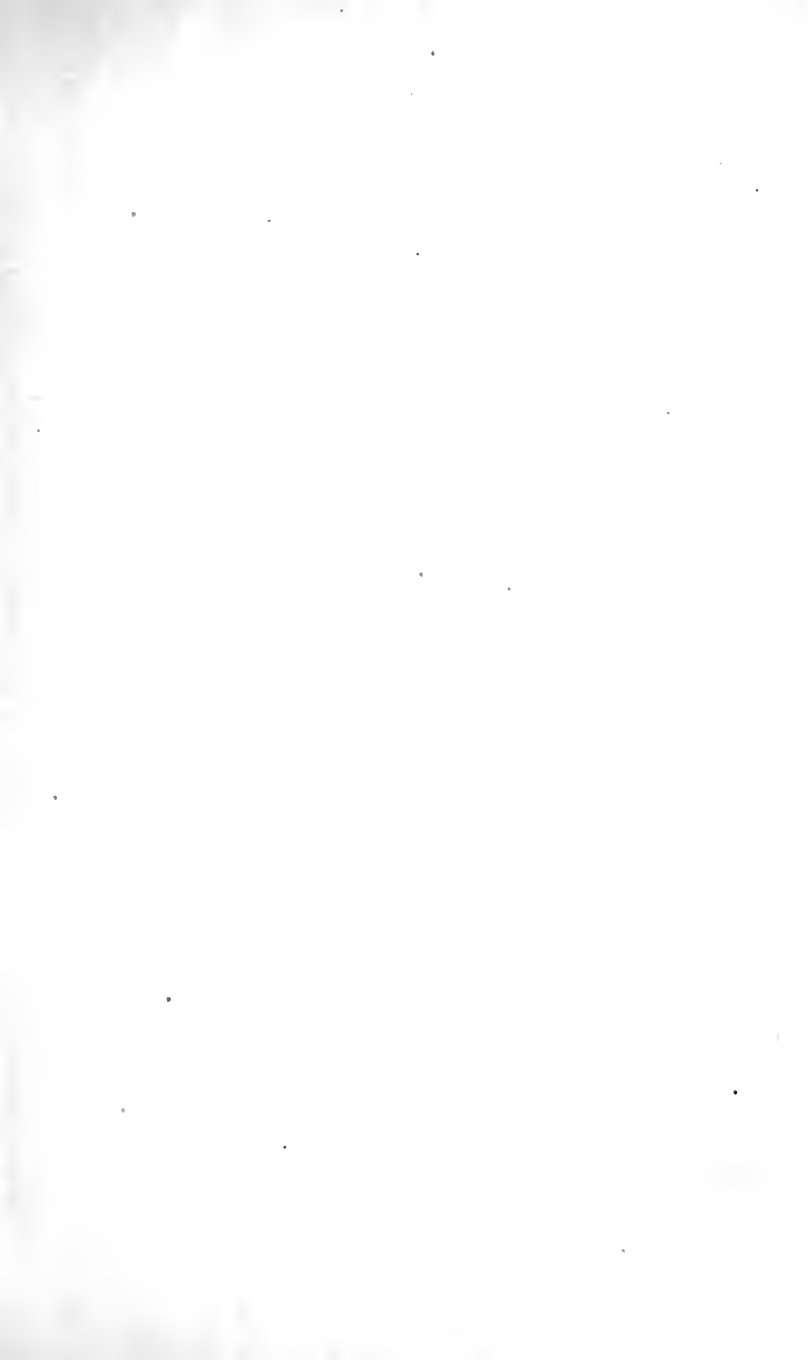


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F. J. A. Hart

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TRACTS
FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

BY VARIOUS WRITERS.

SECOND SERIES.

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No. VIII.

EVIDENCES FOR THOSE WHO THINK AND FEEL MORE
THAN THEY CAN READ.

BY THE

REV. C. P. CHRETIEN, M.A.

RECTOR OF CHOLDERTON, FELLOW AND LATE TUTOR OF ORIEL COLLEGE,
OXFORD.

THERE is a great deal of vanity about book-reading and book-making, from which the readers and writers of tracts are not at all exempt. If we take up an odd volume by chance, or go of set purpose to consult a library, we often find many things we did not look for, but seldom the very thing which we want. So with books of Evidences. We read them, but they seldom satisfy us. We lay them down with an uncomfortable feeling, doubting whether we have read too little on the subject, or too much.

Paley's Evidences are still the best known, and the best written work of their kind. Their author died Archdeacon of Carlisle; had he gone to the bar, and possessed sufficient industry and working power, he would probably have died Lord Chancellor. His father was not wrong in thinking that his son had one of the clearest of heads. He discussed the Evidences of

Christianity with all the calmness and shrewdness of a lawyer.

But perhaps the legal mind is not quite the best to be employed on this subject. It is a little too cool, self-possessed, and, in a sense, disinterested. A lawyer cannot be expected to make a single cause the work of his life. His interest in his client may well begin when he takes up his brief, and terminate when he receives his fee. He does not feel himself called on to make out a complete case. He knows that he might often lose a cause by developing the evidence on his own side too much. He does not wish all his witnesses to be cross-examined; and he is not anxious to cross-examine a witness on the other side, if he sees that by so doing he will injure the cause of his client. Few frames of mind are less suitable than this to apprehending the truth of the Gospel. Saints and martyrs gave it their adhesion in a very different fashion. They did not embrace the cause of Christ for a time, content to lay it down again when they had made out for it a stronger case than that of the adversary. It was with them a cause of life and death for themselves and others—of eternal life and eternal death; and they staked body and soul on the issue.

Again, a court of law has less to do with good than with evil. Its forms are adapted to detect and punish crime, to meet craft with craft, and be too subtle for subtilty itself. We do not complain of it, because it is fit for its work; yet this fitness renders it unfit for other purposes. We shrink from arraiging holiness and

justice at its bar. You cannot impugn the truthfulness of a good man, or ask him authoritatively if he is guilty or not guilty, without treating him as a criminal or an impostor. If at last you declare that he leaves the court without a stain on his character, you confess in so doing that it was an act of wrong, though perhaps of unintentional wrong, to arraign him in court at all. 'Not Guilty' is, after all, a very low degree of praise. But it is all which can be expected from those whose office it is to discover and punish guilt. It is a detective's province to find out a villain: we should never think of employing him as likely to recognise instinctively the highest forms of virtue.

It should also be remembered that in Paley's time the difficulties of evidence and counter-evidence were not so keenly felt as at present. Newspapers were not as generally read; and they did not contain the same frequent accounts of interesting trials, with probability against probability, witness against witness, and last, though not least, counsel against counsel. Criminal trials (and it is these which attract the most attention) have quite altered their complexion since Paley used to come up from Greenwich by coach or row boat, to attend the courts of justice in London. The defendant is now in all cases allowed counsel; and it is part of the counsel's duty to his client to place the uncertainties of evidence in the strongest possible light. He paints in vivid colours, and with all the advantages of particularity, the dreadful consequences if a mistake is made, and the great probability of making one. The consequence

frequently is, that the juryman's verdict goes one way, and his heart another. He believes that the prisoner at the bar is guilty, but he shrinks from the responsibility of saying so. It must be a terrible ordeal for a sensitive and conscientious man to sit on the jury in a difficult case, to listen to conflicting statements and appeals which mingle logic and rhetoric, passion and argument, and then to decide between life and death.

For these, among other reasons, it may be less our fault than our misfortune that we fail to derive entire satisfaction from the fact that 'there is satisfactory evidence' on the one side, and that 'there is not satisfactory evidence' on the other. Surely the human heart by which we live, can find a shorter and safer way to the most Divine of truths. For Paley's method, a deep sympathy with the cloud of witnesses is of no use. We must get some of these witnesses out of the cloud, interrogate them, and make them answer distinctly. We must make sure not only of their acts, but of their motives. We must declare that the striking features of their lives proceeded *solely* from these motives. Convinced of this, we must then proceed to examine the witnesses on the other side in like manner. True, there are nearly two thousand years between us and them. Their language, their way of life, their tone of thought, are comparatively unknown to us. And that of which they testify is no ordinary matter of fact. We want their word as original witnesses of the Christian miracles—of events beyond and above nature, if not against it, wrought by God, not in His ordinary government of

the world, but as if He were putting forth His hand from within the cloud, and writing a few quickly-vanishing characters on the world which He has made. Strange mystery, overhanging at once proof and things to be proved! Dim sound of jubilant and rejoicing voices, testifying, from the cloud and the fire, of strange unutterable things! They lit the torch, and passed it on, and died. Can a common man call them back, and cross-examine them? Nay, who—common or uncommon man—is sufficient for these things?

Let us look for some more practicable way of approaching Christ than this. It may be well to watch a soul as it makes its way out of the darkness to the region of Divine light, and rests there. I am sure that what follows will answer to the experience of some honest hearts. Men who cannot read the Fathers, explore ancient history, study the laws of evidence, or criticise disputed passages, have gained in some such way a firm and abiding conviction of the precious truths of the Gospel. Nay, learned men have found that it was not on their learning that they could rely to establish them in the faith to which not many wise, or mighty, or noble, are called. A sceptical orthodoxy may have whispered into their ears—‘it is about equally probable that everything is a lie; therefore, you may as well take what is offered you as truth; it is as like it as anything else, and a fair case can be made out for it.’ But they have ventured to trust God, in distrusting the vain inventions of man; and, for that very reason, they believe.

The man whom I wish to regard as seeking the truth, may have little learning, and little time to increase it; may feel that his imperfect powers have not been much improved by an imperfect education; or may have one of those painfully subtle minds which find out instinctively the weak point of every case, and therefore do not venture to trust their own intellectual conclusions. Socially, he may occupy almost any position you please. He may be a thoughtful mechanic, or a student who has broken down under hard work, or a man of fortune who has not yet found his real place, and is discontented as he sits, 'stretched on the rack of a too easy chair,' and pressed down by an intolerable load of idleness. But two requisites I must claim that he possess—honesty, and a heart. Common sense requires them in so important a matter; and no Christian will deny that they are needed, who remembers that the word ripens its fruit only when it is sown in an honest and good heart.

Religion is an affair of the heart more than of the head; and it is in the heart that its first strivings will be felt. And these first strivings are often bitter and painful. A man awakes, perhaps, from a state of indifference, to a keen sense of injustice; that is, of a broken law. He sees about him, and feels within him, wrong, sin, and misery; and he knows that these things ought not to be. The world is out of joint, and he cannot set it right. He is thoroughly dissatisfied with something—with himself, or with the world, or with both.

The movement has begun; and it is so far in the right

direction. Distress is infinitely better than stagnation and indifference. There is no real religion in a man who does not make war on vice, does not try to alleviate distress, but sits down contentedly with things as they are, and assumes that nothing can be seriously wrong, because nothing makes him seriously uncomfortable. He may settle down on his lees, and justify himself to himself for so doing. He may write a very logical book in favour of Theism or Christianity, and believe it too; but for all that he has no religion; nay, he has not the first germs and rudiments of religion. Unless a change comes over him, the publican whose conscience is galled, but not quite scared, and the harlot who knows that her life is wicked, shall enter into heaven before him.

But a feeling heart will not suffice a searcher after truth; he must also have an honest mind. He must have that straightforwardness of will and purpose which will enable him to look things in the face, and not to turn aside from them only because they are painful. He must allow that lust, oppression, cruelty, sloth, and all forms of moral and physical degradation, are real evils, and as such, to be fought against. He must not take refuge in a self-complacent optimism, and persuade himself that all things will be for the best, if he only looks on and enjoys himself. He must have no pleasant theory, like that of Job's friends, for setting all things right in a moment, and putting down with a formula the voice within the bosom of suffering man, which is crying out aloud against injustice. He must

manfully recognise the fact of sin, and of wretchedness, which is often its symptom, cause, and consequence. And he must not stand aloof from them, looking at them, as a landscape-painter looks at a view, from that point and that distance, at which squalor and decay are turned into picturesqueness; but he must go down and battle with the evil which he sees, feeling that it is more his duty to use his sword than to keep his shield undinted.

And then his heart will be where his treasure is; and the faith which was in his works, as their source and spirit, will show itself as a glory around them. A strong hope, or rather a firm assurance, will arise in his bosom, that the dark negations against which he struggles have not all the universe to themselves. Justice will rise up within him, strong against injustice; purity shall stand forth in him and before him, only the fairer for the foul forms beneath her feet. Mercy shall be seen stronger than cruelty; and right shall begin its triumph over wrong. He will stand, if not on the height, at least on the rising platform of faith, and look beyond the first scope of visible things. That for which he hopes will be a substance to him. He will no more doubt the reality and the ultimate triumph of goodness and truth, than he doubts his own existence.

Here is a beginning of faith—of the hold of the soul on Truth. It will be seen that I do not hope much good from any *laissez faire* proceeding in this matter—from taking things on trust, or resting on authority—any more than from legal arguments and formal questions of evidence.

Belief is the sound condition of the soul, and if impaired it can be restored only by a process which operates on the soul. Physicians of the body tell us that all they can do is to assist Nature, or rather to leave her free to help herself. They remove obstructions, and trust to the action of her restorative power. They do not regard pain as necessarily a bad symptom. Its cessation often shows that nature has ceased to struggle, and that death is at hand. In the same way, the soul that feels, though it feels painfully, is not dead. A spirit moves and stirs within it—it may be, the Spirit of God.

Would that men, who are morbid and unhappy from external or internal causes, and especially those men whose unhappiness assumes the form of doubt or unbelief, would only grasp firmly the root of truth which intertwines itself with their very misery. ‘So I considered,’ said one of old, ‘all the oppressions that are done under the sun : and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter ; and on the side of their oppressors there was power ; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.’ (Eccles. iv. 1, 2.) A sad and melancholy view, indeed ; but God has set a nobler work than this despondency for our sorrow. ‘Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke ? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover

‘ him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own
 ‘ flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
 ‘ and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy
 ‘ righteousness shall go before thee ; the glory of the Lord
 ‘ shall be thy rereward.’ (Is. lviii. 6—8.) Oh! distressed
 and suffering soul, toil onward along the dark valley,
 seeing just a gleam of sun upon the bill-top ; and though
 you cannot see well where to set your feet in safety, know
 that your sense of the contrast between light and dark-
 ness shows that you are not blind. Despair of nothing ;
 entertain no unworthy thoughts of yourself and of God.
 If you sit still where you are, in the valley of death and
 darkness, your eyes may become used to the gloom, and
 you may come to long for no clear light. But onward,
 forward, upward! Do not dream like Hamlet, or poetise
 like Goethe, but live the life of a man, and yet a life
 above man. ‘The path of the just is a shining light,
 which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.’

But some one may say, ‘just now you were discussing
 ‘ the history of a mind, and now you are quoting the
 ‘ Bible. You leave out several steps here. I follow
 ‘ you as you pass from injustice to justice, from wrong
 ‘ to right, from cruelty to mercy ; but how do you pass
 ‘ from justice, and right, and mercy, to God, and particu-
 ‘ larly to the God of the Bible? Supply the missing
 ‘ links of your argument, show us how justice and
 ‘ mercy imply the existence of God, and that will be
 ‘ something to the purpose.’

A request like this I can only meet imperfectly. The
 missing links of the argument I cannot undertake to

supply, for it seems to me that there is very little argument about the matter. The course by which the honest and faithful mind makes its way from a sense of wrong to a firm confidence in right and justice is not argumentative. The existence of wrong is surely in itself no proof of the existence of right. Yet it proves it sufficiently to minds of a certain disposition and bias. Through wrong they see right, and then right becomes its own evidence. If wrong were removed altogether, right would still remain, and would be more wholly and perfectly right for this very removal of wrong. Faith must always act on a venture. It cannot imitate the mathematician, and prove every step as it proceeds. It may always be accused of being illogical, and of assuming more than is contained in its premises. But the same accusation may be made against every poet whose mind imagines more than his eye can see; against every inventor who has perceived that a machine was possible before he knew how to make it; against every man who has trusted his sword, and his good cause, and a few firm friends, against an army.

I can therefore only express a firm belief that, in actual experience, the case is very much as I have above described it. Apparent, and perhaps real exceptions there are, but they are so anomalous that they prove the rule. From believing in justice, the mind passes on naturally to belief in God. The hazy schemes which place impersonal power or wisdom on the throne of the universe are generally coupled with an equally hazy morality. The man who worships nothing, but has

a general respect for all kinds of forces, and respects them most particularly when they combine to produce that central being, himself, has for the most part a comfortable hope that good and evil are the same thing at bottom. He may think everything good when he is in a sanguine frame of mind, and everything evil when he is out of spirits; but these apparently counter views are only different sides of the same comprehensive theory. It is of no use struggling against universal evil, and it would be wrong to oppose universal good; so in neither case is there any need of exertion. There is no real battle going on between good and evil, and therefore it is unnecessary to take a side.

But those who *do* take a side, and that manfully, are in little danger of finding themselves without a leader. As they play their part in this stern battle of moral forces, they are convinced that a personal Captain guides the host and directs the onset. The energy of their imperfect wills suggests a Will higher, stronger, more perfect than their own. The moral order which they endeavour to establish in their own hearts and lives, and in the small circle about them, raises their thoughts to One in whose enduring and unbroken thought reposes the moral order of the whole universe. They thus learn to feel after, if not to recognise, the great Author of all goodness, whose holy name is God. The day of His final triumph, and of theirs, may, indeed, be very far distant; but the same voice of their heart which strengthens them, when evil prevails and oppression seems most strong, to believe in the invincible

might of truth and goodness, strengthens them also to believe in Him.

But this belief, I should add, though true and genuine, will still be unsatisfactory. It is too abstract, future, intangible, for our common humanity. The God of whom it speaks seems to hide Himself behind His own laws, and, the more we question, to retreat the further into the mystery which encompasses Him. The triumph of which it tells is ideal and remote, and, like everything which is very remote, seems precarious. No one can act consistently upon it, in whom sight is not habitually subject to reason, and in whom the strongest human sympathies, the best human affections, are not weaker springs of action than stern devotion to an idea. Its martyrs (for this faith, too, has its martyrs) must be men who could believe in the light within the cloud, though the cloud often turned to them its dark side, with no portion of its edge brightened into silver. It is a philosophy rather than a religion; a faith for the few, not for the many. It calls for almost more than human strength, but proposes, as the motive for exertion, an object almost beyond the reach of human faculties.

For this, as for many other reasons, I am deeply grateful for one historical fact, which is true generally within the limits of our experience, and which would, I believe, be true universally, were it not for certain deranging causes, which are far too complex to admit of easy analysis. That fact is as follows. Earnest men, who are struggling manfully against evil, look not only for a God who is far off, but for One who is near, and, by

His grace, they find Him. When they hear or read of One who, though full by His own nature of the strength of God, stooped to the weakness of humanity; who, though pure and sinless, fought side by side with stained and sinful man in the battle against sin and Satan; who to ensure us the victory, broke the opposing ranks by painfully stretching out His hands, and gathering into His own bosom the sharpest darts of the enemy; who brought life to us by His death, and, though departed for a time, is still, in life and death, near us and with us by His Spirit; they recognise, with a clear knowledge, that Captain of their salvation, for whom they longed in their ignorance; confess with thankfulness that the Creator has come very close to the creature, and worship God in Christ.

In these remarks I should be sorry to seem to be propounding as experimentally true, and recommending to the experience of others, some 'short and easy method' of attaining the truth. The method may be right, and yet neither short nor easy. The struggle for what is worth having may well be often protracted. The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. The new birth of a soul may be painful, and it may be long before it understands, even proximately, the new world into which it is born. It is for quite a different reason than for its easiness and brevity that I would earnestly propose to those who need it the course above described, of approaching the object of faith by a life of faith. This manner of investigation seems to me sound in principle, and worthy of the end at which it

aims. It leads us to test religious truth by the religious faculty. It has not a tricky and ingenious air, like most attempts to decide questions which belong to one department of truth by arguments brought from another. We should justly suspect from the very beginning, an attempt to decide a physical question by means of metaphysical science, or to make chemistry the great authority on a point of vital action. Physics and metaphysics, chemistry and biology, may be very closely connected; but yet we feel that our senses must, after all, be arbiters in the affairs of sense, and that the facts of life cannot be determined apart from the living subject. In like way, religion and history are closely connected; but, it may be unwise to treat religion merely as a matter of history, and to try it by a purely historical standard. The voice of the heart, the powers of our moral being, claim to be heard in a cause which concerns them so deeply. The kingdom of God is within us. The soul, with all its high aspirations and precious instincts, cannot, if it realises its privileges, trust itself to anything except its Maker. The Spirit sits far above the mere reasoning faculty; and it cannot, without treason to Him who has given it so high an authority, commit its cause to a court inferior to its own. It cannot consent that the claims of justice, truth, and holiness shall be put forth on any lower ground than this—that they are holy, and just, and true.

For it should be observed how any scheme of evidences which begins by insisting on facts, of whatever nature, which took place a very long while ago, puts holiness,

justice, and truth out of court, for a time, if not for ever. If you approach religion from its *present* side, from the facts of the world as we see them, from the existent struggle between right and wrong, from the wants and aspirations and instinctive faith of the soul, you are met by no difficulty of this kind. The facts are patent, and you can proceed at once to consider them in their moral bearing. Faith is not for a moment excluded, except by our own weakness, from the interpretation of actual life. Things press on you; and as they pause before you, or pass on, you say, 'This is right—that is wrong—this cause must ultimately triumph: in that, injustice is at the root, and I see the seeds of ruin and decay.' But the case is very different if we are engaged in investigating any circumstances which belong to a time long past. The first question in that case is, evidently, whether they happened or not. Till we are clear on the historical point, we are not in a position to moralise about them. All who know anything of historical investigation know that its processes, especially if they refer to exceedingly remote times, are often very long and difficult. While they are going on, we are not at liberty, as judicious critics, to anticipate their verdict, or to throw the weight of our wishes and prepossessions into one scale or the other. As historical inquirers, we must have a certain curiosity on the subject of our inquiries, and we must bring to them that spirit of ordinary fairness which is requisite in all honest dealings between man and man; but we should maintain at the same time that judicial impartiality, which it is very difficult to

reconcile with a direct and personal interest in the result of the trial. This is a grave objection to the general use of the purely historical evidences. It seems hard to require a grave and earnest man, who is anxious about the deep things of God, and feels the unspeakable importance of all which concerns the soul, to lay aside for the present all strong feeling on the subject, and begin, in a calm, deliberate, and impartial spirit, an inquiry into sundry questions of fact—an inquiry which he must be prepared to regard as of uncertain length and doubtful issue. If he has made up his mind what its result is to be, the form of an investigation is the merest mockery. And no sane person would attach much importance to the result of hurried and partial researches, leading to a precipitate conclusion. A wise man, therefore, will hesitate before he intrusts to an investigation like this, which may last as long as his life, or longer, issues on which his spiritual nature needs a speedy answer, that it may proceed at once to action. The springs of his moral being may be dried up, before he has carved through the centuries the channel in which his matured judgment can allow them with safety to flow.

