communities as in the most backward. The main difference seems to be, that in the former case they are more effectively held in check by numerous powerful sanctions, religious, social, and political, devised in the best interests of society by prophets, priests, philosophers, and far-sighted rulers and statesmen.

With what volcanic violence the elemental passions of hatred, self-assertion, and acquisitiveness can burst out even in Europe after nearly two thousand years of the preaching of peace and goodwill, the late war is irrefragable evidence. The complete subversion of civilization in Russia in a welter of anarchy and bloodshed is an object-lesson sufficiently striking to open the eyes of all but the

wilfully blind to the results that must necessarily follow in England also, if once the principle of moral authority is seriously undermined.

The obvious conclusion to draw from these facts is, that *the degree of authority possessed by a moral system, and the compelling power of its sanctions, are at least as important as its theoretical perfection.* Theoretical perfection is indeed an important desideratum, but inasmuch as most moral systems (except those based upon the psychology of Freud) are considerably in advance of average practice, a prudent statesman will be likely to adopt, as the basis of his legislation and practical government, the one supported by the greatest weight of authority and by the most powerful sanctions, in preference to one which, though perhaps more perfect in the abstract, is defective in these respects.

Now, in respect of the weight of its authority and the overwhelming power of its sanctions, the moral system of Orthodoxy has and can have no rival whatever. Its author is God Incarnate, who, though limited in knowledge in the human sphere by His own voluntary act, was nevertheless *infallible*, as indeed He claimed to be (see Mark xiii. 31, and cf. the Sermon on the Mount *passim*), and as reason informs us He must have been, for to suppose error in God—even in God incarnate—is as clear a contradiction as to suppose sin. It follows that all the *explicit* teaching of Christ (not necessarily all inferences drawn from His *obiter dicta*, which may contain expressions coloured by the ideas of His age and locality) are *absolutely infallible and irreformable*. To suppose otherwise is to deny the Incarnation.

It follows with equal necessity (because otherwise His infallible words would have benefited only those who first heard them) that He also made provision for the *faithful recording* (in substance, not necessarily verbatim), and for *the correct interpretation* of His revelation in all matters of vital importance. To achieve the former of these ends, He

caused the Gospels and other books of the New Testament to be written, and to achieve the latter He founded a permanent organization, the Holy Catholic Church (Matt. xvi. 16-19), which He charged with the duty of preaching His revelation to all nations, and of authoritatively interpreting it (when doubt as to its meaning arose) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which was promised for this purpose to the Apostles and their successors, not individually, but collectively, as the official heads and organs of the Spirit-bearing body (John xvi. 13), which is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15). The principle of the collective and authoritative decision of disputed points is already clearly recognized in the Acts, where the authority of the Holy Ghost is claimed for the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem, which represented the collective mind of the Church of that age ("it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," xv. 28); and the later Ecumenical Councils were only carrying out the same principle when they passed canons and drew up authoritative Creeds dealing with disputed points, which are still accepted by all orthodox Christians, as embodying the mind and the authority of the collective Church or Body of Christ in which the Spirit of Truth resides.

The sanctions of the orthodox morality are of the same undeniable strength as its authority. For, upon the orthodox view, the same Divine Being who, as incarnate, once promulgated the Christian moral law upon earth, now, as the Ruler of the Universe, holds in His hands the keys of heaven and hell, and judging with the infallibility of omniscience not only men's outward acts, but even their most secret thoughts, will one day reward the righteous and punish the wicked with all the adequacy of omnipotence.

Orthodox Christianity appeals to the full strength of the three most powerful of all human motives: (1) love—love of Him who left His heavenly throne to die for sinners; (2) hope of infinite and unimaginable rewards for faithful

service rendered ; (3) fear of punishment—punishment at once inevitable and awful, for “ our God is a consuming Fire.”

## CONCLUSION

The severe (but I believe just and discriminating) judgment which I have felt bound to pass upon Modernism regarded as an intellectual and theological system, is not in any way due to prejudice. The system attracted me at one time, and as a younger man I passed (like so many others in this unsettled age) through a Modernist phase. It is only after long reflection, extended over many years, that I have thought myself into the full orthodox position which I now hold ; and my sincere sympathy goes out to those who are struggling with religious difficulties, which to me also were once both real and painful.

A clear proof that my criticisms are not due merely to prejudice, but have solid grounds, is that two most distinguished scholars, Dr. Foakes-Jackson and Dr. Lake, who until recently were prominent in the Modernist movement, have now abandoned it, and have passed upon it strictures similar to my own, but much more severe. They consider : (1) that Modernism is not Christianity at all in the historic sense of the term ; (2) that it is intellectually incoherent ; and (3) that Orthodoxy, though not true, is a far more rational and tenable religious system than Modernism.

Thus Dr. Foakes-Jackson says : “ [The philosophy of Modernism as expounded by Dean Rashdall] is more disappointing than the old system which it endeavours to displace. *The work of the ancient councils is at least logical, and has a definite basis*—the Scriptures of the Church, acknowledged to be a divine revelation.” “ [As to] Jesus, not the rational appreciation of Him as a teacher and moralist, but the wonder which His miracles and, above all, His resurrection inspired, made Him the Lord of millions, who hoped for salvation through His sacrifice

and triumph over the grave." "Christianity, to most who accepted it, was a supernatural faith. Its founder had commended Himself by the wonders that He had wrought, and had been declared to be the Son of God with power by His rising from the dead. His Name became a saving power. To believe in Him was to escape death. His sacraments bestowed on His followers a new life. . . . From the first He was the Saviour of those who believed in Him, and has continued so to them, whether Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant. That is Christianity. . . . Granted the principles of Catholic dogma, it is difficult to deny its conclusions."

On Modernism his judgment is identical with my own, and even more strongly expressed. "Its position," he says, "at present has all the disadvantages of a middle party in a cause where compromise seems well-nigh impossible." "It will have to choose one side or the other, for the fence on which it is now sitting is giving way." "The difficulty in which the Liberal [Modernist] school finds itself is that of constructing a new system which will appear like the old, whilst fundamentally different." "The result . . . judged by Dr. Rashdall's paper, is to retain the Divinity of Christ, and to divest it of any meaning, and to give a decidedly Unitarian explanation of the Incarnation. Professor Bethune-Baker is terser and franker when he says, 'When I say that the man Jesus is God, I mean that He is for me the index of my conception of God.'" Once more referring to Dean Rashdall's paper, he says: "This may be good philosophy, but can it be called historical Christianity? Jesus is portrayed as an unique teacher and revealer of God and the supreme moralist, but did the Church so present Him? The unbroken tradition is that He was God in man, saving those who accepted His proffered salvation. . . . *Tu in liberandum suscepturus hominem non horruisti Virginis uterum.*"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal* for January 1922.

The 'unkindest cut of all' comes from Dr. Lake, who declares that Modernist Christology is neither modern nor capable of coming to terms with modern thought—a criticism with which I entirely agree. "Adoptionism [i.e. Apotheosis]," he says, "seems to me to have no part or lot in any intelligent modern theology, though it is unfortunately often promulgated, especially in pulpits which are regarded as liberal. We cannot believe that at any time a human being, in consequence of his virtue, became God, which he was not before, or that any human being will ever do so. No doctrine of Christology, and no doctrine of salvation which is Adoptionist in essence, can come to terms with modern thought."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Landmarks of Early Christianity*, p. 131.

## APPENDIX I

### THE CHARGE OF TRITHEISM

DR. RASHDALL is a philosopher and eminent thinker, and therefore it is only respectful to him to treat seriously the charges which he brings against the doctrine of a Personal Trinity as involving (1) a contradiction, and (2) tritheism or polytheism.

It has already been proved that this doctrine is (1) Scriptural, and therefore orthodox, and (2) that it assigns to God a far higher degree of moral perfection than the rival doctrine of an Impersonal Trinity.

It follows, from the principles laid down as the basis of the argument, that it ought to be accepted, unless it can be shown by *conclusive* arguments to involve a contradiction.

#### A WHOLE AND ITS PART

It is surprising that Dr. Rashdall does not perceive (or at least does not acknowledge) that even his own doctrine of an *Impersonal* Trinity involves at least an *apparent* contradiction—one, moreover, that requires no little metaphysical subtlety to resolve.