It will be seen that this fatal objection lies against all difficult historical argument, considered as preliminary to right religious action. It applies, for instance, to the argument from prophecy as well as to that from miracles. But we began with the argument from miracles, as suggested by Paley's *Evidences*; and to that it may be well, for convenience sake, generally to confine ourselves. It

seems that we must shut out from it for the time the full force of our moral nature, as likely to prove a disturbing element. It is quite doubtful, even as a matter of theory, when we may let it in again. The miracle must, of course, be proved or disproved as a fact, without any reference to its moral bearings. But supposing it proved as a fact, it remains to be decided how far, if at all, the moral element of a miracle may fairly be adduced in proof of a doctrine. Some say that a miracle, considered merely as an act of power, cannot and should not command the conscience; but that the power which it displays can only be recognised as Divine Power, if the miracle is marked also by some Divine moral attribute, as justice, or mercy, or love. Others seem to deny this, and to urge (what I should be slow to believe) that before mere Power, if it can, in some unintelligible way, coerce and subdue ordinary physical agencies, we should fall down and worship. Nay, in quite recent times, a writer of great ability, whose principal work is generally supposed to be of a highly orthodox tendency, has in that work,¹ suggested the probable occurrence of *moral miracles*, in which, it is imagined, the ordinary laws of morality are suspended by the Divine Will. I should be sorry indeed to believe in the reality of these (so called) moral miracles myself, or to invite others to believe in them. Nothing but the severest proof should make us even think it possible that God, in order to make us better and holier, does by His direct intervention, suspend or disturb the sacred rule of right and

¹ Mansel's Bampton Lectures. Lecture VIII.

wrong which He Himself has planted in our bosoms. I mention this supposition of moral (or, rather, immoral) miracles, only to show the speculative difficulties which may and do arise, if we endeavour to ascertain *à priori* the relation of miracles to moral truth. I do not attempt to scale their heights or sound their abysses ; but I only call attention to the astounding fact, that at least one writer of eminence seems to think, that the heart and soul of man is bound to accept a doctrine on the warrant of an occurrence which appears to exhibit less than human goodness, if only it exhibit also more than human power.

In considering the difficulties which beset the attempt to approach the truth of Christ by the road of historical evidence, I have hitherto confined myself to their positive side. In leaving this part of my subject, it will be sufficient to observe that their negative side has likewise its own difficulty. Paley, it will be remembered, does not think it enough to establish the sufferings, sincerity, and simplicity of the original witnesses of the Christian miracles ; he thinks it also necessary to disable all testimony to any other miracles whatsoever. His second proposition runs as follows :—‘ There is *not* satisfactory evidence, that persons professing to be the original witnesses of other miracles, in their nature as certain as these are, have ever acted in the same manner, in attestation of the accounts which they delivered, and properly in consequence of their belief of those accounts.’ If we look this proposition in the face, we shall be astonished at the amount of assertion which it

involves, and at the amount of inquiry which it requires of us, before we are in a position fairly to make such assertion. It does not declare that we, as individuals, are unacquainted with such satisfactory evidence; but that such satisfactory evidence does not exist. Surely, a terrible extent of historical investigation opens upon the fair-minded man who wishes to arrive at an equitable verdict in this matter. Religions in general claim to have their miracles, and may claim to have their miracles examined. Of course, we are not obliged to examine them; but if we leave them unexamined, we cannot on that ground rule the cause against them. A candid searcher after truth will not like to hear the witnesses on one side, and then arrive at his decision, without considering what can be said by those on the other side. These adverse testimonies he will have to search out, and thus to investigate the history of many religions, before he can decide on the truth of one. It will be an easy task enough—if he is prepared to shift continually his hypothesis to suit his facts—to say, as he reads narrative after narrative, this is no miracle at all; this is false; this is diabolical; this is unproved. But it will be a long task even in that case—as long as his life, if he is a very learned man; and he will need a religion that he can believe and use at his death-bed, and indeed sooner. And the process is sad, sceptical, distrustful, wearying work. Let those who wish to see a specimen of it, read the ‘*Criterion*’ of Bishop Douglas. The case is much the same if the lover of pure historical evidences seeks his basis in prophecies, instead of mira-

cles. He will have to examine all the recorded heathen prophecies; to adopt a theory of ancient oracles; to explain away many lucky guesses; to determine whether all foresight is supernatural, or whether it is sometimes the result of a natural gift, and if so, to what degree. By the time he has gone through a good course of these investigations, he will be in a frame of mind which does not strike one as quite the best in which to approach the prophecies of the Bible. This indeed is going in no good spirit through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. Our Lord and Master has told us, when any man says to us, 'Lo, here is Christ, or there,' simply not to believe it. (Matt. xxiv. 23.) The ordinary system of evidences sends us off after the false Christ, to examine his credentials. But we had better get what light we can from reading the Gospels, than wade through an endless series of documents, trying to be impartial as we read, but hoping all the time to find them false. False Christs and false prophets shall show great signs and wonders, and, if it were possible, shall deceive the very elect. But He has told us one thing before. 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.' (Luke xvii. 20-1).

Of course, it should not be forgotten that, while we argue whether evidences of this kind, or evidences of that kind, are most expedient and most convincing, far the largest number of professing Christians maintain an apparent neutrality with regard to the question at issue. They have never turned their serious attention to the

subject of evidences at all. They have never anxiously inquired, because they have never anxiously doubted. Indifference to the whole subject of religion is often the cause of this abstinence both from doubt and inquiry; but it is by no means the only cause. The best, the most honest, the most humble, the most earnest men often decline these investigations altogether. They trust to God, and not to their own powers. They feel that their faculty of faith is a safer and more divine guide than their faculty of reason. And doubtless it was meant so to be. A hundred can live by their faith to one who can examine it. We meet, indeed, occasionally with advocates of the extreme historical school, who say, or seem to say, that no person can really believe who does not believe on historical evidence; and that a Christian who can give no proof of his belief, which the mind of an unbeliever could not follow, is in much the same position as an uninquisitive heathen; and that St. Peter, when he recommended the converts to be ready always to give an answer to every man who asked them a reason of the hope that was in them, with meekness and fear, recommended by implication a formula like that of Paley. But, if this were so, a 'Christian Child' would involve a contradiction in terms, and the little ones whom Christ blessed could have no real hold on the Gospel. In ancient times there might be many martyrs; but there could not be many apologists: so in the present day many men can live by their religion, but few can prove it. The sun sheds a sufficient light about their daily path, and they work by

its light while it is day, without tracing its course, calculating its distance, or measuring its diameter. If their condition be in God's sight a sound one, as I believe it is, it may help us to judge between the two systems of evidence which we have been considering. The principle which leads them to Christ is no doubt the same as that which leads the wise and learned, though it may be different in its application. There is an infinite diversity in all the works of God, and, among them, in His dealings with the soul. But in this diversity we expect to find a unity, and to see an abiding law among the multitude of phenomena. To which kind of evidence, then, the practical or the historical, is the quiet, unquestioning, undoubting life of faith more nearly allied in principle? The answer is clear. Such a life has no traceable affinity with the method of judicial suspense and systematic argument. The soul which lives this life, sits at the feet of Christ, and will not leave Him, even with the intent of serving Him, and in the hope of returning to wait upon Him. She does not try the spirits, whether they be of God, by the rule of external evidence, but knows them by a Divine instinct, as a child knows a friendly face, and as love answers to love. She recognises a mighty work spreading through the centuries. She sees the vine of God trained upon the Cross, bearing its fruit even then and now, while its roots run under the very foundation of the world; but in this recognition there is little historical scrutiny. She does not pry among the dry stones, anxious about the course of each trailing fibre, as it seeks the moisture

beneath, but sits down under its shadow with great delight; and its fruit is sweet to her taste.

And here probably lies the reason why direct and prolonged religious inquiry is so painful to the thoughtful and feeling mind. It has been said that inquiry involves doubt, and this is true. But our inquiries, especially in childhood and youth, are conducted so spontaneously and naturally, with so little effort and self-consciousness, that they are hardly seen to be inquiries; and the element of doubt which they involve is not really perceived at all. As our bodies grow insensibly, by successive exhaustion and nutriment, so our minds and souls grow, feeling a want, and having it satisfied, almost before it is recognised as a want. We had parents and teachers, whom we trusted; and whose answers were ready to meet our questionings. If there was not absolutely faith in our doubts, there was faith in the course which we took to ensure their satisfaction. As we grew, human guidance was by degrees removed, and we could no longer call any man master. But by that time we had happily learned that One was our Master, even Christ. The serene consciousness of manhood thus succeeds, in healthy and well-trained minds, to the obstinate questionings of childhood. We know that we believe, as we know that we can read, without remembering the time when we learned to do so.

But the same principle of growth and attachment works in honest and earnest minds, whose convictions have, from whatever cause, not been early formed, or, when formed, have been rudely shaken. There is too

much life in them to allow them to cling inertly to systems which they feel to be false, like dead ivy cumbering a dead tree. In spite of their temporary detachment from the usual support, they draw wholesome nourishment from the root, while they seek for the fit prop, be it rough bark or fine trellis-work, which they may load with their fruit, or cover with their flowers. For a time their leaves may flag, their branches trail without apparent object, their tendrils float vaguely in the wind. But at last the life within them finds its place by its own mysterious law. It is their free growth, that their vigorous hold, their generous expansive tendency, which justifies their position, though it may thwart the will of the formal trainer, and may appear like caprice to him who cannot appreciate originality and nature.

I have endeavoured to express my belief that the Gospel, which is the law of liberty, is best approached by a way more vital, and less formal, than the ordinary system of legal evidences. I am certain that the best elements of our nature ought not to be kept waiting without during a long judicial trial, and, if admitted at last, be admitted only as witnesses to character, to give their evidence in a stiff conventional way, without being allowed to speak fully out, and say all that they could say. Of course I have no wish to deny that in exceptional cases, with exceptional persons, or in exceptional frames of mind, such books as Paley's *Evidences* may be very useful. They may dash the first flow of sceptical conceit, and teach imperfect argument that it may be met with argument. Nay, there are some

persons (and occasionally very good persons) who have such a peculiar intellectual constitution that they know no way of defending or seeking truth except a set battle. They like the form, if not the bitterness, of controversy. They have no notion of trusting to a good cause, an honest heart, a Divine call, a sling and a stone; but, though bent on fighting Goliath, will fight him in Saul's armour. Men of this kind often see keenly the defects of Paley's Moral Philosophy, and quite distrust his Theology (so far as they would allow him to have any), but think, nevertheless, that they rely on his Evidences. They probably rely in reality on something far better. But if they really need, for themselves or others, an argument on the subject of Christian truth, and wish to derive one from Paley, they had far better have recourse to his *Horæ Paulinæ* than to his Evidences. It is no part of my duty to recommend the *Horæ Paulinæ* as a perfect work. It has its mistakes and inaccuracies; it implies a very imperfect state of contemporary criticism; it is marked too much, in places, with the spirit of the advocate. Still, it has great excellence in its execution, and real practical merit in its design. For it proposes to the reader no great field of historical investigation, which it must take him years to traverse satisfactorily; but it refers him to two short works, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles of St. Paul, and bids him observe their undesigned conformity. Its great advantage, however, is one which is only incidental to its plan. It brings us in constant contact, not with a book only, or a history, or a theory,

but with a man. Just as a reader of general history may, in his researches, come across a packet of letters, written hundreds of years ago by some person of whose name he is ignorant, and may be caught by some odd fact, or some chance remark, which excites his curiosity, and so may toil on through the packet, and con each word carefully, till at last, as he reads, there steps forth from the browned and crumpled papers a personality which he knows as well as he knows those whom he meets every day in the course of ordinary life—or better ; just as the physician, called in to watch a lingering illness, regards his patient at first only as a curious case of some unusual disease, but, as he watches him day by day, learns to know the man as well as his ailment, and to love and admire his faith and patience much more than he wonders at his symptoms ; just as at Oxford, two young men may sit down over their Aristotle, and, as they argue and inquire for a few short hours, about prudence, or the moral sense, or such politics as are practicable to the budding wisdom of nineteen, grow heart into heart, and form a friendship which shall last through life, and very possibly, beyond it ; so, as with his letters in hand, we trace on the map and in history the footsteps of the traveller in Macedonia, and Achaia, and Asia, as we watch his works and his sufferings, his fervent zeal, his burning indignation, his love of the brethren, his care of the Churches, we come to know Paul. This, of course, is not the same as to be Christians. We may admire the disciple without following his master ; we may view his character as a wonderful and a complex phenomenon,

without finding the key which reduces it to simplicity in the light which fell upon him from above. Still, to know Paul is an important step in the right direction; for it is he who tells us, 'be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.' There does not, indeed, lie in his unassisted words a secret to lead us to the crowning act of faith. To raise the soul of man to God is a task within the power of God alone. 'The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.' But the preparation for receiving the Divine Message is a preparation of the heart rather than of the mind. It is more likely to lie in profound human sympathy than in strict human argument. It is better by far to know the spirit of an Apostle than to analyse the evidence of a miracle. Those who, in the sincere spirit of justice, truth, and love, follow in their hearts and lives a disciple of the truth, have a promise which is not given to the student of history, who is as fair as a controversialist can afford to be, and is quite as much in earnest as is consistent with the exclusion of prejudice. 'If any man do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.'

Of course there may be a student of history, who is really and deeply interested in his subject, and yet is as fair, candid, and temperate, as human nature permits. There is no reason in the world why such a person, or one who is far his inferior, should not traverse the historical ground occupied by the constructive side of Paley's Evidences; and there are many reasons why he should. No period of time can be more deeply interesting than

that which follows immediately on the death of Christ, with the single exception of that which intervenes between His birth and His death. Nay, men in general enjoy seeing things in their effects, though philosophers prefer investigating their causes. For this reason, among others, a more practical interest may often be felt in tracing the results of the day of Pentecost, than in arranging the facts of the Gospels. Many would look freely for the fruit of the Branch of David, who would shrink from disturbing, even with a careful hand, the petals of the tender Flower which blossomed in the shade of Nazareth. And it is a noble spectacle to which Paley calls our attention. We feel a trembling joy as we read of the believers, weak in the flesh, yet steadfast before the wild beasts; of saints rejoicing in suffering, and martyrs constant to the death. But when we are just realising the impressive scene, and almost hear the cry—‘The Christians to the lions;’ and are bestowing with all our heart our feelings on the right side, we shall certainly be disgusted if some one behind us touches our shoulder, and asks in a cool tone what it all proves. We shall not mend matters by turning to argue with him. He will tell us, perhaps, of the devotees crushed under the ear of Juggernaut, or of the men who allow themselves for a small sum of money to be swung by hooks placed under their shoulder-blades. We know the answer to this; but if we argue at all, we must go through the process of answering objections, and must allow their nature to determine the course of our argument. Where this will land us, we

cannot precisely tell; we may possibly find ourselves, where Paley has been before us, in the company of Vespasian's blind man, or of the cripple in the Church of Saragossa, who had probably a wooden leg. All this we shall feel to be very little to the purpose; but the work seems to be a painful necessity, if we determine to extract for ourselves and others a moral out of history by mere logic and criticism. History has its own moral, and that a very noble one; but it flows without any such forcing from the quick turn of incident, the interest of long suspense, from great crime or great heroism, from the sudden catastrophe, or the unexpected deliverance. A true-hearted man cannot be indifferent to the genuine records of humanity; least of all, to those which touch his deepest sympathies, and kindle his liveliest hopes. Many persons, therefore, read Paley's Evidences with much satisfaction and benefit, although they miss their point, or perhaps because they miss it. They become interested in the matter of the work, and forget its argumentative form. They see the essential goodness of the early Christians, the simplicity of their lives, the majesty of their patient suffering: and they take their side without further question. They do not exchange the grand and impressive indefiniteness of a great moral spectacle for the laws of formal evidence and the heartless precision of the witness-box.

An inquiry may be made as to the result of these two contrasted processes. If they be fairly and fully carried out, I hope it would be much the same. A judicial inquiry, like any other investigation, if properly conducted,

should lead to the truth at last. As has been said above, I cannot claim any superiority for those evidences which I believe to be vital, human, and practical, over those which are commonly supposed to be more scientific, on the ground of their being more short and easy. The testimony which is borne by the balanced powers of our whole being, as developed in healthy action, may well require a longer time, a greater struggle, a more determined patience, than the testimony which is principally intellectual. Life may fail us before we appreciate the full force of the evidence in one case or the other. But here it is that a great difference between the two processes emerges. The intellectual method is worth nothing to a Christian as such, except through what it accomplishes. It may make him a shrewder or more learned man, but it will not make him a better man. If his thread of life is cut short before he has arrived at his conclusion, his labour is vain. Years of suspense, during which he was illogical if he took the truth of the Gospel for granted, have gone for nothing. There was a vast structure of scaffolding, but not a stone was laid of the permanent building. Not so with the man, who, as he inquires diligently concerning the Gospel, whether these things be so, determines that he will never willingly omit from the plan either of his inquiry or his life, the weighty matters of judgment, mercy, and faith. He does not fight first, that he may build afterwards, but begins his building at once, with his sword girded at his side. His work may be sadly deficient, but yet it is honest work—the best that his

hands could do ; and it will stand, though as a fragment. He may seem to have laboured in vain, to have spent his strength for nought, and in vain ; yet surely his judgment is with the Lord, and his work with his God.

Let us, however, suppose that we are allowed to finish our work, so far as man can finish it. Let us pause at the close of our labours, and look back upon their past course. Its end may be the same, but its direction and character will be very different, according to the method which we have adopted. If we have followed the guidance of Paley and his school, we shall have been regarding for a long time a miracle as an exceptional phenomenon, on the evidence of which we are to receive truths which we might not otherwise have believed. If all goes right in our investigation, we shall at last arrive at a belief in Him who wrought as never man wrought, as well as spake as never man spake. When we have reached this Sacred Presence, old things will pass away, all things will become new. The phenomena, which once appeared to us exceptional, will lose that character altogether. We shall view miracles as Divine facts, as powerful works of mercy or of judgment, going forth naturally from His Divine nature. We shall feel that if our Lord were now upon earth, and we were summoned to live for a time in His companionship, it would be a matter of surprise to us if He did *not* work miracles. The mind will thus be transferred from the work of sifting legal evidence to the higher province of wonder and worship. We shall

inquire, yet without doubting. We shall be willing to remain ignorant, in many respects, of the nature of His miraculous working, and of the details of the several miracles. We shall acknowledge gratefully that while five thousand men were fed by Him on the spot with the first miraculous food, millions have been fed by Him with the fragments. We shall ourselves move, blessed ministrants, calmly among the crowd of hungry and fainting souls, giving them of the good things which we have ourselves received. If this happy end be reached, should we not, as we looked back on the path by which we attained it, feel a deep regret, nay, something of shame, mixed with our wonder? Should we not think with some sorrow, of the time when the strangeness of our Lord's miracles roused our curiosity more forcibly than their goodness prompted our love? Should we not marvel that we ever believed Him for the works' sake, rather than for His own dear sake? And if so, should we not be slow to recommend to others, as the path of legitimate inquiry, a road in which His miracles are long seen by those who traverse it, as wonders which have no essential alliance with goodness? Should we not seek a straighter way by which we may lead our brother to the house of our Saviour, that he, as well as we, may well scan His features, and know Him for the Christ by proof?

The case is much the same with the evidence from prophecy. Let us take, as an example, that most illustrious prophecy, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. We may view this as a kind of miracle, and treat it, like a

miracle, by the historical and exclusive method. We may argue as follows:—‘Isaiah wrote this prophecy ‘about 2,570 years ago. There was no one in those ‘days living to whom the prophecy could refer. It ‘had, therefore, a prospective reference to Christ.’ Our argument will at once raise a host of objections. We shall be told that the latter part of the book of Isaiah, in which this prophecy is contained, was written by another Isaiah, who lived at a later date; that the prophecy might have referred to the writer himself, or to Jeremiah, or to the collective Israel; that, strange as such a supposition may seem to the ordinary English reader, it will not offend those whom long study has made familiar with Eastern modes of thought and language; and that the prophecy may thus have referred to some person or persons living about the time when the prophet wrote, and still may meet with its final fulfilment in Christ. A goodly controversy (if dimensions in such matters constitute goodness) rises up at once. Before it is concluded, we must determine the date of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, the exact circumstances of the writer, of contemporary prophets, of his country and countrymen. For this purpose, we must make ourselves familiar with Hebrew philology and literature; we must have a minute acquaintance with oriental history—an acquaintance which will enable us not only to pronounce on ordinary historical facts, but to see clearly in a region of imperfect light, and to know not only what happened, but how such occurrences would be regarded and expressed by contemporaries. This done,

we shall have at least one more question awaiting us, and that, one on which philologists and critics differ as much as any other men can differ—the structure of prophecy itself. We must determine whether it has one meaning or many; and if it has many meanings, what is the law and limit of their number, use, and application. If we wait till this inquiry is over before we read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah as Christians, we shall have to wait decidedly too long.

But, meanwhile, it may happen (nay, it does happen daily) that good men, learned or unlearned, ignorant of this controversy, or taking a part in it, if tried by griefs or sorrows, fears or fightings, turn instinctively to this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to read of Him, who has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. They know their Saviour, and recognise His likeness. The exact process by which that likeness was produced more than two thousand years ago, they may not know, and may not inquire. But it never even occurs to them to doubt that it is a Divine portrait by a Divine hand; that the Holy Spirit guided the writer; and that his words were meant to guide the reader to Christ.

To Him we cannot come by reasoning only. We owe the close connexion which exists in the current English mind between argumentative, judicial evidence and genuine Christian conviction to an age which, as a whole, was more willing to reason about Christ than to come to Him. Indeed, they seldom even reasoned about Christ in those days, but contented themselves with dealing with the abstraction, Christianity. This they

allowed to rest as a kind of gloss upon their social and political morals, their public and private life, brightening them, but not substantially altering them. They could endure suspense without much pain; for the long-pending decision, to whichever side the verdict inclined, would not greatly affect them. They were anxious to preserve Christian morality for the public good; but the whole question struck them as one of expediency rather than as involving the very life of the soul. Therefore, when a calm, clear thinker laid before them the Evidences of Christianity in a form quite adapted to their taste, they gave him a hearty welcome. And he deserved it; for his method, if not good absolutely, was perhaps as good as the times would bear. It was the plan of the Inquisition, divested of its cruelty—a trial, not by the infliction, but by the contemplation of torture. It invited all men to observe the labours, dangers, and sufferings of the original witnesses of the Christian miracles without undergoing any labours, dangers, or sufferings themselves. It called their attention in the first place to the evidence of Tacitus, Pliny, Juvenal, and Martial; and then gradually introduced the Bible.