According to the usual philosophic doctrine of the soul (accepted by Dr. Rashdall as well as by orthodox Christians), every rational soul or spirit, and therefore every human soul or spirit, regarded as a substance, is *an absolute unit*, neither consisting of nor divisible into parts. This applies also to the Divine Substance, which, being rational and spiritual, is absolutely one and indivisible.

But the human soul, though obviously a unit, has notwithstanding diverse faculties and activities (e.g. knowledge, desire, and will). These are quite distinct from one another and also from the substance of the soul. It thus appears *prima facie* that the soul both is and is not a unit, for apparently it consists of distinct parts, and is therefore composite as well as simple. Indeed, so seriously is this difficulty felt, that many modern psychologists (especially those who have

not had a sufficient metaphysical training) do actually deny the unity of the soul, and teach that, just as a physical substance is made up of material atoms, so a psychical substance (or soul) is made up of psychical atoms.

A solution of this difficulty will prepare the way for a solution of the other difficulties raised by Dr. Rashdall.

## I

Introspection assures us that knowledge, will, desire, and other faculties of the soul are not mutually exclusive, after the manner of 'parts,' but mutually inclusive. They not only 'imply,' but even in a sense 'contain' one another. Thus, it is impossible to *know* a thing, without experiencing a certain *attraction towards* or *desire of* it. It follows that knowledge and desire are inseparable. Whether in the lower instinctive form of curiosity or in the higher intellectual form of love of wisdom, desire is inseparable from knowledge.

Knowledge is also inseparable from will. It is impossible to *know* a thing without exercising a certain degree of *attention* and *discrimination*, both of which involve the exercise of *will*. Thus knowledge involves will as well as desire.

Similarly, *will* necessarily involves *desire*. Will to a large extent is a *choice* between competing desires, and in a soul which possessed no desires (were such a soul possible) there would be no exercise of will.

It follows that these and similar functions and activities of the soul are rather 'distinctions' than 'parts,' for they not only mutually imply, but they actually 'coinhere' in and 'contain' one another.

## II

Similarly, the one substance of the soul (to whose unity consciousness and memory bear witness) is not divided when it exercises itself in the distinct faculties of wisdom, desire, and will. It manifests itself *whole and entire without division* in each of them, and the coinherence of these faculties in one another is a result of the fact that they are all activities of a single indivisible substance which operates 'totally' in all. Thus the faculties and activities of the soul are 'distinctions' within its substance, not 'parts' of it.

## THEORY OF THE GREEK FATHERS

It is along the lines suggested by this human analogy that the more philosophical of the Greek fathers attempt to solve

Dr. Rashdall's difficulty, which was felt from the first, for it is certainly an *apparent* contradiction to maintain that three distinct Persons are only one God.

They start from the position that the faculties and activities of the human soul are 'distinctions within,' not 'parts of' the indivisible soul-substance. This they regard as highly 'differentiated'—far more 'differentiated,' indeed, than matter, but not, like it, consisting of parts.

Then they argue that though all the 'distinctions' within the human soul are mere 'powers,' and none of them rises to the dignity of 'personality,' this is not due to the thing being impossible, but to the imperfection of the human soul. The Divine Substance, being far more perfect than the human, has 'distinctions' of a far more perfect character, and therefore there is nothing contradictory or repugnant to reason in supposing that the three chief 'distinctions' within the Divine Substance realize 'personal' dignity, as we know from Revelation that they actually do. These 'distinctions' the Greeks call *πρόσωπα* or *ὑποστάσεις*, which terms are used quite interchangeably.<sup>1</sup>

They repel the charge of tritheism by pointing out that, whereas in the case of mankind three persons imply three separate substances, and therefore three mutually exclusive personalities, in the case of God there is only one substance, which manifests itself whole and entire without division in three Persons, which for this reason, though distinct, are not *separate* Persons, for they mutually pervade, interpenetrate, and contain one another, and, as being activities of a single substance, are one God.

The Modernist allegation that the Catholic doctrine of a Personal Trinity makes God three Persons in anything like the sense in which the three persons of a committee are three persons, is so far from the truth, that the most charitable assumption to make is that the authors of it are ignorant of what the doctrine really is.