We have happily outgrown this method; and it is well that we should recognise the fact. Nay, the good and simple villagers of Paley's own time had outgrown it. Every man rises superior to it, who finds in one utterance of Holy Writ, one recorded word or work of our Saviour, a Spirit higher than his own spirit, which strengthens him to act and to endure, keeps him from pride, conceit, or self-complacency, and lifts the purpose of his life, and the eye of his soul, heavenward.

The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Our hold on Christian truth must lie much more in our own doings and sufferings than in any contemplation of the doings and sufferings of others. We learn of Christ by coming to Him when weary and heavy laden, and taking His yoke upon us. Leading an incorrupt life, doing the thing which is right, and speaking truth from the heart, are far surer steps up the holy Hill than reading, writing, or discussing books of evidence. For one good and educated man who has derived any accession of Christian knowledge from the close, guarded, wary arguments of Paley, there are ten who owe much to the broken and disjointed, nay, the sometimes clouded and darkened 'Thoughts' of Pascal. Had that great man lived to complete his system of Evidences, he would probably have spoiled them. If we are striving against our fellow men, it may be well to be so careful for nothing as to have the best of the argument. Not so, if we wrestle on their behalf and our own against principalities and powers, and the rulers of spiritual darkness. We shall then be glad to drop the received forms of attack and defence as useless, and worse than useless. We cannot spare an inch of the soil which should bear the peaceable fruits of righteousness, to form earthworks which shall stand, not between us and the enemy, but between our own souls and those of our brethren.

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TRACTS FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

No. IX.

DISSENT AND THE CREEDS.

INTERLOCUTORS: WILLIAMS (*a plain-speaking man*).
BLACK (*a conscientious man*).
Afterwards, SMITH (*an enlightened man*).

I.

DISSENT FROM, AND DISSENT IN THE CHURCH.¹

A LAY DIALOGUE.

W. I HAVE not seen you for a long time at —— Church, Mr. Black.

B. No. The fact is, I have joined Mr. ——'s congregation.

W. Indeed! Well, I trust you feel that you have done right.

B. I can have no doubt on that point. I believe I may fairly say, that since I have joined Mr. ——, I have never heard a word in his whole service in which I did not agree.

W. Do you think it the right thing in worship that one should agree in every word one hears?

¹ This Dialogue (which connects itself with Tracts VI. and VII.) should be compared with Tract V. and with the latter division of Tract VI., as bearing upon a kindred subject, and sometimes with much divergence of view.

B. Of course. How can one worship where one disagrees?

W. Then every difference of opinion would require its own special worship, and 'I don't agree' would always be the sufficient justification for establishing any number of new 'denominations.'

B. Why not? Dissent is literally disagreement. We feel otherwise, therefore we don't worship with you. Only the disagreement between us is not so deep as the common disagreement with the Church of Rome, against which we all protest alike. So that there is a common ground of Protestantism beneath all the separate foundations of Dissent.

W. When you speak of Dissent as a 'foundation,' of Protestantism as a 'ground,' you seem to me to be speaking not only in an unknown tongue, but in one that defies interpretation into human speech. Dissent, protest, may be mighty levers, but they must have *fulcra* to work from. Either that *fulcrum* lies in the thing protested against, dissented from, and then the protest and the dissent are merely wilful, or it must lie in something beneath, some deeper ground which sustains both the protested against and the protesting, both the dissented from and the dissenting, and then only are protest and dissent serious and valuable. Protestantism is a mere appendage to Catholicism, Dissent to an established worship, unless each can appeal to a deeper Catholicity in favour of which it is a protest, from the violation of which it dissents.

B. Of course Dissent can appeal to that deeper

ground of which you speak. I have no wish to justify mere wilful sectarianism, but where one feels that some important point is denied or omitted or disfigured by the Church of which one is a member, one has the right, nay one is in duty bound, to dissent from it.

W. To dissent from the denial, the omission, the disfigurement, by all means. But why dissent from the Church itself?

B. Why, in order to bring that point out in all its due clearness and fulness.

W. Your answer, I believe, expresses most accurately the sole condition upon which Dissent can obtain vitality and permanent existence. Each dissenting body which holds its ground must serve to bring out some side of religious truth which the national Church has suffered to become, or to appear to become, obscured. On the other hand, are you sure that the attempt specially to bring out one particular point clearly and fully does not tend to throw other points into shade, and destroy the due keeping of the various elements of religion considered as a whole?

B. The insistence on one particular point no doubt tends to that sectarianism with which the dissenting bodies are reproached. Each so hugs the particular doctrine or institution for which it has lived or suffered, as to view that doctrine or institution as the sole standard of truth, and to be unable to understand how other bodies can cling with the same fondness to doctrines or institutions quite different.

W. Then in joining a dissenting body, may you not

be in some danger of losing the whole for the sake of a part?

B. Yes, but a part well brought out is better than a whole which is really no whole at all, but a mere confused mass of jarring doctrines and practices, that can be twisted by any clergyman almost into any shape he pleases.

W. Then your motive for dissent from the Church is not that some point. . . .

• *B.* Points.

W. . . . or points which you deem important cannot be brought out in due clearness and fulness, but that other points which you do not deem important may be so brought out in like manner?

B. That other points which I deem false and mischievous, may be brought out with as much insistence and authoritativeness as if they were parts of God's truth.

W. It would seem then that those who do bring out the points which you deny, would have just as good ground for dissenting from the Church as you have, supposing the points you assert to appear in turn false and mischievous in their eyes, and to be actually brought forward.

B. I wish such people would dissent and leave the Church, when of course I could remain.

W. Then in short, you dissent from the Church, not because it is too narrow for any truth which you have dear, but because it is wide enough to hold both yourself and your opponents?

B. I dissent from the Church because she is for ever

halting between two opinions. Whilst such a state lasts, she must expect to be deserted by the most earnest men on both sides.

W. In short, A will leave her because she will not excommunicate B, and B because she will not excommunicate A?

B. You are putting the matter in an invidious, not to say absurd light. But if A is right, and B wrong, surely A is justified in leaving; and conversely B, if A is wrong and B right.

W. But whilst the point remains uncertain, would it not be better to remain on the chance of being wrong, than to leave on the chance of being right?

B. No honest man will go out, who does not feel that he is in the right in doing so, that he has a truth to cling to, and to witness for.

W. Granted; but if men go out from opposite sides, each feeling himself in the right, each holding some truth which he must cling to and witness for, does it not prove that they were both right in remaining in; that their truths required to be left side by side, to compensate and complete each other?

B. Your reasoning might be effective if I had joined some extreme body like the Quakers. But in joining one of the bodies of "orthodox dissenters" (supposing one is not bitten with "apostolical succession") what does one lose besides the liturgy? As for doctrine, I declare I cannot perceive the very smallest difference between Mr. —, and clergymen of the Establishment, such as Mr. —, Mr. —, or Mr. —.

W. It strikes me you have not gained much by the change, if you get only precisely the same doctrine which you could have got in the Church, with the liturgy, which you regret, *minus*.

B. There is no saying when one may not get even that. You know there is a strong liturgical tendency amongst almost all the Dissenting bodies at present.

W. Does it not occur to you as rather odd to dissent from the Church in order to find the same doctrine now, and the hope of the same worship hereafter, as what you have left behind you?

B. But you forget that I am leaving behind me not only the clergymen I have named, whom I shall always respect, but the whole crew of Puseyites, and Neologists, and Latitudinarians. These are the men who drive me out. Am I to stand by at all their mummeries? Am I to listen to all their sceptical theories, and perversions of God's Word? No. Give me a knot of humble Christians, worshipping in spirit and in truth, admitted only to Church-membership after due probation, winnowed out from among the multitude. Even the liturgy I will not regret whilst I am among them. I know it would be safe in their hands if they chose to adopt it; I know it is not safe in the hands that now use it.

W. How do you mean?

B. I mean that, as all the world knows, the words of the liturgy are not close and sharp enough to hold all the slippery quibblers who make use of them. For instance, there is nothing definite on the subject of the Atonement. The doctrine of vicarious sacrifice may be

found in the liturgy by those who know where to see it, but there is nothing explicit about it. The Trinity is, perhaps, the only dogma which is set out with rigorous precision, and that in a creed which is only read thirteen times a year. If there were anything as sharp and clear on the Atonement as the Athanasian Creed on the Trinity, it would rid the Church of Neologians as the Athanasian Creed has of Unitarians.

W. Does Mr. —— use the Athanasian Creed?

B. No; *we* don't want it.

W. But suppose he chose to take up what you call Neologian views,—which, I believe, are not unknown in his denomination,—what would happen?

B. That would soon be settled in a voluntary Church. His chapel would be deserted, and his income nowhere.

W. Do you really feel satisfied with the power of the purse wielded by chapel seat-holders as a final test and bulwark of sound doctrine? Does not the notorious lapse of a large portion of the English Presbyterian body into Unitarianism show alone the fallacy of such a theory?

B. I don't mean to say that it is altogether satisfactory in the abstract, or that it is free from occasional practical dangers. But I have only to deal with the present; I know that the heart of the middle classes, who chiefly fill our Dissenting chapels, is still sound, and I have more confidence in their good sense and right faith to check the growth of heresy than in the whole Bench of Bishops.

W. Do you seriously think that the purity of doctrine of a Church is better guarded by the mere feelings, however sensible and correct at any one time, of its richer members, than by 'the form of sound words' of a recognised liturgy?

B. Not if it were precise enough, of course; not if it were precise enough. But, as I have said before, the Anglican liturgy is not precise enough; or, indeed, there are passages, such as those in the baptismal and burial services, in which it is, or seems, too precise the wrong way.

W. I am afraid you are asking of a liturgy what none but one written at a single time can give, and that only in the actual century when it is composed, viz. that it should correspond exactly to the modes of theological thought for the time being. Now, I have heard a witness beyond all suspicion of partiality,—a Scotchman, who went out with the Free Kirk at the disruption,—assign to the English liturgy a value on the very ground which makes you hold it cheap. Formed, as it is, out of the accretions of many successive ages, it must, he said, possess a breadth and a comprehensiveness which no writer of a single age could possibly give to it, since it naturally and unconsciously must embody the types of religious thought of all the various centuries whose work lies embedded in it.

B. Aye, but it is not breadth that is wanted now-a-days—there is but too much of that. It is depth, positive faith.

W. I agree with you most entirely that a positive

and not a negative faith is what is required of us. But do not confound 'positive' with 'narrow,' or faith in the Divine truths which lie at the root of Christianity, with the assent to certain formulas respecting them.

B. Explain yourself.

W. You and I, for instance, differ widely on the subject of the Athanasian Creed. You—though you have lost it in your new connexion—set a high value on it, wish that it extended to other doctrines besides that one of the Trinity which it especially sets forth. Now, I look upon it as the chief rock of offence in the Church, and long for no Church reform so earnestly as for its excision.

B. Really! You don't mean to say. . . .

W. That I am a Unitarian? Anything but that, I trust. I have passed through that stage of feeling, and have lost, I fear, the very power of understanding how a man can remain in it. No; I accept, personally, almost every statement of positive doctrine in the Athanasian Creed. I have no doubt that it was the work of a very sincere man, whose soul was vexed by what he saw around him of the spiritual and moral impotence and mischief of Arianism, and who, no doubt, braved, and very likely endured, a large amount of obloquy, and perhaps persecution, by drawing it up. But the embodying of it in the services of the Church, as a collective profession of faith, appears to me most objectionable and most dangerous.

B. What can you mean?

W. I mean that the attempt to shut up God's truth

in the narrowest words we can find to express our own views of it, and then to enforce the formula so obtained upon others, appears to me impious; that the assertion, that it is essential towards salvation to 'think' in a particular manner about a certain doctrine, appears to me to involve the very essence of heresy and schism; and that the necessary result of such a course, if rigidly carried out, must be to rend the Church asunder. I look upon the Tridentine decrees and anathemas as being all contained in germ in the Athanasian Creed.

B. Then your ideal liturgy, I suppose, would be framed in words that should mean everything, and nothing at all?

W. Words need not be dead because they are wide. They must be living words, on the contrary, or they will express no truth whatsoever. The most living word, perhaps, in any language, is 'love,' and yet what an infinite variety of meanings does it convey!

B. But it is a mockery for persons to be using the same words in different senses.

W. Why so, if they do it openly and with mutual consciousness of the fact? To take a homely illustration: what mockery would there be in two persons jointly ordering a cook to send up 'their dinner,' knowing that the dinner of the one would be bread and water, that of the other meat and beer?

B. But the Church would be full of heretics.

W. Heresy seems to me to start from the attaching one's own private interpretation upon the words of Scripture as a ground of separation from others. I

received once a sharp and invaluable lesson on that subject from a Romanist friend. He had come to the conclusion that, by virtue of 'invincible ignorance' on some points, I might not be excluded from salvation, though outwardly separated from his Church, and proceeded to enumerate our grounds of agreement, questioning me in turn on the different articles of the Creed. I declared my assent to them all, but added that I did not believe them all in the same way as he did. 'There spoke the heretic!' he exclaimed; and the shaft, I felt, came home to me.

B. I am afraid that you and I differ indeed greatly as to what is required. The main reason for which I am content in my new connexion to drop the liturgy, still more the Athanasian Creed, is simply that they are unintelligible to the masses. As to the latter, though one meets now and then with a poor man who enters with real zest into its theology, the bulk of them cannot follow its logic, and are wearied by it. And, much as *I* value the liturgy, I cannot overlook the fact that, through its peculiar phraseology, it seems to ignore various essential doctrine. Take that of salvation by faith, for instance. Surely that is a truth which the liturgy keeps strangely under the bushel. There is scarcely a word about faith, except in a collect here and there, or in the prayer 'for all conditions of men;' and then it is not saving faith, the faith of the Epistle to the Romans.

W. A Unitarian, differing, as you will see, greatly from you, once said to me that, apart from the

Athanasian Creed, he was kept from church by the liturgy, as it was 'full of the doctrine of the Atonement.' Now, I say that the liturgy is 'full' of the doctrine of saving faith, that there is hardly a collect in which it is not.

B. For instance?

W. 'O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in Thee.' . . .

B. Ah! but the word there is 'trust.'

W. Is not 'faith,' in the very highest sense, 'trust'?

B. No doubt, no doubt; but then, you see, the people are not accustomed to think of it by that name.

W. Is that the fault of the liturgy, or of those who should have taught the people? If there be this divorce in the habits of thought of the many between 'faith' and 'trust,' is that not all the greater reason for clinging to a work which does preserve their identity?

B. But, once more, I say the liturgy speaks a foreign tongue to the masses. With many, dissent rests simply upon the wish to find something intelligible in worship, which they cannot do in church.

W. What you say is, I fear, to a great extent, but too true; and woe to us for having allowed such a thing to come to pass! But all you have said seems to me to prove nothing whatever against the liturgy, but everything in favour of educating people up to it. What is wanted, I should say, is not to reduce the Prayer-Book into the phraseology of the day, but, on the contrary, to show the people how the phraseology of the present

day is to be translated into the deeper and wider words of the Prayer-Book. Even at the present day, you shall find in the same classes two persons of the same intellectual standard—you shall find two whole districts on a like equality—for the one of which persons and districts the Prayer-Book shall be a sealed book, and for the other an open one, and this simply because in the former its meaning has been overlaid and obscured by the popular theology, whilst in the latter it has remained unclouded by that influence. In other cases, indeed, I make no doubt that the intellectual training of the poor has been positively debased by the disconnected ejaculations and infantile grammar of much popular extempore preaching, so that their mind has become incapable of taking in the fulness of religious thought in our collects. How much of earnest, yet rational extempore prayer and preaching might be required, to bring our poor up again to the point from which they have sunk, I cannot say. That the stiff constitution of the Anglian Church does not afford sufficient legal opening for the due carrying on of such a work as part of its regular discipline, I am well aware; and, whilst it is so, one cannot complain that the dissenting bodies, with their hands less closely tied, should address themselves to the classes in question.

B. Now, from what you said just now, I fancied you were bitterly opposed to all dissenting bodies.

W. My own view of these bodies is, that with a more freely-constituted, more livingly-organized Church, almost every one of them might be made to fall into

its place as an order or fraternity devoted to some special function or functions, but all recognised as forming part of the body of the Church, and subject in the last resort to its general discipline, although ruled, as respects their special functions, by a special discipline of their own. Mr. Isaac Taylor, I think, brings this point out excellently for the Wesleyans, showing us how Methodism was intended by its founders to act merely as a special organ in the Church; and how all the present mischiefs and vices of the Wesleyan system flow from its having been compelled, by the narrowness and stupidity of churchmen, to assume an independent position, and to harden from a religious order *in* the Church to a distinct sect *out* of it. But, anyhow—to revert to present purposes—I do not see why the sad fact that the liturgy is imperfectly understood by a certain class, should lead men who do understand it to desert it. Dissent, as loudly as you will, from whatever tends to cause or to perpetuate that imperfect apprehension; but dissent in the Church, not out of it.

B. Out of the Church I must dissent, so long as I know that the Church has not strength openly to cast out of her even such wild infidels as one whom I see now coming up to us, and whom you must pardon me if I feel little disposed to speak with.

(*Exit* BLACK; *enter* SMITH.)

S. Was that Mr. Black who just left you? I hear he has lately joined a Dissenting congregation.

W. He has.

S. Happy man!

W. To have left the worship of the Church?

S. No. To have found one with which, I presume, he is satisfied.

W. This from a positive philosopher!

S. Yes. The fact is, man does need a worship, and the attempts that way of Positive Philosophy, 'Catéchisme,' 'Calendrier,' and what not, do not satisfy one. Sooner or later humanity must no doubt evolve for and from itself an appropriate form of worship; but, in the meanwhile, a man with religious instincts and cravings, who cannot put up with the dry husks of an effete theology, must often feel a painful void. I wish the Church of England were not so narrow, or its *formulae* so precise.

W. Mr. Black has just been complaining of the Church for being so wide, and with *formulae* so vague.

S. By Jove! What does he say to the Athanasian Creed?

W. He is satisfied with it as respects the Trinity, but wishes it spoke as sharply as respects the Atonement.

S. Does he wish to make the Church a solitude? That creed has driven enough men out of her pale, kept enough men from orders as it stands; what would it be if it embodied the exact propositions of Archbishop Magee, or rather (since the mantle of religious authority seems in our days to have descended upon the religious journals), the *novissima* of the 'Record' on the Atonement?

W. Seriously, where do you think the shoe chiefly pinches in the Church of England?

S. In the Athanasian Creed, of course, in particular, and the Articles generally; not to speak of Infant Baptism, Episcopacy, State support, &c.

W. To begin with the Articles. I do not think any layman need trouble himself much about them; they are meant for the clergy, not for the laity.

S. But does not the prefixed royal declaration require 'all our loving subjects to continue in the uniform profession thereof,' prohibiting the least difference from the said Articles?

W. Do you consider yourself bound by every declaration of his majesty King James I.?

S. Certainly not. But is there not some canon on the subject?

W. The fifth canon of 1603 excommunicates impugners of the Articles. But do not forget that the Canons of 1603, so far as they introduce any new regulations, have been expressly decided not to be binding on the laity, as never having been confirmed by Parliament.

S. Still, I suppose the Articles must be supposed to have a sort of moral obligation on the laity, as forming part of the constitution of the Church.

W. I think you mistake the position of the Church of England. Her organization is not based, like that of many other Churches, upon a document amounting to a confession of faith, but upon uniformity of worship. During the worst, most unspiritual period of her existence, she held fast by this: 'Do you join in our worship, take part in our communion? Then you

'are a member of the Church. Do you refuse to come to church and take the sacrament? Then you are none of us, and fit, probably, to be treated as a popish recusant convict.' You see that fellowship in prayer and sacraments, not express assent to certain propositions, is her essential test of membership. This one principle runs unvarying, from the original Act of Uniformity, through all its various confirmations. The Articles are a matter of clerical regulation. Nothing can prove this more clearly than the fact that, according to the rubric, the Catechism gives a sufficient qualification for Confirmation, and Confirmation for Communion. 'So soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say in their mother tongue the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and also can answer to the other questions of this short Catechism, they *shall* be brought to the bishop.' And 'there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.' Not a word in all this about the Articles.¹

S. Well, but—the Athanasian Creed?

W. I admit it is a stumbling-block, the existence of which I deplore.

S. What do you do yourself in respect to it?

W. I join in repeating those clauses in it to which I can conscientiously assent; but there are a few clauses, and portions of clauses—the 2d, the 28th,

¹ Mr. Williams will be found in the foregoing observations to have plagiarized largely from Mr. Maurice's 'Subscription no Bondage.'

and the latter member of the last—which never have passed my lips since I came to the age of reason, and, please God, never shall.

S. Rather a curious sort of compromise, I should say. Do you adopt the expedient as to any other parts of the service?

W. In one respect only. I mean as to those portions of the Psalms which—against all apologies that are made for them by some of my most valued friends—I must hold to be utterly unfit for purposes of collective worship, viz. vers. 28, 29, of Ps. lxi., and vers. 8, 9, of Ps. cxxxvii.

S. Then you are, in fact, a Dissenter.

W. In the Church, thank God, not out of it. Whilst dissenting from portions of her formularies, I do not feel one whit the less a member of the Church of England, and do not mean to leave her unless she drives me out.

S. Yes, I can quite understand that traditional prejudice in her favour, sucked in with one's mother's milk, fostered by all the associations of one's childhood.

W. You entirely mistake my position. In the first place, I have old Independent blood, as well as Scotch Presbyterian, flowing in my veins; and all the instincts of race would, with me, run against the high Laudian views of Anglican doctrine and practice. In the next place, I was brought up abroad for the most part, and thereby for many years was mixed up with Ultramontane and Jansenist, Lutheran and Calvinist,—fight-

ing out the Protestant controversy while yet in my teens,—receiving my first deep religious convictions from foreign Protestant sources,—yet kept in contact all the while with the heterogeneous indifferentism, scepticism, rampant anti-Christian dogmatism, passionate political or social faiths of Continental society, carried away by them more or less, sojourning a year or two in Socinianism, carried to the very brink of Atheism. For years after I had returned to this country, the Church of England had no hold upon me. I have attended many different forms of religious service; have frequented a particular Independent chapel for nearly a year at a time; listened to one of the best sermons I ever heard, from the lips of a Unitarian. Even after I had grown to feel the value of Church principles—so far as it could be realized from the Evangelical point of view—being in the midst of an English community abroad which was torn to pieces by religious disputes—I preferred joining a Free Kirk congregation to taking part in such squabbles. So that, you see, my attachment to the Church of England is the very reverse of traditional. It is the full, deliberate assent of one who has proved many things, and having found what is good, holds it fast.

S. Yes, you take up with the Church of England as a *pis aller*.

W. Not in the slightest degree. I value her because her service appears to me an adequate exponent of Catholic truth, an adequate embodiment of Christian worship; and I know as yet of no other body in this

country, or elsewhere, which does so to the like extent.

S. But if you did find a body which satisfied you better, you would join it?

W. Not in the least. I hold that, for the proper development of a nation's character, there should be in it one leading Church, whether established or not. And I hold that every member of the nation who feels the value of the tie which binds him to his fellow-countrymen, beyond that of his right to slip or break it, will always wish, whenever practicable, to remain also a member of that leading or national Church, but without in the least renouncing his right to dissent, within that Church, from any of its formularies or practices which he feels to be contrary to Catholic truth, or subversive of a Christian economy.

S. So that if the Church of England were Presbyterian or Independent—

W. I would remain a member of the Church whilst allowed to do so, and can only thank God that, in placing me within the Church of England as she stands, He has limited my dissents from her to such trifles, compared to what they would be, in such an event as you have mentioned. The liturgy, for instance, would be for me an unspeakable loss. Except under very peculiar circumstances, producing entire unity of spirit between minister and people, such as a great common crisis, or very long familiarity with each other's feelings, I do not see how public worship is possible without a fixed form of prayer. I heard last

year in the Barony Church at Glasgow what appeared to me the absolute perfection of a Christian *sermo*; but the prayer which preceded it, though from the same lips and full of the same faith, carried with it no real sense of worship. The hymn is, in short, *the* worship of all religious bodies which have no other liturgy.

S. But what would you do in a Catholic country?

W. Roman Catholic at least, if you please.—I can only say that I have never been able to worship in a Roman Catholic church, except when no formal worship was going on, and, consequently, I certainly could not conform under such circumstances. But whilst the positively irreligious, as I view it, character of Romish worship, and the manifold corruptions of the Romish system are such as, in my opinion, entirely and everywhere to justify separation from Rome, still I am always delighted to hear of one who is a sincere Christian being able to remain a Roman Catholic. The Romish system will never be overthrown by Protestantism without, but by Christianity within.

S. You are perhaps able to justify to yourself your position in respect to the so-called religious worship of the Church. But there is another worship besides that of the regular services, the worship of fellow-work between the minister and his people. You have probably proved that there is no legal or even moral obligation on the laity to assent to the Articles. But do they not still remain a stumbling-block in the way of such fellow-work? Can the layman, who perhaps

repudiates the Articles wholly, co-operate heartily with clergymen who have to sign them?

W. You are singularly troubled about the Articles. I could not sign them myself, but I never find any difficulty in working with 'a good parson.'

S. You could not sign them yourself, you say?

W. I could not. At the same time, I should say at once that the extent of my dissent from them is very small.

S. But suppose your objections were numerous or radical?

W. Of course the power of working with a man depends in great measure upon your sympathy with him, and that in great measure upon the doctrines, I will not say which he holds, but upon which he acts. But without wishing to judge the clergy, I must say that I do not find in general that their conduct turns much upon the Articles and the degree of their assent thereto. Very much, on the other hand, does depend upon the extent to which they enter into the spirit of the liturgy, and the value which they set upon it.

S. But you cannot hold it advantageous to a Church that its teachers should have to sign their assent to a document which many intelligent and thoughtful laymen more or less repudiate?

W. I do not. I should heartily wish to see the Articles reformed on some points. I would prefer seeing subscription altogether done away with.

S. Yes, that would give great latitude to the clergy.

W. It is not greater latitude that I wish for. I

doubt if there can be any greater than now; nay, I doubt whether there be not too much already. The benefit of abolishing subscription to the Articles, I think, would be this, that it would compel clergymen to feel more clearly the true constitution of the Church, as founded upon her liturgy, would impress more strongly upon them that the true religious unity is that of worship.

S. All well and good for clergymen, and orthodox people in general. But what avail is it to us poor philosophers, whom every 'Gloria Patri' must offend, whom the ascription of every prayer repels?

W. Surely you are unreasonable. You begin by saying that you feel you want worship of some kind; you admit that Positive Philosophy and Comtian Catechisms supply you with nothing to satisfy you; and now you find fault with the Prayer-Book for not being conformable to Positive Philosophy. You say that you are repelled by the 'Gloria Patri,' by the ascription of the prayers of the Church. I say it is you who repel the Church and its prayers. The very essence of worship depends upon its being addressed to a Power out of ourselves, higher than ourselves. You feel (whether you admit it or not) that Humanity is no such power, but simply, considered as an object of worship, one of those metaphysical notions which Comte is for ever knocking down and for ever setting up again. Yet when we acknowledge such a Power, you refuse to look out of yourself, and look up to Him.

S. You mistake me. I do wish to worship; I do

wish to look out of myself, above myself. I dare say—I wish to believe, and am inclined to believe—that there is some such Higher Power. But then, when I try to worship in the words of the Church, I find those words involving all sorts of dogmatic propositions about the Trinity, about the procession of the Spirit, about the Incarnation, &c. &c., which I am not prepared to assent to.

W. You cannot, as a reasonable man, expect that the expression of such actual faith as others have should be pared down to the shadowy outlines of what you are simply ‘inclined to believe.’ At the same time, there must necessarily be in the liturgy much that you are not yet prepared to assent to. My sole advice to you is this,—*worship*, be it ever so little. If there be one single prayer which really comes home to you, try to enter into that, and see whether by degrees you do not learn to enter into others also. Let your effort be to come nearer to your brother-men in this high office of human life—not to stand aloof from them; and be assured that if you can but once feel at one with them in a single petition to a Higher Power, that Power will reveal Himself more and more to you, and bring you into ever-closer communion with your fellow-creatures and with Himself.

S. Ah! but then there are all the intellectual difficulties as to prayer—

W. Try to leave them behind when you pray. Pray first. Observe, as a *fact*, the effects upon yourself of any impulse of earnest prayer, if you find yourself

blessed with such. If you do find that it actually soothes your spirit, braces your will, fits you the better to do your work as a man upon this earth, I ask you, in the name of your own Positive Philosophy, not to let yourself be robbed of those precious facts by any 'intellectual difficulties' whatsoever. They will disappear in precise proportion as you candidly acknowledge the value of those facts.

S. You almost tempt me to go to church. But I must not forget one thing, that after prayers comes the sermon. What am I to do as respects that?

W. In too many instances I could give you but one counsel—pray for strength to endure it.

S. Well, perhaps I may make another trial. But it strikes me that your view of 'Church principles,' as folks call them, is not a very exalted one.

W. Not certainly for those who look upon the Church as a small exclusive body, which one has to distinguish at one's peril from a number of more or less close counterfeits, and whose genuineness is mainly proved by the maintenance of certain well-attested traditional formulas and practices. But for those who, to use the words of a devout Roman Catholic, member of a much-maligned race (the Portuguese of Southern India), have learned to see that 'Christ is in all the Churches'—for those, above all, before whose eyes have once flashed in their reality those words of St. Paul's respecting the Church, 'which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all'—for these, true catholicity is no system of observances and dogmas, but a uniting

power—not travelling on a circumference, but ready to radiate from any centre. Then, however gladly one may use any words and practices, in themselves unobjectionable, which may serve to unite us the better to the most distant of our brethren in space or time, yet one would fain always be at one with those near first, and then with those far off—with countrymen first, then with foreigners—first with the living, then with the dead. In this frame of mind nothing becomes more pitiable than to see men puzzling the slow brains of honest clodhoppers by some symbol, however beautiful, dug up out of an obsolete ritual, convulsing an English parish for the sake of conformity to far-off Latins or Greeks. Such pseudo-catholicity I call, in plain English, schism.

S. I did not know you were so strongly opposed to our high Anglo-Catholics.

W. Not a bit more so to them than to any set of English or Continental Dissenters, who, for the sake of some real or fancied revival of the practices of the primitive Church, choose to separate from all their neighbours, and to constitute a little ‘pure’ community of their own. There is not a pin to choose, as it seems to me, between such bodies and the extremest ritualists among ourselves.

S. But are you not implicitly condemning Protestantism itself?

W. God forbid! I know of no more blessed event in all history, since the first propagation of the Gospel, than the Reformation of the sixteenth century. When-

ever a work of genuine reformation begins in a religious body, the latter must either accept it and be renewed by it, or cast it out. When the reformers are cast out, if there is no other body ready to welcome them, the work of reformation can no more help organizing for itself a new body, than a snail can help secreting its shell. But the more such body retains of whatever was healthy or even harmless in the old, in my judgment the better.

S. Why, you are now going in altogether with the Romanizers !

W. Not a whit. Do not confound 'retaining' with 're-introducing.' The question of Christian expediency in matters of worship is profoundly modified by the action of time. It may be a sin to restore what it was once a folly to reject.

S. Well, after all I don't much care for the squabble between Protestant and Catholic. But do you know that your notion of the Church appears to me to be very nearly akin to the Comtian one of humanity ?

W. With this difference at least (not to dwell upon others), that the Comtian humanity is a mere headless trunk, and, therefore, as an object of worship, nothing more than a moral fetish; whereas the Christian Church is essentially a body bound in one in its Head, and the supreme organ, not object, of worship. . . . Yes, the Head, the Head ! When will this generation learn to look up, and see the Head ?

II.

THE CREEDS.

THE subject of the Creeds was touched upon in No. VI. of this series. I entirely concur with the writer in what he has said of them, and have little or nothing to add to his remarks as regards the point of view from which he has looked at them. What I have to say respecting them belongs to another class of considerations altogether.

Much of the present tone of thought among men of various classes is to be characterized neither as unbelief nor scepticism, after any previous fashion, at least, of scepticism. There are many who regard the faith and the Church with much good will, who see and feel the great evil of rejecting the one, and being hostile to the other; who know of nothing which they could put in place of either the one or the other; who are conscious of no one definable objection on which they would lay stress to either the one or the other; but who are chilled by a misgiving that both have lost much of their power and their meaning. What was once sharper than a two-edged sword they suspect of being blunted; what could once give the victory that overcometh the world, they fear can no longer hold captive the minds

and will of men. Something they imagine to have been developed in human life and society, to which the gospel does not reach, thoughts to be stirring which it did not anticipate, knowledge to have been gained which it did not contemplate, experience to have been passed through to which it was not adapted. It may be, or it must be, still Divine in its inward core; but much—and men may add that they cannot yet tell how much—of what was once regarded as part of that inward core, must now be allowed to drop off as withered husk.

This surely is the state of mind which is exhibited by many, and more or less characteristic, we may be sure, of very many more: a state of mind which the clergy are loudly called on by the multitude to denounce, but which they would surely do far better by trying to understand, sympathise, and honestly deal with.

Now, if this misgiving exist at all, it is plain that her Creeds are the part of the Church's equipments on which it will soonest and most markedly fasten. One of them, indeed, will be allowed more favour than the others—that commonly called *the Apostles'*. Supposed (though the supposition, as regards the greater part of that called the *Nicene*, is a very precarious one¹) to be

¹ What alone in the Nicene Creed as we now use it was the work of the Nicene Fathers, is the *Homoousion*, the assertion that the Son is of one substance with the Father. The statements regarding the Holy Spirit were inserted at the first Council of Constantinople. The general frame of the document, the words 'God of God,' &c. are ante-Nicene, and, as is argued by Bishop Bull, were used by the early Orientals contemporaneously with the employment of what we call the *Apostles' Creed* in the West.

the earliest, it will be considered likely to be also the longest lived. It is regarded as simple and undogmatic, as not going beyond Scripture, as what all who name the name of Christ can say without hesitation. The others are dogmatic, their phrases are born of the schools, they seem to force thought into definite moulds, they limit and they exclude. A clerical education and a theological habit of mind reconcile the priesthood to them; though even in that order many may be suspected of struggling under a yoke in submitting themselves to their authority. It will be further urged, that there was presumption in the very act of their formation. The being of God is so far above all conception, that we ought to abstain from expressing conceptions of it, to content ourselves with such as God has himself authorized by giving us Holy Scripture. All other language will be an attempt to take measures supplied by our own minds of that which is essentially immeasurable, and will be not merely, as it needs must, inadequate, but misleading. The human mind, it will be urged, can make no approach to real apprehension of the Divine essence. The Absolute, the Infinite, the Unconditioned will be pronounced to lie outside all human thought; and He to whom those terms apply can be known by us in no relation to their meaning, but only in such modified manifestation of Himself as He sees fit to make, and as He has made in Holy Scripture.¹ Decla-

¹ I know not whether it is necessary to disclaim imputing to the writer who has recently attracted so much attention by maintaining this, the disparaging view of the Creeds which I am trying to

rations, therefore, respecting the Divine Being, pronouncing the Son either of one substance, or of like substance with the Father, distinguishing between the Son as begotten, and the Holy Ghost as proceeding, were all acts of presumption in the first instance, and have been standing calamities ever since. Even granting that they served some good purpose once, they have ceased to do so now, and all the more in that language continually shifts its relation to thought, and what might be the nearly unavoidable expression of devout sentiment at one period, becomes almost antagonistic to it at another. Let it be remembered, it will be said, that always

‘The old order changeth, giving place to new,’

and let us learn the wisdom of surrendering, or at least being ready to surrender, what we may be no longer able sincerely to retain, in calm confidence that the God who ‘fulfils Himself in many ways’ will enable us to hold fast by all that is essential and enduring in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The seeming reverence, as well as wisdom of such a view, adds to its recommendations with many; and in using the epithet *seeming*, I am far from denying that many of its votaries are led to it by a sincere spirit of reverence. But in proportion to the value of real reverence, it is important to be on our guard against any deception in the matter. Reverent minds will

sketch. This would be in the teeth of facts. But many will take his doctrine so far as I have indicated it, and value it as a step on the road in which he should not bear them company.

welcome whatever seems dictated by reverence, and it is on this latter point that there may be room for mistake. I would therefore entreat my readers seriously to consider the questions to which I am about applying myself, in order that we may find where the real reverence and piety will be likely ultimately to remain.

The inadequacy of all conception and all language the instrument and utterance of conception, to measure the being of God, and to span the realities of eternity, is a truth so obvious, as to amount to a truism. But if so, does it not apply to the words of Holy Scripture as well as to any other? Let us hear St. Augustine on this matter:—

‘ He who speaks, says what he can. For who can say it as it is? I am bold to say, that perhaps not John himself said it as it is, but even he according to his capacity, since he, a man, spoke concerning God: inspired, indeed, by God, but still a man. Because inspired, he said somewhat; had he not been inspired, he had said nothing: but because a man inspired, he said not all that is, but what a man was able to say.’¹

Surely this is so, not from any want of authority in Scripture, but from the fact that it is addressed to human minds in human words. But though those words are thus necessarily inadequate, they are true,

¹ ‘ Qui loquitur, dicit quod potest. Nam dicere ut est, quis potest? Audeo dicere, fratres mei, forsitan nec ipse Johannes dixit ut est, sed et ipse ut potuit, quia de Deo homo dixit: et quidem inspiratus à Deo, sed tamen homo. Quia inspiratus, dixit aliquid; si non inspiratus esset, dixisset nihil: quia verò homo inspiratus, non totum quod est, dixit; sed quod potuit homo, dixit.’—*August. in Johann. Evan. Tract. I. 1.*

and to be thoroughly received and relied on. They are limited, and therefore inadequate as expressions of the Unlimited; but they nevertheless exhibit that Unlimited to the eye of the spirit which was made for beholding it, and which rolls weariedly and distractedly till it has rested upon it. We must not confound, as has been recently done, the inadequacy of concepts and words with the view which those concepts and words reveal. The words of Scripture, though the words of mortal finite beings, reveal to us the Absolute Jehovah, the Inhabitant of Eternity, the Living One, which was, and is, and is to come.

Now if we believe this of the words of Scripture, need we disbelieve it of other words denoting the same thing as they? The question is important, for do as we like such other words there will assuredly be. If Scripture does anything for us at all, it does not come to shut our mouths on the subjects which it handles. If it has given us real knowledge, it must be knowledge with which we can deal as we do with other knowledge, which we can discourse upon, which we can in some way explain, which we can translate out of one form of words into another. Granted that in doing this there is risk of doing more, of changing the key, of so altering the proportions of things as to make one thing become another, it is but risk against which we have to guard; we cannot evade the task itself. For religious thought cannot be communicated and interchanged merely in the words of Scripture. Scripture has not been given us in such a form as to admit of being thus employed.

It contains and communicates all saving truth, the high and transcendent revelation which is wrapped up in the thrice holy Name into which we are baptized, the knowledge of God and of His Son, which is eternal life. But there this truth, this Revelation, this saving knowledge, lies like a rich ore which is to be carefully wrought out and brought to light by diligent study, reverent meditation, religious practice, persevering prayer. And consequently, Scripture always supposes the standing ordinance of preaching, digesting, and expounding Scripture. ‘You called me,’ the early convert might well have said, ‘to the renunciation of gods ‘ many and lords many, you made the one living and ‘ true God the foundation of your preaching, but yet ‘ you told me to worship the Son of God, to honour ‘ Him even as I honour the Father, and you offer me ‘ Baptism in a three-fold Name; it is true you do not ‘ say Names, but Name of Father Son and Holy Ghost. ‘ This adds to my perplexity; surely you can remove ‘ it, surely you can tell me what you mean by all ‘ this.’ And such a request never can have been spurned. The bishops, priests, and evangelists of the Church must have given it some answer, must have vouchsafed some explanation. The same want, the same necessity of meeting it, is felt in the present day. A distinguished prelate¹ of our time, in the very act of writing matter a good deal characterised by the tone of thought which I have endeavoured to describe, a good deal disparaging, though not rejecting the Church

¹ Archbishop Whately, ‘Logic.’ Appendix, art. *Person*

divinity which is embodied in the Creeds, is compelled to give his own digest of what he thinks that Scripture has revealed on the subject ; a digest which many have thought subversive of that Revelation, which few I suppose think satisfactory, but which anyhow is in its form and terminology as heterogeneous to the language of Scripture as is that of the Creeds.¹ I repeat it, this statement of Scriptural truth in language other than that of Scripture, language cast in a mould different from that of Scripture, is what must be if we are to realise, digest, teach, and interchange thought upon that Scriptural truth. Only a theorem of exact science can be taught and learned by means of a single statement. With everything else we have to expand, to illustrate, to compare, to explain. And eminently must this need exist in the case of Scriptural truth, which is not set forth to us in Scripture so much by statement, as by implication, which is exhibited in lively facts, the key to which is presumed to be in the reader or hearer's hands. Therefore those who will not have extra-Scriptural statements of the faith had need consider whether they are not thereby rendering that faith nothing to themselves, an object giving no occupation to their minds, no exercise to their faculties, no material of converse with their brethren. What we cannot consciously dwell on, what we may not speak of, is to us as if it were not. A God whose essential being is not only immea-

¹ I ought in justice to Archbishop Whately to say, that he vindicates the use of non-scriptural language, as rather advantageous than otherwise.

surable, but altogether without the sphere of thought, is to us no God: a Revelation of God on which we may not pause and ponder, the disclosures of which we cannot digest and take into our habitual musing and mind, is no Revelation at all.

But if each individual Christian does this for himself, or each philosophical or theological school for itself, the variety of explanation and theorising will be alarming enough. Granted (which would be granting a good deal) that the one object of faith and trust and love remained present to all their minds, they would be hard put to it to find that this was the case. Men's reflections on and explanations of heavenly truth, whatever else they would do, would never prove bonds of union. Every diversity of early history and education, of habit, of temper, of intellectual bias, would come out with fatal power, and keep Christ's disciples, at the best, not only separate from each other, but absolutely unintelligible to each other, at the worst denouncing and anathematising each other.

But the task of meditating on and digesting heavenly truth was performed in early times, not by mere individuals, but by the collective Church. She baptized her members into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. She gave them this Name as the last full revelation of God, in the light of which they were to act and to suffer, to live and to die; and in the work of bringing them up to a true apprehension of it, together with that of guarding it against perversion and denial, she digested her statements of

it into those formularies which we still receive and pronounce.

Those formularies have received the reverence of the succeeding ages. With but trifling exceptions, they are accepted and used by the whole hierarchic Church in north and south, in east and west. Nor is such acceptance and use confined to the hierarchic Church, which retains the old liturgic forms, and has incorporated the Creeds with them. Nearly all the puritanical bodies, although they do not pronounce the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, yet retain their dogmatic statements.¹ The question before us is, whether

¹ 'In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.'—*Westminster Confession of Faith*, cap. II. 3.

'The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the Manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.'—*Ibid.* cap. VIII. 2.

The same is taught in the two Westminster Catechisms, in which, moreover, the Incarnation is defined as the 'taking a true body and a reasonable soul.'

Though there must be very considerable differences of practical habit between those who possess such statements merely in theological articles and catechisms, and those who constantly make them in solemn liturgic action, yet it is plain that what I have quoted is an acceptance of the divinity of the first four œcumenical councils, as embodied in the then Creeds.

So with the Helvetic, the Augsburg, the Belgic, Confessions.

this universal acceptance and use is a misfortune or an advantage—whether it is a fettering of Christian development with chains which were always heavy and have now grown rusty, or whether it is the wearing a garment of faith and liberty which is not destined to wax old.

They who take, or tend to take, the former side of the alternative, do not for the most part seem to object, in their own persons, to the statements of the Creeds. It would rather appear that they view them as in some way injurious to their minds and the minds of others, and as standing in the way of comprehension. We have listened lately to a complaint that the Fathers of Nicæa bound not only themselves, but succeeding ages as well, when they adopted the word. And it has been intimated that the terminology of the fourth century is inapplicable to the thoughts of the nineteenth—I suppose because words change their meaning in time, and cease to denote the same thing as at first. Let us consider these points in their order.

As regards the first, I cannot see how the Nicene Fathers were to bind themselves without intending to bind the succeeding ages. They could have had no heart for their work had they thought themselves to be merely adopting a provisional measure. If it was right for them to say that Christ is of one substance with the Father—if they felt that declaring Him to be God means nothing if it does not mean this, that the adopting of this declaration puts an end to all uncertainty as to what is intended by the worship of

Christ, they cannot have contemplated a subsequent abandonment of the ground which they were taking. Christ being God can never cease to be God. If being God must mean that He is of one substance with the Father, the latter declaration will remain as true for all time as the former. To suppose them sensible of a call to declare the latter, and yet tormenting themselves with so strange a conjecture as the possibility of that which it was right to say in their own age becoming wrong to say in another, is surely to suppose very wildly. When men are solemnly occupied with the question, What is the truth? they are raised out of time, out of the accidental preferences, and fancies, and fashions of one age; they are either not inquiring and not really thinking at all, or they are inquiring and thinking for all the ages, for all time.

And this brings us to the second point. Words, in the shifting phases of thought, beyond doubt shift in meaning. Dean Trench's works show in the most lively manner how little time is required for this, what alterations take place in the force of a word within the lapse of a single generation. When we go back a couple of centuries the change is great indeed. Who in the nineteenth century could talk with Barrow of resentment towards God because of His dealings with us? If we recede so far as Aristotle, we find that the office of the teacher must mainly consist in explaining the sense in which he used his terms of Art; how, for example, his *energies* meant something very unlike what we should in common talk mean by the word. This is

undeniable; but the phenomenon which it contemplates requires some further consideration.