As for Dr. Rashdall's assertion that the orthodox doctrine divides God into three minds, the reply is that even if there

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rashdall is entirely wrong in stating that *ὑπόστασις* does not mean 'person.' It is true that in earlier use it is equivalent to *οὐσία*, but later it is freely used for 'person,' interchangeably with *πρόσωπον*, even in the formal proceedings of Councils. For instance, the Eumenical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) speaks of the two natures of Christ as "coalescing into one person and one hypostasis" (*εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης*). Similarly, *ὑποστατικός* means 'personal.' The 'hypostatic union' is the union of the two natures of Christ in *one Person*.

are 'three minds' in God (the Church says there are three 'persons,' not three minds), yet these minds are not 'separate' minds, in the sense in which human minds are separate. Three human minds are *separate*, as being activities of *separate* substances, and they are for the same reason *mutually exclusive*. The three Divine Persons are not parts of, but are 'distinctions within,' one indivisible substance, which is wholly in all; they are therefore (1) inseparable, (2) coinherent, (3) mutually containing, and (4) substantially one in the one Indivisible Substance of the One God.

To speak of the orthodox doctrine as a doctrine of 'Three Minds' or 'Three Gods' gives an entirely false impression of what it really means.

## APPENDIX II

### MR. MAJOR'S THREE CHRISTOLOGIES

It is somewhat difficult to treat seriously Mr. Major's wild statement that "to every modern student of the New Testament whose eyes are not holden by dogmatic tradition it is clear that there are at least three Christologies . . . in the New Testament,"<sup>1</sup> but in order to show due respect to one who is widely regarded as the official exponent of Modernism, I will attempt a brief reply.

#### THE LOGOS-CHRISTOLOGY

The three essential points of the Logos-Christology are these: (1) that the Logos (or Word, or Wisdom, or Son) of God is personally distinct from the Father; (2) that the world was created in and through the Logos; (3) that the Logos pervades, upholds, animates, and rules the entire universe, spiritual and material; (4) that the Logos became incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth.

I shall first show that the Pauline Christology, although it does not use the *word* Logos, teaches all these doctrines, and is therefore *identical in principle* with the Logos-Christology of St. John. A single passage from St. Paul will suffice to prove to demonstration all these points. In Col. i. 13 ff. we read that "the Son of God's love" (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ), who, as being the beloved Son, is obviously a *person*, exists as a person (αὐτὸς), before all creation (πρὸ πάντων); that the universe was created *through* Him as God's agent, also *in* Him as its ground (τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐκτισται); that He was the agent in creating not only physical nature and human nature (τὰ ὄρατα), but also the angels and heavenly powers (τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες, etc.), to whom, as being the Image (εἰκὼν) of the invisible God, He is infinitely superior. This "Son of God's love" became incarnate, but in Him even as incarnate dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead (πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα). He died upon the cross, and

<sup>1</sup> *The Modern Churchman* for September 1921, p. 198.

rose again "the first-born from the dead." The effect of His death is *cosmical*. It has not only made atonement for human sin (v. 14), but also for the sin of the entire universe ("through Him to reconcile all things, τὰ πάντα, to Himself, . . . whether the things on earth or the things in the [plural] heavens").

We have quite obviously in this single passage the whole Johannine doctrine of the Logos, though without the actual term. It is superfluous to add further Pauline passages, or to prove at length that Hebrews and 1 Peter are based on the same general Christological theory.

We have proved to demonstration, therefore, our first point, that, in all but actual expression, the Pauline and the Johannine Christologies are not two, but *one*.

#### THE SYNOPTIC CHRISTOLOGY

The Synoptic Christology, equally with the Pauline and Johannine, regards the Son of God (or Son of Man) as a pre-existent, divine, and personal being. The voice at the Baptism of Jesus, as reported by our earliest witness, Mark, in itself suggests this. The Father says, "Thou *art* (Σὺ εἶ) My beloved Son," *not* "I now elevate Thee to the rank of My beloved Son." Adoptionism is thus definitely excluded, as it equally is by the following words, "in Thee I *was* well pleased (εὐδόκησα)," which naturally imply pre-existence.