This fluctuating character of language is in exact proportion to the intellectual and moral condition of those who use it. Just as men are unthoughtful, just as their minds are engaged wholly with the present, just as they were without hold on and without links with the past, will the phenomenon show itself. I have heard that there are tribes in Australia in which grandfathers and their grandchildren are well-nigh unintelligible to each other. In proportion as men are out of this savage, semi-bestial condition will the phenomenon grow fainter, will language be a link not merely between those of one generation, but between a past and a present, will it bind together not merely the people of one place, but the people of different times. The whole dignity and value of letters consist in their power of effecting this, in their giving utterance to the united thoughts and feelings of a nation, not merely in its momentarily collective but in its historical character. Thus it is that Chaucer and Shakespear address themselves to Englishmen in English utterance still. Thus it is that the past is not to us another world in which we are wholly away from home, that it still speaks to us, that we are made to feel that we should not be what we are but for it, and for what it has bequeathed to us.

Now if there be a body on earth that must be supposed above and beyond others to possess this power of arresting and fixing thought and word, surely that body should be the Christian Church. And this I believe to

be her high function. As she is called to bind together the peoples, nations, and languages of one time, so is she called to bind together the ages and generations. As the many members of one time have not the same office, but each contributes to the edification of the whole, so is it with successive generations. The struggles and the successes of one age, the experience it gains, the lessons it is taught, were not meant to die with itself, but to remain the inheritance of every succeeding age. And after vague thought has become reverently determined, and words of heretofore ambiguous meaning become fixed, both surely may and should continue so for the rest of time.

And thus, while the adoption of such terms as *οὐσία* and *nature* in the sense which they bear in our authorized divinity justified considerable hesitation before it was resolved on, inasmuch as their previous use had not been altogether in that sense, this adoption has fixed their meaning for succeeding ages. I am quite at a loss to see any hindrance to their conveying the same sense to minds in the nineteenth century which they did to minds in the fourth or fifth. Had they never received this solemn consecration, they would very probably have gradually altered their meaning, acquiring some other sense in the lapse of time—they would have stood in need of explanation when occurring in writers controverting the positions of Arius or Eutyches, just as the Aristotelian phrases stand in need of being explained by the commentator or lecturer. But I am sure that when we honestly pronounce these words

now, we intend what Athanasius meant by the one, and what Leo meant by the other. I do not see that we could easily find a better way of saying that Christ is truly God than saying that He is *ὁμοούσιος τῷ Πατρὶ*,¹ a better way of exhibiting His Manhood in conjunction with His Godhead than by the statements of our Second Article, which are those of the Council of Chalcedon; not used by us indeed in any of the Creeds, but so familiar to us and accepted by us, that we habitually rank them with the others.

And so with the word *person*. Its early use, we are told, was different² from that which the Latin Creeds have introduced. Undoubtedly the word which at first meant *mask* would take some time, and pass through intervening stages of meaning, before it came to denote *living and reasonable subsistence*. But if in the hour of need it was felt to be the best that the Latin language could supply for that purpose, and has thus, after habitual use in that sense by Latin Fathers, been adopted in the document which we call the Athanasian Creed, is it not reasonable, as well as unavoidable, that it should become fixed in that its last and highest sense? I can see no merit in the

¹ Of course this is not exactly our Western statement; but if an Athanasius could see in the fourth century that the Latins really meant the same thing by their *consubstantial* as the Greeks did by the *Homoousion*, I know nothing to hinder us from seeing and feeling this too, and using the phrase of *one substance with the Father* as intended for a translation of the phrase *ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρὶ*.

² It may be questioned, however, whether Archbishop Whately is justified in saying that *Persona*, he believes, never bore its modern sense in pure Latinity: see quotations from Cicero in Morell's Ainsworth.

counter-process of always looking at words in the earlier stages of their history, and suspecting fallacy in their final meaning. Such resolute etymology goes to rob them of their living power, makes them cease to grow with growing thought, and deprives that growing thought of its limbs and its instruments. Some have thought the Greeks better off than ourselves, inasmuch as, speaking of three *Hypostaseis* where we speak of three *Persons* in the Godhead, they use a mere term of art, which can suggest no notion beyond the explanation given of it; whereas, *person* being habitually applied to ourselves in our individual characters, awakens a variety of thoughts connected with ourselves and the men around us, which we ought not to introduce into our thoughts of God.¹ Such have overlooked the fact, that the Greek did not content himself with the barren term of art, *hypostasis*, probably because he could not. He must needs avail himself of the word *πρόσωπον* as well. Anyhow, I am sure that the Latin *person*, in the high sense which it has gained, and to which the Trinitarian controversies probably were a main cause of raising it, has exhibited, does exhibit, and will not cease to exhibit, the truth of the New Testament respecting the distinct subsistence of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, better than any other Latin word besides. *Substance*, the exact translation of *hypostasis*, was for well-known reasons out of the question; but let any man try the effect of substituting *subsistence* for *person*, as he says the Athanasian Creed, and say whether he thinks it

¹ Whately's 'Logic.' Appendix, art. *Person*.

improved thereby. And though it is undeniable that the word *person* is applied to ourselves individually, and that the meaning which it bears in reference to ourselves cannot be kept out of our thoughts when we speak of the *Persons* of the Trinity, it remains to ask, whether this be not right instead of wrong? whether there be not vital truth in the association? whether the personality of Father, of Son, and of Holy Ghost be not, when revealed and apprehended, that which awakens us to a higher and juster sense of personality in ourselves? whether the mighty distinctions between persons and things, on which rest so much of law and all true morality and all true liberty, have not come into clearer daylight since the Creeds forced us to confess and habitually remember the three distinct Persons of the undivided Godhead? ¹

A reader, however, who has gone on with me so far, may ask me why I do not go farther? why, if reflective digested confessions of the truth which is diffused through Scripture be not only unavoidable but de-

¹ The only part of the old divinity which seems materially affected by change in language is the condemnation of Monothelism. Undoubtedly to affirm two wills in Christ in the sense borne by *will* in our later philosophy would be equivalent to affirming two personalities. This controversy, not having introduced itself into our Creeds, might well be passed over as beside our present question. Still I doubt not that the Church's condemnation of Monothelism was a just one. But they who are in a situation to feel the difficulty arising out of the modern acceptance of the word *will* are, by the very fact, in a capacity of seeing the solution. They can soon discern that *will*, in the higher ethics of modern times, is used, if not as an exact equivalent for *προαίρεσις*, *arbitrium*, yet far more in the sense of these words than of *θέλησις* or *θέλημα*.

sirable ; if those done by each man for himself, or each set of men for themselves, would scatter, instead of uniting ; and if it be an unspeakable advantage that the Church at large has done, and the Church at large accepted, the work, we should content ourselves with the creeds of early times? Why are we not, it may be put to us, to embrace, on the same principles, the dogmatic divinity of the schools, the decisions of Trent, the creed of Pope Pius? This is no imaginary question. It is the *argumentum ad hominem* which the Romanist addresses to us who repeat the three Creeds. No doubt it may be met in various ways. A man may feel it enough to say that the early Creeds commend themselves to him as true, the later dogmatic decisions do not. But I wish to bring forward a large distinction between them, which exists, and should be accepted as decisive.

Undoubtedly, there has been much of the reflective and dogmatic process of which I have spoken since the early Councils. Not merely the high transcendent truths regarding God which occupied them, but questions respecting man's relation to God, the Atonement, the operations of Grace, the Sacraments, have been pronounced on. The answers have been given in various and conflicting dogmatic forms, have been accompanied by peremptory anathemas. There are thus in Christendom now various masses of dogmatic divinity, all of which, as they are conflicting, no man can accept, but with some portion of which every man is connected, to some portion of which every man owes a good deal of his education and habitual thought. Well, then, of

this I must say, in consistency with what I have already laid down, that much of it was unavoidable; from much of it, it is scarcely possible for any man to shake himself free. This being so, much of it may be regarded as having, in the providence of God, done some good. Much of it may have given determinate and fixed shape to true thought that would otherwise have proved vague and fugitive. Much of it may have been a valuable ingredient in the education of those who have been submitted to it. Some of it each division of the Christian Church must of necessity condemn. Some of it we may think was, if not false, yet a calamity, a needless, and therefore an undesirable stiffening of thought, a ground of disunion where there might have been unity. In some instances we of the Church of England may well think it our peculiar privilege to be allowed to stand free from it. I have on a former occasion endeavoured to show that this is our case in regard to the various theories of the Atonement. Wherever this is our case, I am sure that we ought to make it our parts to continue in that case. When it is not our case, we may, I think, accept and use what we have of it, as that which was designed to form some part of our spiritual education, as Englishmen and members of the English Church. But while we do this, we must not seek to impose it on other nations and other branches of the Church. We may demand that our own clergy accept it and teach according to it; but we may not exalt any of it into terms of communion.

But the divinity of the Creeds rests on a higher ground. The Charter of the Christian Church demands that her members enter her by being baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. This is the last and fullest Name of God which He has revealed. It is indeed the strong tower into which the righteous are to enter and be safe. The setting forth of this Name is the great business of the Church in every place and in every time. The wide and only true comprehension of men is to gather them, in spite of every diversity of education, habit, and opinion, into the acknowledgment and the light of this Name. Therefore its meaning must be unfolded. We dare not treat the baptismal words as a mere magical spell. Their power and their value depend on their perceived significance. Reverent questions about that significance must be answered: perversions which would destroy that significance must be met and warded off. And wonderfully under God's guidance was that work done, when, so far as we can see, it could be best done, while the memory of apostolical teaching was still fresh; while the Church was still in a capacity of collective action; while Christian minds were not choked or impeded by multifarious controversy; while the theological vocabulary was still to be formed, and terms not yet tied down could be fixed to the requisite sense. Then, in that œcumenical period, did the Church at large ponder the revealed truth of the Great Name, and set forth its meaning for the benefit of her children in every age. I cannot imagine better words than those

wherein she has set it forth. I cannot imagine an idler question than whether better words could have been found then, or may be found hereafter. I cannot believe that it was intended for each age to forego all benefit from the work of a past age; that the endless task of ever pulling that work to pieces, and seeking to reconstruct it ourselves, has been imposed on us. Nor do I believe that we should do other than forego real comprehension of men by abandoning the ancient Creeds. By such abandonment we might indeed enlarge what is now called the *multitudinism* of a Church; but we should not thereby do away with existing disunion: we should merely shift its outward seat. The worshippers of Christ as their God, and they who refuse such worship, would be as far asunder as they are now. And we should lose that real comprehension which is gained by holding up the Creeds, or rather the Name which the Creeds proclaim—and not local articles on subordinate questions, or the opinions of favourite teachers—as the expressions of unity. When a man has really bowed to the conviction that he has been redeemed by no being less than his Maker and his God, I cannot imagine that he will long scruple himself to confess Him such in the words of the Creeds. His difficulties about them will not be so much personal as of the kind which I have endeavoured at present to deal with. Till he has bowed to this conviction, there must be a chasm between him and those who are possessed by it—a chasm which no abolition of formularies will ever fill up, but which still leaves scope for much sym-

pathy, for much preparedness for entire communion. Better leave things thus for the present, and let the Church of God keep that great 'confession unto salvation' which she has placed in the mouths of her members for so many ages, and by means of which they have jointly adored the thrice-holy Name of Father Son and Holy Ghost. Here, as I have said, we have the true and only instrument of comprehension; and when we have learnt to value this instrument, we shall be enabled to hinder all subordinate and local dogma, even such as we may have much reason to value, from interfering with its operation. That we may have cause to abide by and to fight for in place and season—this we must anchor on as the ground of universal communion. Of course it is too easy to pervert and misuse the great œcumenical formularies, even whilst we are most zealous for them. We may clothe ourselves with their style and language in a spirit of mere ecclesiastical pedantry; we may prize them more as theological touchstones whereby to detect the heresy of our neighbours, than as utterances of common confession unto salvation; we may be partisans of them instead of real believers in the sacred object of which they speak. 'Surely you believe in the Nicene Creed?' once exclaimed a young and eager controversialist. 'No,' said one; 'I do not believe in the Nicene Creed. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible, And in one Lord Jesus Christ,' &c.

These are real and practical dangers; but we may be

preserved from them, if we have a mind, by the liturgic worshipping position which the Church assigns to her Creeds. Trying to say them in church, sincerely and reverently, our thoughts may be lifted up by the words above the words, to that which the words proclaim, to the One God, who is set forth by them as simple Unity, and yet no barren, abstract point, from which every possible idea we can have of life and mind and moral being has to be shut out, but as infinite Fulness, the seat of Personalities distinct, but altogether undivided from each other, containing in Himself relationship, intercommunion, and all the reciprocation of an infinite and eternal love.

TRACTS FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

No. X.

POLITICS ANCIENT AND MODERN.

I.

THE PROPHETS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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WHO and what were the Hebrew Prophets and their Prophecies, in relation to their own times, and to the world and the Christian Church? Can we continue to share the old and common faith of Christian men, in its essentials, if not in its most popular form, as to these questions, and yet sift them to the bottom by the methods of exact criticism and science? Can we add knowledge to our faith, and not lose our faith in gaining the knowledge?

If we look at the Hebrew Prophets in connexion with their own times, we find that they have certain characteristics in common with the teachers of other nations. No nation, ancient or modern, has won the name of a nation till it has been subdued to order and industry, and organized into a body politic, capable of common action, in peace and war, by the discipline of

lawgivers and rulers, civil and religious. But history tells us that law and order are not all; that there must be a provision also for progress in the life of a nation, or it must deteriorate while it stands still. Egypt and China became retrograde when they ceased to go forward. The Athenian orator understood, or at least was truly possessed by, this distinction, when he attributed the political freedom, internal and external, of his nation to its organization into a commonwealth, in which 'the LAW was their king, and SPEECH their teacher.'¹ The law—*nomos*—was much, but not less was the *logos*, the free, rational, and instructive speech, which maintained, adapted, and expanded the law from year to year, and generation to generation, and thus secured the progress, as the law did the permanence, of the nation. And as this speech required speakers, there grew up in Greece an order of political, as well as of moral and philosophical, teachers and advisers. And the greatest of these political advisers, Demosthenes, describes his own office and duty as being 'To see events in their beginnings, to discern their purport and tendencies from the first, and to forewarn his countrymen accordingly; to confine within the narrowest bounds those political vices of habitual procrastination, supineness, ignorance, and love of strife, which are inevitable in all states; and to dispose men's minds instead to enlightened concord and unanimity, and to the zealous discharge of their social

¹ Lysias, ii. 17—20.

‘duties.’¹ And how Demosthenes applied, and taught his countrymen to apply, these principles to the practical politics of their day, we all know.

The greatness of ancient Rome, too, stood not in her laws alone, but in her laws and her free speech together; and the tribune had as large a share as the senator in building up the republic. And what was true of the states of antiquity, is not less true of those of modern times, only that we have multiplied and ramified indefinitely the forms of reasoning, discussing, and teaching, by writing and printing, no less than by word of mouth.

Nor were the Hebrews wanting in this characteristic of every nation that deserves the name; they, too, had their *nomos* and *logos*—the LAW and the PROPHETS: they, too, in virtue of this distinction and its effects, have obtained a place among the historical nations of the world. The latest, as he is one of the greatest, of our political philosophers, declares that it was due to the existence of ‘an inestimably precious unorganized ‘institution, the order (if it may be so termed) of ‘prophets;’ that ‘the Jews, instead of being stationary ‘like other Asiatics, were, next to the Greeks, the most ‘progressive people of antiquity; and, jointly with them, ‘have been the starting-point and main propelling ‘agency of modern cultivation.’² And Milton has said the same in words, which, however familiar to the

¹ *De Coronâ*, c. 73.

² *Considerations on Representative Government.* By John Stuart Mill; pp. 42, 43.

reader, he will not be unwilling to see again before him :—

‘ Their orators thou then extoll’st, as those
 The top of eloquence, statist^s indeed,
 And lovers of their country as may seem ;
 But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
 As men divinely taught, and better teaching
 The solid rules of civil government
 In their majestic unaffected style,
 Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
 In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
 What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
 What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat ;
 These only with our Law, best form a king.’¹

The prophets rose into increasing importance as the Hebrew nation itself grew and became consolidated : they came from every rank and profession, and though they had schools or colleges, and we see occasional indications of their forming an organized body in the state, their influence was, in the main, a personal one. The prophet warned, threatened, and denounced, as well as advised and encouraged, the king or the people, as the occasion required ; and the political position of such prophets as Isaiah and Jeremiah may be fitly compared with that of Demosthenes or Cicero, Milton or Burke ; though, in some respects, still more fitly with that of Luther, and Calvin, and Knox. The thoughtful student of the writings of the Hebrew prophets has no more difficulty in connecting the whole of their discourses with the events of their own times, than is reasonably explained by the imperfection

¹ *Paradise Regained*, iv. 353.

of the historical records which remain to us of those events. Whatever else the prophets were, they were the political advisers and guides of their nation, in the maintenance and development, through constant struggles, of constitutional government—government by law, and not by arbitrary will. Samuel was the last of the judges, as well as the first of the prophets, and it may not be possible to distinguish completely between the two functions in considering his acts. Still it would seem that it is in his capacity of prophet that he first tries to induce the people over whom he exercised so deservedly great an influence, to abandon their desire for a king, and to continue in the old paths of the commonwealth: when they insist, he chooses and anoints a king; and when that king treats the constitution and laws with a disregard which was not the less serious because the instances recorded may seem of no great importance to us, Samuel takes steps—treasonable steps the pedant might call them—for saving the nation and its future life, by advising and sanctioning a change of dynasty. Let us ask ourselves whether the Jewish nation would have played any part as a ‘main propelling agency of modern cultivation,’ if its monarchy had been allowed to take the form which Saul would have given it, if he had made religion a creature of the kingly power, and war an instrument of rapine, and not of justice; and we shall, perhaps, see that Samuel’s view of the matter was the true one, and in accordance with the proper vocation of a

prophet. In the latter years of Solomon, when his government began to replace with the vices of an oriental despotism the virtues of a constitutional rule, the prophet Ahijah points out Jeroboam, the governor of the northern tribes, as the man whom the people may fitly rally round when the favourable opportunity occurs for throwing off a yoke which is becoming intolerable. As the nation progresses, and the reciprocal rights and duties of rulers and people become more defined and consolidated, and the necessity for violent revolutions becomes less, while the evils they would inflict on the nation become greater with its growing civilization, the prophets, like the wiser political advisers in the more advanced times of other nations, keep themselves more strictly within the limits of the laws. Isaiah is unsparing in his denunciation of the vices, social or personal, of the king, the priests, the prophets, and the statesmen, as well as of the people; and he warns them that their guilt will bring upon them the punishment of foreign conquest: but he does not, like the earlier prophets, take upon himself to disturb the existing order of the state by prompting or sanctioning revolutionary acts. And if we compare Isaiah's political counsels for patriotically resisting these very conquerors, whom he had yet declared to be God's scourge of the nation, with Jeremiah's advice to the Jews of his time, that they should submit quietly to the invader, we see another phase of the wisdom of the true prophet, who knows how to distinguish ends from

means, and who can adapt new means to the ends when the old ones have utterly failed to be applicable. For the patriotic spirit, which was still capable of being roused to worthy action in Isaiah's time, was sick unto death in that of Jeremiah; and the question was no longer that of maintaining the grand old Hebrew polity against the Assyrian exterminators of law and order by universal despotism, but of protracting the miseries of political decay and extinction under the feeble tyranny of a Jehoiakim or Zedekiah and their nobles, when the harsh strong military rule of the Babylonian offered the only opportunity—and history has proved that it was an opportunity—for a national recovery even from that depth of wretchedness. Jeremiah has been condemned as unpatriotic, even as a traitor, for discouraging the resistance of the besieged city, while he shared its sufferings; but he is fully justified by the results in the history of his own nation, and not less so by a comparison with the like results in the like circumstances of other nations, ancient and modern. It was of the essence of the prophet's calling, that he should sacrifice the letter to the spirit, if need was; and he did this, sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another: but if we look well, we may always see that he was never a mere denouncer and protester: the law was ever with him, as it has been with the wise political teacher of every nation, the counterpart of liberty, whether of speech or action; and he knew that the counterpoise and reciprocal

play of these two forces was constantly required for the well-being of the state, whatever means might be most fitting for that end. And thus, in that extremest case with which Jeremiah had to deal, when all faith in law and order had died out of the hearts of the nation's own rulers, the prophet could teach the nation that it might still believe in the reality and vitality of these; but that for a season they must look for them from without, where then only could they be found.

But while the study of the writings and acts of the Hebrew prophets leads us to see that the analogy is real, and not fanciful, between these and the orators and political advisers of other nations, it shows us differences as well as resemblances. Demosthenes, and Cicero, and Burke, claim to speak in the cause of law and order, of justice and goodness; but the Hebrew prophet claims to speak in the name, and as the messenger, of the God of law and order, of justice and goodness. According to the best Hebrew scholars, the word which we translate *prophet*, in the original means a *speaker*, yet a speaker who has been instructed to speak by another, and that other, God. This is illustrated by Exodus iv. 16, 'And he shall be thy *spokes-*
' *man* (נְבִיא, the word which we elsewhere render '*prophet*) unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall
' be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to
' him instead of God.' And it seems to have been with this understanding of the name, that the LXX. trans-

lated נִבִּי, by *προφητῆς*; for the *προφητῆς* of the Greeks was not the predictor, but the forth-speaker; the interpreter of the oracle, of which the utterances were too obscure to be understood without such interpretation; though, while thus interpreting, he might be one to whom the future, no less than the past and present, were revealed:—

ὅς ἤδη τά τ' ἔοντα, τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἔοντα.

Our Lord thus designates John the Baptist as a prophet, yea more than a prophet, because he was so especially a man sent from God, to declare the coming of His kingdom; so the Apostles and Evangelists use the term; and so it has always been understood in modern times of most earnestness and zeal, such as our Reformation or Civil War, when men interpreted the Bible by experience gained in the council-chamber, the battlefield, or the prison, rather than by collation of commentaries. Thus Milton hopes, in his 'Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing,' that England is on the eve of becoming a nation of prophets; and Jeremy Taylor entitles his book on the like subject, a 'Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying,' without a hint that he is using the word in any unusual sense.

In thus claiming to be, not only a teacher, but a teacher sent from God, the Hebrew prophet asserted for himself a position entirely in harmony with that which he asserted for his nation also. The great men,

and especially the great teachers, of any nation, pre-eminently exhibit the characteristics of their nation, while they carry them to an excellence and a height not attainable by inferior persons. Now we may say that the characteristic of the Hebrew nation, which distinguishes it from other nations, and marks the place which it holds in the history of the world, is its witness that the God who made heaven and earth is the moral and political Ruler of men and nations, and that men and nations stand in abiding personal relations with God, and God with them. If poetry and philosophy and political equality, if laws and constitutions and powers of self-government, be, in one sense, the birthright of all men, it is not the less true that these blessings were first acquired, matured, and reduced into possession for us, by the special agencies of the Greeks and the Romans. And if, as St. Paul told the Athenians and the Romans, the knowledge of God, and of the relations of God and man, was the birthright of all men, it is not less the fact (as St. Paul also points out), that this knowledge was made clear and coherent and vital in the hearts and lives of men, and matured and consolidated into an abiding inheritance for them, by the agency of the Hebrew nation. It is not without an effort of reflection, that we nineteenth century Englishmen realize the fact, that the belief in one living God, at once the Creator and the Moral Governor of the world, is not the natural belief of mankind. Yet the study of history not only shows us this, but also that though the early religion

of the Greeks and of the Romans, and the successive efforts of the wisest and best among them, in developing and purifying that religion, might have been expected to lead to some such culmination in a true and pure faith, such was not the fact. The piety of Homer and Æschylus and Socrates, of Numa and Scipio and Cicero, did not help the world to the attainment of a true faith, as well as to the attainment of true knowledge in art, in philosophy, and in civil government. But while the religion of the Greeks and the Romans decayed, and passed through superstition into scepticism and atheism, in spite of individual efforts to arrest the process, to the Hebrews it was given to advance, through national and personal struggles and sufferings, extending over many centuries, and even, at last, through national decay and death, to an ever higher and purer knowledge of God, and faith in God. We must look at the facts of the Hebrew history with a steady and prolonged investigation, to see, what we then do see, by how painful a process it was alone possible for men to learn that they are governed by one living and righteous God, at once their King and their Father and Friend. Then we see in that history, how erroneous, partial, and otherwise defective and unworthy beliefs, were subjected to successive purifications and eliminations, as the Hebrew race passed through its course. The worship of idols, of many gods, even of the one God in places of supposed special sanctity, finally ends in the worship of God who is a Spirit, in

spirit and in truth ; human,¹ and then animal sacrifices, are superseded by the sacrifices of a contrite or a thankful heart ; and the ritual of sacerdotal ceremonies gradually makes way for the liturgies, and readings, and expositions of Scripture, through which the Synagogues passed into the assemblies of the Christian Church. Thus argues St. Paul (himself the last and, excepting his Divine Master, the greatest of the Hebrew prophets) when, in the Epistle to the Romans, he sets forth the calling and office of Israel, and shows how the mission was fulfilled, though from the days of Abraham to his own there had ever been a portion, and often the largest portion, of the nation so faithless and reprobate, that he denies to them the name of Israel.

And while there was thus a continual progress making in the nation, in order to its arrival at these ends, and the future was a constant advance in excellence, and not merely in position, upon the past, the future was, in a very singular manner, a chief interest

¹ Though the history of Abraham had taught the Jews from the earliest times that God required men to sacrifice their own wills by obedience and faith, and not their children with actual knife, and wood, and fire ; though the law of Moses taught the same truth by directing the redemption and spiritual dedication of the firstborn of every human family, while the firstborn of all cattle was to be actually sacrificed ; yet so deeply was the disposition to human sacrifice rooted in men's minds, that at the period of the nation's highest civilization we find Ahaz and Manasseh still sacrificing their children to Moloch. They were every way bad kings ; but their depravity must have represented the depraved portion of the then existing nation, as much as its pious and virtuous portion was represented in Hezekiah and Isaiah.

of the nation—that is, of the better and nobler part of the nation—and especially of its teachers. The Hebrew lived in the future, while he worked in the present and strengthened his energies for work and his future hopes by the traditions of the past. Grant as much or as little historical value to the narrative of Genesis and Exodus as the severest criticism may demand, or the temper of the critic dispose him to give, these narratives are still the mirror in which we see the lineaments of the Hebrew mind clearly shown to us. The Hebrew idea of creation is that of a cosmos of physical order and beauty, of which the inanimate and animate existences were evolved by the Creator according to the several laws which He had given to each; yet in all subordinated from the beginning to the descendants of the human pair who were to multiply till they had filled and subdued the earth, while they themselves were to live in personal relations with the Creator Himself. And at every discovery of the fact, that there are powers of evil arrayed to break down this order, and to resist man's attempts to enter into and possess his inheritance, there is a new promise for the future, a new assurance, not only that the victory shall be with the right, but that it shall be won by the aid of Jehovah present with His servants. The seed of the woman shall triumph over the seed of the serpent; the flood shall be followed by the rainbow; the descendants of the childless Abraham shall become a great nation in the land in which he is a wanderer; the Egyptian bondage shall

be succeeded by the triumphs of the Red Sea, and the entry into the Promised Land; and all by the same ever-present aid. What the Iliad and Odyssey were to the Greeks, what the traditions preserved to us by Livy were to the Romans, and what they are to us as the records of the original mind and character of these nations, such were, and are, the early books of the Old Testament to the Hebrews and to us. We see that the light in which the Hebrew read his history was the light of God's promises, fulfilled in the past, and confidently anticipated in the future; promises of the establishment, and maintenance, and endless evolution of the kingdom of Jehovah upon earth, with Jehovah present in His kingdom. Age after age these anticipations become more and more lofty, and more universal. As increasing civilization and civil progress extend the earthly horizon of the nation, so is their spiritual horizon extended by a new, and clearer, and fuller apprehension of what God's plans and promises are, and what His methods of carrying them into effect. It becomes continually clearer to the Hebrew mind, that not only the material, but also the human and spiritual, world has been constituted and is governed by the laws and counsels and actual superintendence of God, and that God employs men as His agents both for carrying on this government, and for revealing and explaining its character and methods. And the culmination and consummation of this national training was in the preparation of the nation to expect, and for the faithful of

the nation to acknowledge and receive in due time, the actual coming of a Messiah, and thus realize that end which the writer to the Hebrews sets forth in the opening words of his Epistle:—‘ God, who at sundry
 ‘ times and in divers manners spake in time past unto
 ‘ the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days
 ‘ spoken unto us by a Son, whom He hath appointed
 ‘ heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds,’
 &c. Thus the nation became a nation of prophets, and its teachers prophets above all men, though bearing the common lineaments of all.

Example is better than abstract statement, and I will take the liberty of quoting (with a few alterations) from my Commentary on the Book of Isaiah a sketch of that prophet’s life and writings, as illustrative of the prophetic office which was raised to its highest dignity in his person. For the detailed reasons which have led me to adhere to the old belief that Isaiah wrote the whole book, notwithstanding the weighty arguments which the greatest German scholars have adduced in favour of their contrary conclusion, I must refer the reader to the Commentary itself.

‘ Let us turn to the book as it is, and hear its own
 ‘ story, as far as we can make it out, and from its con-
 ‘ tents we shall gradually obtain a distinct acquaintance
 ‘ with the prophet’s times, with his personal character,
 ‘ and with the nature and course of his political career.
 ‘ Uzziah’s able administration, both foreign and do-
 ‘ mestic, with enough of military discipline, and actual

‘ warfare, to give manly energy to the people, yet with
‘ a still greater care for agriculture, trade, and commerce
‘ by land and sea, had raised Judah to a high point of
‘ material prosperity ; and the impulse thus imparted
‘ to it, continued during the reign of his successor
‘ Jotham, whose nobles and statesmen, like himself, not
‘ only inherited their fathers’ political maxims and
‘ habits along with their wealth and honours, but had
‘ also been trained in their practical school. But their
‘ prosperity had become merely material. For their
‘ morality was no more than a selfish prudence, often
‘ degenerating into the employment of the forms and
‘ the ministers of the law to effect iniquitous and
‘ criminal objects, and their religion a performance of
‘ the Mosaic ritual by men who did not conceal the
‘ sceptical opinions, or the superstitious idolatries,
‘ which had taken the place of a living faith in their
‘ minds, accordingly as these happened to be intellectual
‘ or formal. Consequently, when the third generation
‘ —that of Ahaz—succeeded, it was too completely
‘ enervated by luxury and vice to maintain the tradi-
‘ tional policy even against such feeble enemies as
‘ Ephraim, Syria, or Philistia, and still less to make
‘ head against the truly formidable power which had
‘ begun again to threaten the world from Assyria. A
‘ crisis, or judgment day, had arrived, in which the
‘ general corruption and depravity must be punished, or
‘ else truth and righteousness would be permanently
‘ superseded by iniquity and selfishness, and a mere

‘ kingdom of evil. And the sentence then, as always,
‘ was executed through the providential coincidence of
‘ this attack from the scourge of God, with the moment
‘ when long-continued vice had produced that internal
‘ weakness and imbecility which are its proper fruits ;
‘ according to the law which has united sin and its
‘ punishment in inevitable sequence, and provided that
‘ the loss of ordinary intelligence and ability to avoid
‘ the latter shall be one of the links of the chain. The
‘ accumulated wealth of the country was exhausted in
‘ buying, or rather trying to buy, the protection or the
‘ forbearance of the Assyrian hordes, who not only
‘ wasted the land year after year when it was culti-
‘ vated, but prevented its cultivation by carrying the
‘ inhabitants into slavery, and especially to Babylon ;
‘ the people of which seem, according to Micah, Isaiah’s
‘ cotemporary, as well as to himself, to have taken a
‘ chief part in the oppression of Israel. But reforma-
‘ tion was the end, and punishment only the means ;
‘ the anger of a Father not only ready, but longing, to
‘ forgive his children, and to receive them again to his
‘ heart ; and while the old vicious generation was thus
‘ gradually rooted out, a new one, of which Isaiah,
‘ Hezekiah, and Eliakim were the leaders, grew up
‘ under the salutary though trying discipline of national
‘ humiliation and suffering. And when this discipline
‘ had done all that it could do for that time, when God
‘ had by it taught His people all that they were capable
‘ of learning from it, without being wholly consumed in

‘ the process ; and when He had at least secured a per-
‘ manent result for the world, if not for a people too
‘ perverse to partake therein, He delivered Judah from
‘ its great oppressors, and restored it to peace and pro-
‘ sperity under its king. Men are the agents, God
‘ himself being present to direct them, in the accom-
‘ plishment of the laws of His moral government of the
‘ world ; and it was a main part of Isaiah’s mission to
‘ warn and to denounce, although the immediate effect
‘ seemed only to be to “ make the heart of this people
‘ fat, and their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes, lest
‘ they should see and understand, and convert and
‘ be healed.” His deprecatory question, “ Lord, how
‘ long ? ” is illustrated by his habitual practice of imme-
‘ diately following up his warnings and denunciations
‘ with consolatory promises ; and if it ever seemed to
‘ him, as it seems to many of us now, that the melan-
‘ choly task was imposed by an un pitying sternness, he
‘ would have learnt, and we may learn, that it was not
‘ so when it was adequately explained by the events of
‘ after years. These showed that, whatever worth the
‘ national reformation under Hezekiah possessed, it did
‘ owe to the long continuance of the previous punish-
‘ ment ; and that, even as it was, this had not been
‘ enough to make any permanent impression, but that,
‘ in simple fact, the people had been allowed to “ convert
‘ and be healed ” too soon, and that the whole process
‘ had to be gone through again, with redoubled severity ;
‘ and while the short narrative contained in the thirty-

‘ ninth chapter tells us how unflinchingly Isaiah threw
‘ down, with his own hands, the structure of national
‘ prospects which he had been building up during a
‘ ministry of near fifty years, the subsequent chapters,
‘ to the end of the book, show him deliberately raising
‘ it again in a manner exactly consistent with his whole
‘ previous character and teaching. And consistent
‘ alike in its resemblances and its differences ; for while
‘ the man and the prophet, with whom we have become
‘ so familiar in the past prophecies, meets us throughout
‘ the new, in his old individual shape, we recognise and
‘ identify him, not more by his faith and hopes, his
‘ philosophy and imagination, and his whole method of
‘ looking at men and things, and God’s government of
‘ both, than by his wonted exercise of that prerogative
‘ of a man of genius, and a prophet of God, by which
‘ he adapts himself, and his teaching, to the new
‘ necessities which this new experience had revealed.
‘ And though I do not forget that there is no more
‘ perfect unity than that which results from the work
‘ of successive labourers actuated by the same idea, of
‘ which the Book of the Psalms, the Bible itself, and,
‘ in another kind, the building of York cathedral, are
‘ instances ; and though it would be possible to make
‘ out a very good case in favour of such being the unity
‘ of the book before us, if we only had a foundation of
‘ fact to begin with, still I appeal with confidence to
‘ the judgment of every thorough and matter-of-fact
‘ student of our text, whether there is not complete

consistency and cónerency in the mind and writings of the one man Isaiah; or whether the theory which divides him into an Isaiah and a "Pseudo-Isaiah," or "Great Unnamed," does not deprive the former, if not also the latter, half, of much more than half its meaning. To myself, it often seems that, if these latter prophecies of Isaiah had been lost, some Cuvier or Owen of human science might be conceived restoring them in their actual shape, from the indications of their law and germ in his earlier writings. And, on the other hand, I am irresistibly reminded of the Jewish tradition, that Isaiah was sawn asunder by those who misunderstood, and denied, his real office and powers; and think how that tradition has been, by a reversal of the ordinary process, provided with its philosophical idea, and transformed into a regular myth, after 2,000 years of mere historical existence.

'The "years that bring the philosophic mind"¹ had come to Isaiah, with the last qualification needed to enable him to complete one of the few works which are "not for an age, but for all time." He had, indeed, shown himself, by what he had done, well prepared for what yet remained. If he had reason, after delivering the

¹ 'Let me advise the reader to study the whole of Wordsworth's Ode from which I here quote, as a most instructive comment upon the spirit of prophecy, as exhibited by Isaiah; and especially as to the relation between these latter chapters and the earlier ones. Our seer, like the Hebrew one, teaches us how to connect "the pansy at our feet" with "truths that wake to perish never;" and to understand how "our noisy years" may "seem moments in the being of the eternal sileuce."

‘ Lord’s last message to Hezekiah, to exclaim, with the
‘ Psalmist, “ My spirit is overwhelmed within me ; my
‘ heart within me is desolate,” he knew how to add,
‘ “ I remember the days of old ; I meditate on all Thy
‘ works ; I muse on the work of Thy hands ;” and now
‘ that he had understood, and unequivocally declared in
‘ the Lord’s name, and as His prophet, that his early
‘ warnings that the cities of Judah should be without
‘ inhabitant, and the houses without man, and that the
‘ Lord should remove them far away, and there should
‘ be a great forsaking in the land, had not been FULFILLED
‘ in the late years of calamity ; that there was still to
‘ come a captivity, not of many inhabitants, but of the
‘ nation and its king ; and a destruction, not of villages
‘ and towns, but of Jerusalem and the temple, when, in
‘ the words of his cotemporary, “ Zion should be ploughed
‘ as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the
‘ mountain of the temple a forest, and the daughter of
‘ Zion, the nation itself, should go forth out of the city,
‘ even to Babylon ;” he would be no less earnest to
‘ discover and to declare when and how were to be
‘ realized his own corresponding promises, that “ Zion
‘ should be redeemed with judgment, and her converts
‘ with righteousness ; that she should be called the city
‘ of righteousness, the faithful city ; that in her should
‘ reign a king of the house of David, of the increase of
‘ whose government and peace there should be no end,”
‘ and of which the blessings, spiritual no less than
‘ temporal, should not be limited to Israel, but extended

‘ to all nations who should “ go up to the mountain of
‘ the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, to be
‘ taught of His ways, and to walk in His paths,” and
‘ “ whom the Lord of hosts should bless, saying, Blessed
‘ be Egypt, My people, and Assyria, the work of My
‘ hands, and Israel, Mine inheritance.” And the
‘ latter half of the book tells us the result:—that the
‘ human and finite ideals of his youth, which he had
‘ expected to see realised in the fruits of his own mi-
‘ nistry and Hezekiah’s reign, had faded (as all such ideals
‘ do) like the flower of the field, though not till they
‘ had served their purpose both for his countrymen and
‘ himself; but that to replace them there had been
‘ meanwhile maturing, and now was revealed to his
‘ purged and illumined eye, God’s divine and infinite
‘ ideal of the destinies of Israel and mankind. His faith
‘ and hopes, and the whole tenor of his teaching, had
‘ from the first been based, not upon the merits of his
‘ nation, but upon God’s original choice of them, with-
‘ out any previous merit on their part—upon His good-
‘ will towards them, and upon His faithfulness in keep-
‘ ing the covenant He had made with them, however
‘ they might break it; and this purpose of goodness,
‘ of free grace, must remain still, and could as little be
‘ overcome by new sins as by the old ones. And yet,
‘ what could any kings and prophets do more, nay,
‘ what could God Himself do, that He had not done,
‘ to effect it in the face of such inveterate resistance,
‘ and even incapacity? The answer, we may be sure,

‘ came to Isaiah through that diligent inquiry with
‘ which St. Peter, who entered so heartily into the
‘ spirit of the great and good of his own people, tells
‘ us it was the habit of the prophets to “ search what,
‘ or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which
‘ was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand
‘ the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should
‘ follow.” He would ask himself what, more than
‘ he had hitherto supposed, was contained in those pre-
‘ dictions which he had been moved to utter when he
‘ and his disciples were not only sharing the calamities
‘ which overwhelmed the nation at the beginning of the
‘ reign of Ahaz, but also bearing the contempt and per-
‘ secutions of their unbelieving countrymen, to the effect
‘ that they were to look for relief and triumph to the
‘ birth of a Child of the house of David, whose name
‘ should be called “ Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty
‘ God ;” and thus meditating upon these, and all the
‘ rest of his past prophecies, he would have been—we
‘ see that he actually was—at last prepared to receive
‘ and to make known a still more glorious revelation of
‘ God’s counsels than had yet been made to him. This
‘ declared that the invisible Lord and Guide of the
‘ nation would come in His own person and effect that
‘ deliverance which His most pious representatives were
‘ unequal to accomplish, by bearing the sins of the
‘ nation as they could not be borne by any other king
‘ or prophet, however devoted to suffer, and to do all
‘ things for the nation’s sake : and that out of this

‘ deliverance should spring, not a mere restoration and
‘ re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel under the
‘ Branch of the Stem of Jesse, but a universal king-
‘ dom, and one which, in order to be universal, would
‘ be spiritual, established in the hearts and lives of its
‘ subjects, and, therefore, no longer dependent on out-
‘ ward circumstances of national peace and prosperity
‘ for its development, but able, if need were, to found,
‘ and continually expand itself, in spite, nay, by help,
‘ of the absence of these things.’¹

But here I shall be asked, ‘ Do you mean, and will
‘ you say, categorically, whether you do, or do not
‘ mean, that the prophets were inspired, and possessed
‘ and exercised a miraculous power of predicting future
‘ events?’ I have no inclination to *evade* these ques-
tions. I hail the publication of the *Essays and
Reviews*, and their wide-spread circulation, as a secu-
rity that the evasion of these and such-like questions
can never again be possible, in our generation at least.
But there are real difficulties in the way of replying
‘ Yes ’ or ‘ No ’ to such questions. They assume—what
is not the fact—that the words ‘ inspired ’ and ‘ miracu-
lous ’ have a precisely defined meaning, known alike to
the questioner and the respondent. The words are used,
indeed, as shibboleths both of popular belief and popu-
lar scepticism ; but every student of theology, as well
as of moral or physical science, knows that popular

¹ *Hebrew Politics in the time of Sargon and Sennacherib* (a Com-
mentary on Isaiah), pp. 321—327.

phrases are far from precise and accurate, though they usually embody a good deal of sense. And not only are these words—‘inspired’ and ‘miraculous’—not defined by their wide-spread popular usage, but they are not defined completely, and beyond difference of opinion and statement, by the accurate theological thinkers and reasoners themselves. In this respect we are no worse off than the students of physical science, as to the very facts of which there are often wide differences among the great authorities—as in the most recent discussions upon the comparative size and character of the brain in men and monkeys, the nature of celts, and the habits of gorillas. We need not complain, but we must not shut our eyes to the fact, that so it is in theological discussions also. In the one case, as in the other, one must remember, with Bacon, that ‘If a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties.’ And while there is still much that is doubtful, and needs farther patient investigation as to the nature of Hebrew prophecy—investigation of facts, and not of theories and reasonings—there is much that is clearly ascertained. I do not find that any real student of the prophets and their writings considers a power of miraculous prediction to be their chief, or most important characteristic, however strongly he may believe and maintain its existence. Hengstenberg, Havernick, and Alexander, no less than Ewald and Bunsen, find and declare that prophecy has

a deeper and a nobler, a more human and more divine, interest than that. To get at a real understanding of what prophecy is, a real study of the prophets is necessary; and the points of agreement among such students are, in truth, always greater than their differences. In the actual combats of the critics and commentators, the differences may seem to them and to their followers the important matters; but it is pleasanter, and, I think, more profitable, to look for the agreement below those differences; to stand by at a sufficient distance to be able to see that if the shield is gold on one side, it is silver on the other; to find a firm shore from whence we may look with no indifferent gaze on the storm, while we feel how sweet such a standing-place is. Let me entreat the reader to take such a standing-place for himself, and look for himself whether there be not a coherent and credible meaning in prophecy which, if it does not completely explain or supersede the doubts and differences of commentators, reduces them to such comparative non-importance beside itself, that we can wait patiently for farther inquiry to clear up those difficulties too, and yet feel that we already possess the main knowledge we want.

The Prayer-Book is the authoritative manual of a large portion of the Church in England, and in it, if anywhere, we may look for so much theological precision of language as can reasonably be required of us. And so far from the Prayer-Book limiting either the word or the idea of inspiration to the writers of the Bible, these are the passages in which the word

occurs:—‘Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the
 ‘inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit:’—‘That by Thy holy
 ‘inspiration we may think those things that be good:’—
 ‘Inspire continually the universal Church with the
 ‘spirit of truth, unity, and concord:’—while the fact
 that such inspiration is the ordinary, habitual right of
 every member of Christ’s Church, and that apart from
 such inspiration he can neither be holy nor wise, is
 asserted or implied in every sentence of the book. And
 this inspiration the prophets undoubtedly claim for
 themselves, nor has their claim ever been denied by
 any one who recognises the reality of such inspiration
 at all: but so far from supposing that it was higher
 either in kind or in degree than that of those who
 were to come after them, they look forward to the
 time when what they felt to be a partial, occasional,
 measured gift to them, should be given to all men,
 from the least to the greatest, without measure.¹ Their
 calling and office in this world were different from ours,
 or from that of any other teachers, ancient or modern,
 and in this sense their inspiration was special, and dif-
 ferent from that of other men; but the difference was
 in its object, and in its form, and not in its essence.²

¹ Jerem. xxxi. 33, 34; Joel ii. 28, 29.