That actual personal pre-existence *is* implied is rendered certain by the Markan miracle which almost immediately follows. It was wrought by Jesus to prove (1) that He is the divine Son of Man, and (2) that He is able to exercise, even when humbled on earth, the divine prerogative of pardoning sin, which He had previously exercised in heaven (Mark ii. 1 ff.). That in contemporary use the title Son of Man *in itself* implied heavenly, divine pre-existence as well as a future coming to judgment is not denied even by Mr. Major, who says: "The new [modern] view is that the title is used . . . to describe a pre-existent Heavenly Messiah living with the Ancient of Days in heaven and ready to descend . . . to inaugurate God's kingdom on earth."

As pre-existent, and as sharing the Father's throne and attributes, the Son of Man is obviously God's vicegerent and agent in creating and ruling the universe, i.e. the Logos.

Mr. Major would probably object that this inference, however obvious and necessary, was not actually drawn by the Synoptists. The evidence, however, that they *did* draw it is convincing. All of them record a remarkable nature-

miracle, the Stilling of the Storm, which caused the awe-struck exclamation: "What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Matt. viii. 23; Mark iv. 35; Luke viii. 22). St. Mark records the exact words used by Jesus, "Peace, *be muzzled.*" These imply that Jesus regarded Himself as able to exercise (even as incarnate) the same absolute authority over physical nature which a man exercises over his dog or his ox when he muzzles it. The meaning of the miracle is *undeniable*, and is reinforced by such other physical miracles as the walking on the waves and the multiplication of the loaves.

To object that the miracle of Stilling the Storm is mythical, is pointless. Even if it is a myth, it is at least obvious that those who invented it believed that Jesus was the Logos, or the power sustaining and ruling nature.

Nor can it be fairly contended that this doctrine, though found in the later Synoptics, is not found in the earlier 'Logia,' for the very first incident recorded in the 'Logia' is our Lord's Temptation, and two of His temptations were suggestions that He should turn stones into bread and float down unharmed from the pinnacle of the Temple. It is open to Mr. Major to contend that this narrative is a fiction, but it is a matter beyond all question that the Apostle Matthew (or whoever else compiled the 'Logia') believed that Jesus was able to work these physical miracles, and therefore believed that He was the Logos.

The Logos-doctrine is, naturally, not so fully expressed in the Synoptics as in St. Paul and St. John, *but it is there*. Those apostles only filled in the details of an outline already clearly and firmly drawn by the Synoptists, and by the still earlier primitive source, the 'Logia.'

Thus there are not really three distinct and incompatible Christologies in the New Testament, as alleged by Mr. Major, but only one, viz. the doctrine that the pre-existent Logos, or Son of God, or Son of Man, the Father's vicegerent and agent, and as such the creator and sustainer of the universe, became man as Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The peculiar reading of D and a few other ancient authorities in Luke iii. 22, "Thou art My Son; to-day (*σήμερον*) have I begotten Thee," ought not to be brought into the discussion, for it is rejected by all critical editors. The reading is clearly an assimilation to the exact text of the LXX of Ps. ii. 7. Nor is it necessarily heretical. The use of *σήμερον* in the sense of 'eternally' or 'in eternity' is well established (it is found in Philo). Consequently an orthodox reader would understand it: "Thou art My Son, I have *eternally* begotten Thee," cf. Heb. i. 5.

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It was my original intention to include in this book a full sketch of the history of Modernism, but as I proceeded I found that it was impossible within the compass of a single volume to do justice both to Modernist history and to Modernist principles. I decided, therefore, to ignore the history in order to deal fully with the principles.

The reader desiring to study the history of Modernism will do well to begin with the indispensable *Histoire du modernisme catholique* (pp. vii, 458, Paris, 1912) of M. Houtin, which gives ample references to the original authorities, many of which are inaccessible in this country, and also refers to numerous documents not included in the list that follows. From this list are excluded all Liberal Protestant works, except in a few cases (like those of Dr. Lake and Dr. Foakes-Jackson) in which the authors have lately passed from Modernism to Liberal Protestantism. Orthodox works have also for the most part been excluded, unless they are definite replies to Modernist books.

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