² Ewald, in the Introduction to his work on the Prophets, has treated this subject—the reality of the fellowship between God and man through the presence of God’s Spirit in man, and the special form of this inspiration in prophecy—with his wonted piety and wisdom, and with striking simplicity and perspicuity. The whole treatise is most interesting and instructive. The two first sections are translated in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, for January, 1853.

Does, then, this difference of form involve a miraculous power of predicting future events? Some men prefer to approach this question as one of fact, others as one of reasoning. The latter start from the doctrine—the logical soundness of which is fully recognised by Mr. Mill, in his *System of Logic*—that the Creator of the world, and Giver of the laws by which the world is governed, must be believed to be able to suspend those laws if He sees fit, and may be expected to do so, if there be an adequate cause for the suspension. And they maintain that such an adequate cause for a miraculous gift of prediction to the prophets is found in the importance of the evidence which this would bear to the fact that they were God's messengers and spokesmen, and that their words were His words. I do not myself feel that this is a more worthy view of the Divine Wisdom than that which looks for a perfect provision and adaptation of means to ends in God's ordinary government of the world, and in the ordinary relations of God and man—ordinary, yet spiritual no less than temporal. Just as I believe that the prophets were inspired because I believe that every good thought and affection in the humblest Christian is inspired too, so I believe that there is no occasion to look for miraculous proofs of the calling of the prophets, because I believe that the every-day world, spiritual as well as physical, affords all the evidence we need of the perfect wisdom of the desigus and methods, and of the actual personal superintendence,

by which God has governed the world from the beginning till now.

And I find myself no less at variance with those who, taking their stand on the *facts*, say that they find undoubted instances of a miraculous power of prediction in the writings of the Hebrew prophets. That the prophets exercised a very wonderful power of prediction, such as is not known in our own times, must, I think, be admitted by every impartial student of the subject; yet it was a power which seems to me in analogy with the other known powers of the human race, and of favoured individuals of the race; and that it is more probably and more worthily explained by reference to what we know of the laws of man's spirit and human existence, than by assuming a suspension of those laws. A certain power of predicting events in the immediate future, we shall all agree with Demosthenes,¹ and with Mr. Mill,² in recognising as an undoubted qualification of the true statesman and political adviser. Cicero held that the reality of the power of divination was proved alike by the universal belief of the greatest sages, and the manifest correspondence between the predictions and events of the oracles of Delphi in particular.³ And Niebuhr⁴ denies that the accounts of the ancient oracles are explicable by calling

¹ Quoted above.

² *Representative Government*, p. 224.

³ Coleridge's *Lay Sermons*, p. 91, third edit. Grote's *History of Greece*, ii. 339. Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, ii. (Divination).

⁴ Lieber's *Reminiscences of Niebuhr*, pp. 225, 227.

them artifices of the priests; and his observations suggest the thought whether these powers did once exist, not as a miraculous witness of the true faith, but as a human endowment of the earlier ages, like the powers of language-making, and myth-making, which we no longer possess. And the history of the middle ages, as well as those of Greece and Rome, nay, those of later times still, contains many instances of the fulfilment of predictions of no less social and political importance than those of the Hebrews, to those to whom they were addressed. The intuitive and imaginative powers of the human race have become weaker as we have passed from childhood to maturity, while those of the reason have become stronger; and the reasoning faculties now do much work that used to be done by some happy insight. The social and political relations, too, of modern nations are far more complicated than those of the ancients, for they are the intricate results of many more causes than were at work in the ancient world; consequently, an intuitive discernment of causes and effects was easier then than now, for philosophers tell us that every event could be certainly predicted if we knew all the causes that are at work to produce it, seeing that like effects always come of like causes. The age of the world was different, the special vocation of the Hebrews was different, and the special qualifications for filling that vocation in that age were different, from those which we have to do with in our own experience; but the wider experience

of our race, and not of our mere selves, may teach us that each age, each nation, and the great teachers of each age and nation, have exhibited powers beyond what are known in any other case. There has been but one Homer, one Socrates, one Michael Angelo, one Shakspeare: the greater part even of intellectual and educated men live and die with hardly a perceptible trace of the gift which enabled Newton to grasp very complicated theorems with intuitive apprehension; and Mozart, in infancy, could compose music with a knowledge of the laws of harmony which few grown men could acquire by any study. There has been one Greece, from which the world derives its philosophy and art; one Rome, to which it owes its laws and governments; and what would the world be now, and to the end of time, if there were no England? And we neither deny these facts, nor call them miracles in order to give God the honour of them.

There is, however, in many persons, an anxiety to recognise the existence of miraculous powers in the prophets, and a fear and suspicion of any question upon this point, because such persons feel that to them these miracles are witnesses of God's personal presence with the prophets, and, therefore, with themselves. And, doubtless, this fear is a wise and true one. There is a danger of our finding the order of the universe so perfect, and so fitted for harmonious working in all its parts, that there shall seem no place and no need for a living God. And they who have learnt in their own

hearts and lives that God is a Father and a Friend, and not merely a Creator, must shrink from any such suggestion. I would not disturb this belief for those to whom it is thus valuable; nay, would unreservedly agree with them, that if they are right in supposing that it is the proper support for all men's faith, then assuredly the fact of miraculous predictions will be one day universally seen to be a fact. But it is a mistake to suppose that this belief in miracles, and faith in a personal God, do always rise and fall with each other. It is the object of this Tract to assert this faith in a living God, as witnessed to by the prophets; and for myself, I am persuaded that their witness is clearest, and best understood, without such reference to miracle.

We know that even machinery of iron and steam is not really self-acting; that not only has it an intelligent personal maker, but that it must be kept in repair, kept at work, and applied to human purposes, by the constant personal superintendence of living men. And still more is this true of all social machinery. If we were told that a man had perfectly organized his household on his wedding-day, and had thenceforth left it to work of itself, we should not even care to hear the result of so absurd a scheme. Nor do we feel much more interest in a family, in which the position of the members is that of servile dependence on the detailed orders of a master, who, though present and active in maintaining regularity, does so by mere rules and orders, without

showing trust or sympathy towards his dependents, or expecting these of them. What we do admire and praise, as worthy the name, is the household in which the head is present and active in upholding and developing the order which he has planned and arranged from the first; but who does this by a human, spiritual influence, and an authority which is felt and acknowledged in the spirits, and not by the mere outward acts, of his children and dependents. He has a plan and method which need no arbitrary after-thoughts and changes to set them right; but this plan and method are not the less dependent on his presence and influence, put forth in unceasing action, for their success, nay, for their continued existence. So, too, with political institutions. They are not only made by wise lawgivers at first, but they are, and must be, continually worked by wise and able men; the want of whom is immediately followed by deterioration even of the best constitution, and by its destruction, if no new generation of such men arises. And thus we come back to the position with which we started, that all human society requires, as the condition of its existence, that it should have, not only laws, but also guiding men; and that while this truth was known and witnessed to by the Hebrews, no less than by the other historical nations, to them was it specially given to declare, that these guides themselves must be taught of God, and that in their teaching and guidance they are reflecting and explaining God's own methods of guiding and

teaching mankind. This is the special witness which the Prophets bore to their own nation, and have borne ever since to the Christian Church—that God has established His kingdom upon earth, and that He governs it, not merely by laws, but by His Spirit and His living presence also.

II.

DO KINGS REIGN BY THE GRACE OF GOD?

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[*The Articles alluded to in this Conversation will be found in the Postscript, p. 60.*]

A. HAVE you read the leading article in the *Times* of Monday, October 22d, on the speech of the King of Prussia at Königsburg?

B. Yes; and another leading article in the same journal, on the same day, respecting the struggle of the Pope with the Emperor of Russia at Warsaw.

A. Why do you name them together? What have German and Slavonic countries to do with each other? Unless, indeed, you mean to enforce the striking remark of the first article, that Frederic II. the spoiler of Poland, must have reigned by the Grace of God, if the present king can boast to do so.

B. I should have fancied that Frederic II. *did* reign by the Grace of God.

A. The pupil of Voltaire?

B. I do not see how Voltaire, with all his jests, or Frederic, with all his legions, could alter a fact.

A. Oh! now, I see what you mean. The Grace of God may signify, as the *Times* observes, that kings could not exist if God did not suffer them to exist. They may be struck dead by Him if He pleases. But as the writer of the article pertinently hints, so may you and I, though we have no royalty.

B. I do not understand by the Grace of God the tolerance of a Destroyer. I may be tempted to think of God in that character. All men are. The revelation of His Grace leads me to think of Him exactly in the opposite character.

A. Still you are saying nothing that is distinctive of kings. Do you think, or do you not, that they have privileges, and Divine privileges, which do not appertain to you or me?

B. I do not think, but know, that they have duties and responsibilities which do not appertain to you or me.

A. Of course, every one knows that. But the question is, whence come these duties and responsibilities.

B. I think that is the question.

A. The King of Prussia says—

B. My dear friend. It may be very important to Prussians to know what their king says, and still more what he means. But the phrase, *Grace of God*, is found upon every silver shilling and copper penny which circulates among us Englishmen. Surely we should settle whether it has any signification for us, before we ask whether it has any or none for Germans.

A. Let me see: the impression is sadly worn off this

half-crown. I do not think it is much clearer in my mind.

B. Perhaps not.

A. As the *Times* tells the King of Prussia; The man who reigns avowedly by the grace of the people, simply by universal suffrage, is likely to show the kings who reign by the Grace of God that he is rather stronger than they are.

B. You are a volunteer. You look forward, I presume, with quiet satisfaction to that result?

A. I was talking of Prussia, not of England.

B. I was talking of England, not of Prussia.

A. You really fancy that we shall be stronger to resist an invasion because *Dei Gratia* is on our coins?

B. No! I think we may be much weaker.

A. What now?

B. The habit of saying what we do not believe is a weakening habit; the habit of using any solemn words which we do not believe is a specially-weakening habit; the habit of blaspheming the name of God is the most weakening habit of all.

A. You wish then to have done with the phrase. You would not mind if you heard that the proposition was debated in St. Stephen's which was sometime ago debated in the Sardinian Parliament?

B. Not if we are prepared to face the question fairly.

A. In what way to face it?

B. To acknowledge that our Queen holds her power by the same tenure as the Emperor of the French

holds his; to acknowledge that she is not a constitutional sovereign; to acknowledge that we have been merely indulging in vain jargon and hypocritical cant when we said that she was.

A. Constitutional sovereign! What *has* that to do with reigning by the Grace of God?

B. In my opinion, everything.

A. Then you mean that our Stuart rule was the model of constitutional government?

B. I think it was the model of unconstitutional government.

A. But the Stuarts boasted of Divine right.

B. Therefore they did not confess that they were reigning by the Grace of God. No one who asserts a right to a possession—an indefeasible, inalienable right,—can admit that he holds it by grace.

A. One idea flows very rapidly out of the other.

B. As all flagrantly false ideas flow easily and rapidly out of the true. They are direct contraries notwithstanding; and the false is only driven out when we rise to a full belief in the true.

A. But was it not the great triumph of our ancestors that they overcame this idea of Divine Right? And did they overcome it by bringing out the idea of the Grace of God?

B. I would rather you consulted Mr. Carlyle on that point than me. The great service he has rendered to English history is, that he has shown Cromwell, not in pretence but conscientiously and with all his heart, to

have maintained that God is the king of the nation, and that whoever rules must rule by His calling and grace.

A. Supposing him to have proved that point, what does it make in favour of our hereditary monarchs?

B. It makes much *against* them that they refused to recognise a truth which they were professing in all their formal words and acts, and that they needed this soldier, and all the discipline which he brought upon them, to remind them of it.

A. Charles II., you think, learnt the lesson?

B. He held, undoubtedly, that he reigned by the grace of Louis XIV., and acted upon that conviction.

A. A most religious and gracious sovereign!

B. You think he *did* reign by the grace of Louis XIV., and his brother by the grace of him and of the Pope?

A. The Revolution settled that question.

B. How?

A. By announcing that the power of the sovereign is derived from the people.

B. You are not really going back to a perversion of history which Burke exposed seventy years ago. You must know that Dr. Price committed the curious anachronism or the pious fraud of imputing the doctrine of the *Contrat Social* to Lord Somers and the framers of the Act of Settlement, and that Burke proved, by the plain evidence of documents, that they held no such doctrine. You may think Rousseau's

opinion an advance upon theirs, but you cannot, without the most violent outrage upon fact, identify them.

A. Did Burke accept your idea of our kings reigning by the Grace of God?

B. No man in the eighteenth century did or could adopt it frankly. The maxim of the age was to deny it. Therefore, when he was obliged to quote passages from the legal documents of 1688, which distinctly and directly affirmed that the king had broken his covenant with God, and had been deposed by Him, Burke stammered, and slandered his own heroes by supposing that they used an insincere religious phraseology, merely to cover a transaction which might else have seemed to threaten the continuousness of the succession and the safety of the monarchy. Read carefully the passages in the early part of the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, which bear upon this point. See what strength there is in his confutation of Price; what feebleness when he must find or invent a sense for the authorities which he quotes against him that is not the obvious one. See how he is obliged, by this difficulty, to treat the Puritans as mere fanatics. Yet the authors of the Revolution had learnt from them, that God is the actual King over kings; that they do not reign by their own pleasure; that if they outrage His laws He will punish them: and they were compelled to fall back upon these maxims, and to enshrine them in their legal acts, that they might not admit a mere anarchy, when they were

seeking to preserve an order. See, again, how the same cause—the narrowness, I mean, of his Whig faith—compelled this wisest of English statesmen to reject the true lessons of the French Revolution, whilst he manfully refused to find in it the untrue lesson of the Old Jewry divine.

A. Stop! stop! You may have your English past, if you can make it good. But when you talk of the French Revolution, you are upon the Rousseau ground; you are in the atmosphere of the Declaration of Rights, and the Sovereignty of the People.

B. If the other ground has slipped from me, it was not a firm one; if another atmosphere is needed for 1789 and 1862, it was not a good atmosphere for 1688.

A. What! are men never to grow? All the experience of centuries is to go for nothing? The dogmas of the Puritans and of Lord Somers are to bind us who know all the philosophy of the two centuries since their time?

B. I believe that must be the result, if this doctrine of rulers reigning by the Grace of God, is cast aside as an obsolete doctrine; if we do not look into the force of it, and claim it for our children and our children's children. Then I can see no hope of growth, nothing but endless vicissitude; a continual return to the point from which we started; republics succeeding monarchies; empires swallowing up republics; theories trying to do duty for facts; facts overwhelming theories; men crying for liberty of thought, then crying as loudly for an iron despotism which shall crush all thought. I have

answered your first question. I was preparing to answer your second about the lessons of experience, and our being tied and bound by the maxims of Puritans and ancient Whigs, when you interrupted me.

A. Pray let me know what your new reading of the French Revolution drama is, by which you contrive to extract from it a confirmation of the maxims which it seems to confound.

B. Again I must protest that it is not my reading. In this case, as in the case of Cromwell, turn to Mr. Carlyle.

A. What, for a justification of kings; of the *Simulacra*, the shams of creation?

B. No; but for a witness, *how* they became simulacra and shams. For a witness what came upon them *when* they became simulacra and shams.

A. He shows, certainly, that the abysses were opened to swallow them up; that there came an utter anarchy because they had been unable to rule.

B. What made them unable to rule?

A. The eyes of men saw their weakness; the hearts of men protested against their injustice.

B. What opened the eyes of men to see, or their hearts to protest?

A. Many things. The philosophers had something to do with it. I was not aware that they spoke much about the Grace of God.

B. Of all things except that. But they had, as you were observing before, royal disciples.

A. The cleverest in Europe. Frederic, and Catherine, and in his own Austrian fashion, not stupid, Joseph. These were not shams.

B. And they effected for Europe, what?

A. We will not go into particulars. At all events, they could not prevent the French Revolution.

B. Thank God for that!

A. You thank God for it?

B. Certainly I do. I thank Him for the demonstration which the Revolution furnished, that kings do reign by His grace, and not by their own self-will, and that if they become either tyrants or *rois faineants*, He will arise to judge the earth, and requite the proud according to their deservings.

A. Our young Conservative England statesmen will not thank you for your version of their favourite doctrine.

B. Oh! that words of mine—oh! that the lessons of history—would awaken these young Conservatives to reflect upon their own phrases; to use them not as party phrases, but as if they were divine and true; and must, if they are divine and true, make themselves good in every land. Then, instead of lending themselves to the cause of Italian or Austrian despotism, instead of slandering Garibaldi, and trampling on the memory of Cavour, they would see in their acts the witnesses of God's government over the world; they would feel that it is our calling to teach the nations Who is on their side, Who has helped them in

their hour of misery, in Whose right hand they may trust at all times. If we believed our own form, we could say to the Italians with some emphasis—

‘Trust not for freedom to the Franks ;
They have a king who buys and sells.
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of freemen dwells.’

A. My dear friend, do you know whom you are quoting?

B. Of course I know ; a poet who had a good right to speak such language to the Greeks, and would have had at least the right of habitation and intercourse to speak the same to the Italians.

A. But not a very godly poet, I suspect.

B. And therefore an ineffectual, however sincere, a champion of liberty. That his words may become good for one nation or another, that one nation or another may not trust in the king who buys and sells, we must invoke a principle which Byron would have derided. *In hoc signo vinces.*

A. So says Count Montalembert to Poland. But he wishes nothing for Italy but subjection to a power more terrible and more ignominious even than that of her old princes and of Austria ; and to one which rivets their fetters in the name of religion.

B. You recal my thoughts to that other article in the *Times*, of which I spoke at the beginning of our conversation. That, you remember, was on the subject of Poland.

A. Yes, and on the power which the Pope is able to exert in Warsaw, whilst he is so utterly helpless in Rome. The *Times* remarks that the story of the conflict between Russian imperialism and the spiritual ruler reads like a chapter out of the records of the middle ages.

B. I was delighted by that observation. A modern journalist cannot do us a greater service than by making us feel the close relation between the events of one period and those of another, the eternal principle which binds them together.

A. What principle? the papal ascendancy?

B. Remember the facts we are comparing. The Pope was sometimes successful, sometimes beaten in his conflicts with the German emperors. He showed, then, the feebleness of outward power, the strength of weakness. The same moral lies in the present transaction.

A. Do you mean that spiritual power is stronger than secular power? You are getting papal.

B. Am I? Take another instance then. Turn to Dr. Stanley's Lectures on the Russian Church. Read his account of the time when Poland was trampling upon Russia, was endeavouring to partition Russia. Observe how then the Latin Church was lording it over the Greek Church, just as the Greek Church in Poland is now lording it over the Latin Church. And read how a poor monk of a Russian convent stirred up the spirit of his land and of his Church to defy the armies

of Poland and the anathemas of the Pope ; and how he did overcome both.

A. Apply your lesson.

B. I say that the Pope at one time or another, speaking in the name of the God of right and of justice, and defying unrighteousness and injustice, has a might, not because he is Pope, but because there is a God of right and justice, by whom kings reign and princes decree judgment. I say that the weakest man speaking in the name of that God, has a power which belongs to no pope and no emperor ; a power which will at last shiver their power in pieces, because it has pretended to exalt itself into the place of His, because it has not been used like His to emancipate, but to enslave the nations.

A. Mahomet and his hosts might speak of such a God, and go forth in His name to break the idols of the nations in pieces. I do not see anything specially Christian in your proclamation.

B. The words which contain my doctrine are these :—*Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers are gathered together, Against the Lord, and against His anointed. Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that dwelleth in Heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will preach the law, whereof*

the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.

A. A great authority, to whom you have referred several times, would say, if he heard you quote this Psalm, 'Old clothes! old clothes.'

B. Very likely; but I find that the clothes which he exposes for sale are apt to become rusty; that his heroes appear as if they only fitted centuries that have passed long ago; that by his own account they are utterly out of fashion now. I want something which shall make the heroes of the past live in the present, which shall bind the ages together. If there is such a King as this Psalm speaks of—an Everlasting King—I can claim those heroes for ourselves, I can find a bond between the periods. Therefore I shall use the Psalm, and draw what comfort I can from it, let Mr. Carlyle perceive the smell of Monmouth Street in it ever so much.

A. But you respect Puritanism as he respects it. And you think, as he thinks, that Puritanism has had its day, and done its work.

B. I respect Puritanism for proclaiming God as the King of the nation. I hold that Puritanism is obsolete, because it conceived the best human Government to be a tyranny of Saints or Presbyters. I rejoice that the Whigs threw aside *this* part of the belief of their predecessors. It must have interfered with all civil and religious freedom, with all social progress. That they threw aside with it, in any practical sense, the

belief of a Divine King, explains, it seems to me, much of their vacillation, of their wrong doing, of their incapacity to meet the crisis at the end of the century.

A. Had not the theocratic idea tolerably well exhausted itself before the end of that century?

B. Quite exhausted itself, if you mean by the theocratic idea their opinion that priests, kings, or popes are Gods, or can stand in the place of God. A substitute had to be found for them. The people assumed the throne which was declared to be vacant. It claimed to be King of kings, and Lord of lords.

A. Is that the force you give to the phrase, 'Sovereignty of the People?'

B. Not when Mr. Fox or Lord Stanhope proposed it as a toast at the Crown and Anchor. It represented for them a certain amount of hips and hurrahs, and of broken glasses. To the mobs of Paris it signified the highest and most irresponsible power which could exist on the earth.

A. But the mobs of Paris did not rule altogether, or for ever?

B. Certainly not; numerous experiments were made to discover an order to which they might bow down. Ingenious constitutions were devised; only, in Mr. Carlyle's phrase, 'they would not march.' Then came the great delegation of the supreme sovereign power to a conqueror and a policeman.

A. The first Napoleon did not reign without a religion?

B. No emperor ever did. A religion is required that the invisible world may be felt to do him homage as well as the visible. He is the *Divus Imperator*. The ultimate worship is his. The different forms of worship, or the one form which he patronises, serve for his apotheosis.

A. This Emperor's power came to an end?

B. Yes; the nations bowed to him. But they rose again. They rose in the name of the God of their fathers. The Tyrolese peasant, the learned Prussian, was taught by suffering to invoke that name. There was found to be one higher than the *Divus Imperator*, and that one a Deliverer.

A. The Holy Alliance was the glorious result of this outburst.

B. Only the Holy Alliance proclaimed another God than the One whom the kings and nations had invoked in their distress.

A. Another God?

B. I use the words deliberately; the God to whom Tyrolese, Prussians, the monks and people of Moscow prayed, was the God who said on Sinai, 'I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other Gods but me.' In these words the awfulness of Law was bound for ever to freedom. The Deliverer from bondage was declared to be the Living and True God. And he in whose name the monarchs composing the Holy Alliance, destroyed and reconstructed the boundaries of

uations ; in whose name they crushed all thought and movement in the separate nations, was—what ?

A. You will not expect me to answer. But, I have generally been told by such champions of the Bible as you, that unless the Holy Alliance had crushed the spirit which was then at work in the Continental Universities, there would have been an end of faith in the Bible.

B. I believe there were no such Neologians in the world as those royal ones—none who pronounced such immense portions of the Bible to be interpolated—none who so distinctly affirmed it in its main contents to be obsolete—none who did so much to check the return to faith which had begun in the schools, through the influence of the popular faith upon them—none who did so much to make the infidelity of the schools a popular infidelity. Before the Holy Alliance, the philosophers were learning to think that the Bible might mean what it said, and that that which had kindied life, freedom, intellectual effort, social progress, in the sixteenth century, need not be their destroyer in the nineteenth century. The Holy Alliance succeeded in persuading the philosophers and the wayfarers that they had a common interest in suspecting whatever assumes to be a word of God, to be a conspirator against men.

A. Mr. D'Israeli did not allude to that influence in favour of Neology when he was tracing the rise and progress of it so learnedly in his speech to the Clergy the other day.

B. What a pity that he did not! He would then have thoroughly justified his right as a politician to enter upon a theological subject—he would have shown his genuine and devoted attachment to the faith of his fathers, which these continental despots insulted—he would have given the most valuable instruction to his ecclesiastical hearers.

A. What say you of the Orleanist experiment which followed?

B. I would rather that you reflected upon it for yourself. France had an able sovereign, counsellors more than ordinarily wise, many of them, as far as we can judge, honest; unusual material prosperity. What was wanting? Why were there insurrections instead of contentment? Why were the able counsellors always seeking for some power to bind the elements of the nation into one? Why do they speak now of a religious unity, even of a Papal unity, as necessary to Christendom? Why could not their theories, or all the material prosperity avert the revolution of 1848? Could a king uphold a people, emancipate a people, elevate a people, who confessed he was only reigning by the grace of the people?

A. Surely he was not overthrown for holding that faith. Those who overthrew him held it in a much stronger sense than he did.

B. I grant you that they destroyed that which they believed they had created. I grant you that all fictions and traditions proved utterly ineffectual to withhold

them from doing that which they were minded to do. Nevertheless, there was a restraint. They were conscious of a real power and government which was greater than their own. In a number of ways they did it homage. In a number of ways they confessed a law which they did not create. They asked to be shown what that law was.

A. You do not seem inclined to accept the second empire as an answer to that demand.

B. I accept it as clearing the way to an answer; as setting before us the only two possible answers which remain; as leaving us the choice which of the two answers we like best.

A. You come back to your Psalm.

B. I own it. I believe we are driven from every other solution except this and the Imperial. Our Tory talk of Divine right, our Radical talk of the Sovereignty of the People, all the middle eclectic devices to escape from one or the other, are rapidly merging in the imperialist doctrine. We may disguise it from ourselves as we will, but it is that which is commending itself to a large part of our young England.

A. Not to the constitutional Whig?

B. Therefore he is scoffed at by both. They ask him what standing-ground he has; and he can only reply by phrases borrowed from the past, or compounded of the notions of his opponents.

A. Are not we Volunteers representatives of young England?

B. I rejoice to think so; of the *true* young England; I see in you not talkers about Divine right, or popular sovereignty, or constitutional Whiggism, but men who, whether Tories, Radicals, or Whigs, feel that they have a country which is worth all their notions and all their talk, and who, therefore, bring to its defence whatever is solid in the faith of every school and party. The Tory brings his belief that God does uphold the sovereign; the Whig brings his belief that there is an order or constitution, without which the sovereign's power is nothing; the Radical brings his belief that the well-being of the whole people is the end for which sovereigns reign and constitutions exist. And our people come into the ranks not claiming to rule, but asking to be ruled; confessing that there is a law, which is necessary to freedom; coveting discipline; only asking that it may be the discipline of men, not of machines.

A. But we are not Ironsides. We do not chant the second Psalm at our drill.

B. The Jew, I should suppose, did not chant it at his drill, if he had one. He and his kings learnt the meaning of it in actual battles with those who had enslaved him, or in horrible captivity to Babylonian Imperialists. There, and not in the schools, he found that there must be an Only Begotten Son who binds earth to heaven, God to man; or that the Babel polity, the polity of the Man-god, must triumph over all nations. The truth dawned upon him through suffer-

ing. He often lost it; but he waited in the belief and hope that it would become substantiated in a human fact.

A. An idea of humanity, then, does not seem to you satisfactory.

B. An idea of humanity will probably pass into the worship of humanity—will draw into itself all dead or dying superstitions and idolatries—and will become the great staff of an imperial system which crushes out humanity.

A. Is the idea, then, to perish?

B. How can it if it has been realized? If the words are true, and not lies, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?*

A. It is written in the same Psalm, *Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and so ye perish out of the way. If His wrath be kindled yea but a little; blessed are all they that trust in Him.* Have not these words been a plea all through the history of Christendom, with Christian, catholic, and religious kings, to propagate, persecute, rob, and murder, in Christ's name? Did not priests point the moral by directing kings to their victims, and adorn the tale with deeds of blood, which, left to themselves, those kings would not have perpetrated?

B. Most true. History is full of the records of these Judas kisses; they have been followed by Judas curses. I find the best interpretation of the language, *He that sitteth in the heavens doth laugh, the Lord hath them in derision*, in the results which have followed those wicked

experiments, by whomsoever they have been undertaken, by whomsoever they have been encouraged. *The Son has indeed been angry.* The strength of kings has withered; the power of priests has become impotence; their faith has been turned into unbelief. All these are acts of distrust. The kings think to patronise Him by whose grace they reign; the priests desire to put themselves in the place of Him of whom they are sent to bear witness to kings and people. What can come of such a denial of the principle upon which all power stands, such a refusal to trust a Divine Redeemer, but what has come of it?

A. You read this lesson in the weakening of the Papacy?

B. Part of the lesson lies in that assuredly. I hope Englishmen will not suppose it is all there. If the vision of a Son of God and Son of Man does not rise behind the vision of a falling Priest-Monarch who has hidden it from our eyes, people will still cry for the counterfeit.

A. Are not Protestants preaching in their different churches and conventicles of this Son of Man?

B. If they were, I think He would be recognised as having some dominion beyond the church and the conventicle. He would be confessed as the Son of *Man*, not as the founder of a religion, or of multitudes of warring religions, and as indifferent to the freedom of nations.

A. How can you bring that thought to the minds of Englishmen?

B. I would ask them, as I have asked you, to look at their pennies and shillings.

A. And then?

B. To consider whether they utter truth or falsehood.

A. Suppose I said a truth for our English sovereigns. How would that affect Germans, French, Asiatics, Americans? Are we to bind them with the cords of our institutions?

B. God forbid! If our princes rule by the Grace of God, they rule as witnesses that all kings, presidents, kaliphs, *quocunque gaudent nomine*, rule by the same grace.

A. Presidents too! I thought that the D.G. only encircled the brows of the legitimate.

B. All are legitimate whom God owns as legitimate. They lose their legitimacy by not confessing the law under which they live. Who have more need to be reminded of the law which can hold a people in unity, which asserts the manhood and citizenship of every man, than our brethren of the American States?

A. Perhaps you would not be quite confounded by the ordinary argument that if kings exercise their functions by this grace, all doctors, soldiers, lawyers, cotton-spinners, journalists, handicraftsmen, exercise their functions by the same grace?

B. Confounded by it! It is a logical conclusion from

my premises. It is the very principle I am most anxious to maintain. When we thoroughly grasp it I believe we shall become a righteous and a free people, able to be witnesses of righteousness and freedom to the ends of the earth. If we let go the half-faith we have in it, instead of seeking to deepen and to expand it, I see no alternative for us but the acceptance of the most slavish doctrines into our hearts, and of the actual bodily slavery to which such doctrines always lead at last.

A. The D.G. on my half-crown is a little more visible to me than it was.

B. When it is dim, the faces of the Queen and of Britannia become dim. Restore its brightness, and they will become brighter and clearer every day.

POSTSCRIPT.

No. I.—*Times*, October 22, 1861.

WHEN the King of Prussia tells us that he holds his crown from God, that he is king by the Grace of God, and that in symbol of this he lifts the crown from the altar and places it on his head with his own hands, what does he mean? Has he any meaning? Is there anything which he wishes us distinctly to understand? In one sense, probably, all people will admit that what he says is true. If the Grace of God means the will and permission of God, no doubt the King of Prussia reigns by the Grace of God, just as any one who holds any position, high or humble, beneficial or noxious—every one who lives, moves, and has his being, exists by the permission and will of the Deity, and would cease to exist if that permission were withdrawn. But if the King of Prussia means nothing more than this, it would, we should think, have been accorded to him, even by metaphysical Germany, without dispute or cavil. It would be hard to refuse to a king a privilege which is possessed in the fullest manner by every person and every institution in his dominions. But, if the meaning be that the king holds his office by a different tenure, and derives his authority from a different source from all other magistrates who administer justice in his dominions, who command his armies, who collect his taxes, we are

astonished that a man can be found at this period of the world's history, foolish enough to put forth claims so shallow, so offensive, and so utterly unsupported by reason or religion. If the kingly office be of a pre-eminence differing not only in degree, but in kind, from all other public offices—if it is conferred by a different authority, and is hedged round by a different sanction, from all other public offices, we may expect to find some trace of the fact in the history of mankind during the period in which miracles are supposed to have ceased. Do we find that the causes which have raised particular races or particular men to the crown are more mysterious than those which give rise to other historical events? Valour, great ability, good fortune, noble birth, great services, sometimes great crimes, have made men into kings, and the Roman satirist could remark that the same wickedness which raised one man to the gallows, placed a diadem on the head of another. Is it in the lives and conduct of kings that we are to seek for peculiar evidence of the immediate tutelage of superhuman power? History tells us that the most startling instances of human depravity have been found, not in cottages, but in palaces. We do not mean that sovereigns are worse than other men; but they are no better, and are exposed to greater temptations. Is it in the permanence and the happy close of their tenure of power that the Divine protection of kings, that the Divine origin of the office, is shown? The same satirist tells us, and the history of the Roman Empire confirms the truth, that in his time few kings died a dry—that is, a bloodless—death. To what does this Divine quality attach? Is it to the title of king? Is it to the reality of power? Was Oliver Cromwell king in all but the name—king by the Grace of God? Of course, Henry VI.—king in nothing but the name—was so.

When an Elector of Brandenburg becomes a King of Prussia, do his subjects owe him a different kind of allegiance? Is the change operated with the change of title, or did it accrue by degrees, as power, at first limited and subordinate, became predominant and absolute? Did Frederick the Great, the friend of Voltaire, reign by this Grace Divine? Is it extended to limited monarchies? and, when provinces are surrounded or divided by treaty, is this influence transferred, as a sort of right, member, and appurtenance of the soil, to the new owner? Can it be forfeited by misgovernment, by heresy, by infidelity? Has a prince got it who does not believe that he has it? And, last, though by no means least, what room does a claim of so high and paramount a nature leave for liberty in the subjects of a prince who claims, not to rule by their will, but by a title wholly paramount, infallible, and incontestable?

To us, who owe most of the prosperity and happiness we enjoy to the fact that 170 years ago we solemnly repudiated the Divine right claimed by the Stuarts, and set up a dynasty content to derive its title from the will of the people, and to reign so long only as they observed the compact of their coronation oath—to us, who love, honour, and obey the Queen for far other and better reasons than this tyrannical ‘right Divine,’ which our forefathers so indignantly rejected—these speculative questions may seem to have very little practical value, but they are by no means unimportant in their bearing on the future destinies of Prussia and of Germany. The Prussian nation has received the most explicit warning that their sovereign entirely repudiates the only theory of government consistent with its constitutional exercise. The man who hopes to augment the splendour of his house and the extent of his dominions by the support of

the people is the apostle of a system which finds no room in it for the people at all. A king divinely appointed, and owing no account to any power but that from which he claims his crown, can never really permit his people to trench on such ample, sacred, and illimitable prerogatives. He may, indeed, suffer himself to be 'surrounded by institutions in harmony with the spirit of the age,' but between him and this circle there is no real point of contact. He is the rock on which the waves may beat, but not prevail. He will tolerate advice from his subjects, but his right to decide for himself and for them is not at all compromised by such an admission. Can it be supposed that, starting from such premises, and avowing such principles, Prussia can possess the power to assimilate to herself the rest of Germany, and to regenerate a country which wants nothing but a leader and a policy which may faithfully represent her sympathies and her aspirations? If Germany is to become a single nation—and, unless she does so, she has nothing to look forward to but endless dangers and calamities—it can only be by exploding the ancient and absurd principle of many made for one, by setting up the doctrine that kings exist for the benefit of their subjects, and derive their title from them, and that it is therefore competent for different states to join together in one compact whole, and to place at their head any sovereign they may think proper. The King of Prussia tells his people that he looks to the powers and rights of the crown to prevent internal disturbance. Those powers and rights he claims to derive from a much higher source than the assent of his subjects, and proposes to exercise against them, if need be. We cannot conceive what good the King of Prussia could promise himself from such a manifesto as this. It is, in fact, a breach with the Liberal party, made in

the most public manner, on the most solemn occasion. Possibly the king was only thinking of how to come in the most magnificent manner out of the question of the homage which he has found so much difficulty in giving up. Possibly he was not unmindful of the recent proceeding of his friend the Grand Duke of Saxe-Gotha, who has deliberately expunged the formula, 'By the Grace of God,' from the blazon of his title and honours. Possibly he was determined to show the Prussian Liberals that, notwithstanding the recent progress which the Diet might seem to have made towards constitutional government, he was not prepared to yield a single point of the highest prerogative that was claimed by the proudest of his predecessors. Whatever his object, he will probably find before long that he has to do with a power whose head claims no Divine right, boasts himself the representative of the popular will, and the chosen of universal suffrage, but who yet contrives to wield the concentrated force of a whole nation with a vigour, energy, and success to which the obsolete claim of Divine right can add nothing, and from which its absence can take nothing away.

No. II.—*Times*, October 22, 1861.

THE mediæval enthusiast, and even the historical student, often feels a secret longing that he could just have a glimpse of the grave and terrible struggles between the civil and ecclesiastical power in the Middle Ages. What a thing to see, if only for a minute, the awful solemnity of an excommunication, the stern rigour and fell blight of an interdict, or some one of those crushing blows by which the emperor or the king avenged himself at last, perhaps only to make

atonement in his turn! It appears, however, that we need not travel back six centuries for this. If not at our doors, it is, at all events, within a few days' railway travelling. Any gentleman who wishes to see what we may call the real thing has only to take a *Continental Bradshaw*, and he may easily arrange a line which will take him from London to Warsaw in a given number of hours. He will there see, in all their native grandeur and on a colossal scale, the moral forces that divided the allegiance of the civilized world a thousand years ago. He will see the myrmidons of a semi-Oriental despot scattering religious processions, stripping mourners of their weeds, entering churches, and clearing them of their congregation in the very act of prayer. By and by he will see the archiepiscopal mandate affixed to the sacred doors, announcing that the Cathedral is closed, by virtue of full powers from his holiness the Pope, till my Lord the Emperor has made a satisfactory expiation for that outburst of secular pride. Such are the two great contending powers. They have both to make a long arm to reach the scene of the contest. The one sends his legions from St. Petersburg, the other his missives and spiritual terrors from Rome. On the spot the minor actors in the scene are not less strange. There is a crushed nationality, which lives on its glorious recollections, and still hopes to be free. It seeks help where help may be found. It pushes its roots and its suckers to Rome, and seeks to find in the wide-spread sympathies of a universal Church a sufficient fulcrum and weapon against the vastest of Continental dominions. Who may not watch with interest the various fortunes of so great and momentous a struggle?

That was the state of things at Warsaw last week, and no doubt is so at this moment; for the duration of the

struggle, the obstinacy of the combatants, and the deep sea of the quarrel, do not allow the situation to change very rapidly. What is most remarkable at this moment is not that in a city in a state of siege and filled with camps, the churches should be cleared of political demonstrations. The Emperor of all the Russias and his devoted servants may easily be credited with the power and the will to do all that is necessary to maintain his authority. What is indeed remarkable in this, the middle of the nineteenth century is, that the Pope, maintained by French bayonets, and clutching with feeble hands what is left of his temporal realm, should be able to close the churches of a distant capital in the face of imperial armies. It is a fact, that when the Pope, to say the real truth, has not a shred of temporal power left, but can only do as General Goyon allows him, he can discharge mandates and censures that seem to acquire force as they go, and to be nowhere so strong as at the greatest distance from home, and in the haunt of the strongest of his rivals and antagonists. It is something more than royal jealousy or popular disaffection that the Pope has to encounter in this instance. The Emperor of Russia, as the chief of the Russian Church, is the principal head of that hydra of Antichrist with which Rome maintains, as it believes, incessant yet eventually triumphant war. The two greatest of spiritual powers are here in opposition. Russia herself has long avowed that the extinction of this rivalry is necessary to seal her possession of Poland. So long as that nation is Catholic, she expects nothing but resistance, either long smouldering, or in periodical outbreak. So all her overweening power, and all her subtle policy are directed to root out this vital source of rebellion. Her eyes, her hands, her feet are on Poland. There they are, like wrestlers in the old

group, closely intertwined, on almost equal terms, though one, indeed, over the other. Nevertheless, Rome, through her hierarchy, sends hope and resolution, if not actual strength, to the oppressed. This she does from a city on the walls of which the French flag only floats awhile, to be replaced by that of United Italy.

But, if Rome can do this, she must also expect to hear the question—what need has she of that temporal sovereignty which has stood her in so little stead in this instance? A piece of parchment, a seal, a letter, and a messenger in priestly costume can be despatched, and speed his way as well from the Vatican, or the Quirinal, or any other Papal residence, as from the capital of a Papal State—as well, indeed, from Avignon as from Rome. Nay, in this case there happens to be no reason to dread the secular influence of an Italian kingdom. Victor Emmanuel himself would not object to see the Poles fortifying themselves with Italian influences against the arms of the Northern despot. The old game of siding with the weaker against the stronger, and so giving hope to the nations, and inspiring a salutary caution in tyrants, can be carried on just as well from a church or a palace as from a fortification or a camp. It is, indeed, a spiritual warfare, so far as it appeals to the aspirations or the terrors of mankind. The advocates of the Pope's temporal pretensions, therefore, while they will be not a little pleased to see how he can defy the Northern Potentate in one of his own capitals, must admit that the argument tells both ways. So far as it tells for the efficacy of spiritual powers, it tells also against the necessity of temporal aids and appliances. What is the Pope at Warsaw but a purely spiritual power? He is only a name, a mystic personage, a ruler of consciences, a shepherd of souls, or whatever else

the churches may call him. There he has not a soldier, a bayonet, or the smallest emblem of worldly power to embody his pretensions. Yet he can do what even the Russian Emperor himself would hesitate to do ; and, so far from the act being one of fatal precipitancy or ignorant rashness, all Europe waits to see what expiation will be offered, and when the Cathedral of Warsaw will be considered sufficiently holy for the partisans of Poland and the Pope.

TRACTS FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

No. XI.

THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE.

THERE are reasons which plead strongly in favour of reserve upon such a subject as that indicated by the title of this Tract. On many accounts, both writers and readers might be glad to leave it under the protection of the solemnity of Church teaching, or of the private intercourse of Christians.

The subject of spiritual life, and of the dependence of men, for that life, upon the Spirit of God, does indeed belong to the most sacred mysteries of human belief; and if there are any mere *arcana* of the Christian religion, for the use of the initiated only, this might well be reckoned amongst them. But it is impossible, when we become seriously interested in the objects of our own faith, or in the conquests of the same truths over other men, to acquiesce in such a reservation of esoteric doctrines. If we attempt it, we do so at the peril of inverting the true proportions of the faith. That which is most sacred, and which we should most shrink from seeing outraged or vulgarized in common controversy, is that which also proves itself to be most fundamental and most powerful. The Nature of the

Son of God is such an object of belief. The working of the Divine Spirit is one of the same kind.

Let it be considered that all Christians maintain in some form, with whatever reluctance and subject to whatever restrictions the doctrine may be held, the real working of the Spirit of God upon human souls. But if there is truth in this doctrine, what a momentous truth it must be! And when we look at the records of the Gospel of Christ, we find all its results—its progressive historical results—attributed to this power. In all ages the triumphs of the Gospel are ascribed by those who are concerned in them to the purpose and influence of the Spirit of God; and most emphatically is this the case in the earliest Apostolic age of the Church. The only possible inference is, that if the Gospel of the Son of God is to prevail with increased dominion in our own day, it must be through the same power. Without the Holy Spirit, unless all the professions of Christian Churches and schools are in error, and all the history of the Church of Christ fallacious, it is impossible that men should be brought to believe and to act as Christians.

I do not know what communion or party would have a right to boast of having borne witness most practically to this truth. It is more to the point to confess the danger to which we are all exposed, of being forgetfully untrue to our faith. And this danger undoubtedly besets in a special manner those who desire to appeal to common human experience, and to all that is good in human life, in support of the Gospel of Christ. Knowing what a mischief and what a blasphemy it is to call that

evil which God has not called evil, and being anxious not to assume themselves to be better men than others whom they know to be upright in their hearts, and pure in their lives, at the same time that they withhold their assent from the Catholic Faith, they may easily be tempted to lower the pretensions of that Kingdom which was established by the direct putting forth of spiritual power from Heaven, and to invite the patronage, rather than the homage, of honest men, to the truths of which they feel themselves to be unworthy exponents. But we have no right to confound ourselves and our cause in our humility. The Gospel which claims to be the Word of the Living God, cannot exist upon suffrance. If a submission to the Divine Spirit is necessary for the right reception of the Gospel, nothing will be gained by a conciliatory suppression of this fact. It will only become a matter of supreme importance to see that we do not *misrepresent* the Holy Spirit of God, by substituting for Him our own opinions or traditions or authority. To exhibit His power, without claiming His influence as special to ourselves, is the way to win others. In an age of that scepticism which takes its occasion from mental culture, as well as in ages of more turbulent resistance, the effectual work for God will be done, not by those who argue most plausibly, or are most ready to assume that the Spirit is on their side, but by those who have most of the real warmth and strength of Divine inspiration, and who are *therefore* tolerant and respectful towards their fellow-men. For there is a contagion of health and life which propagates

convictions, and which moulds in time the general belief of societies.

I have hinted at one great difficulty which besets the acknowledgment of a Divine Spirit moving the hearts of men. It is taken for granted, that a religious partisan will identify the Spirit of God with his own cause. Undoubtedly he is very likely to do so. When he does it confidently and coarsely, he will but shock and disgust those who shrink from speaking of being led by a Spirit from above. It must be admitted that the belief in such a Spirit is liable to be perverted in every degree down to the most revolting caricatures. To cast the name of the Holy Spirit as a missile against those of whom we do not approve, is, unhappily, too easy an expedient. But it may be possible to contend against this practice better than by mere reticence, if we will consider, and invite others to consider with us, what the truth is concerning the Spirit, according to the manifested principles of the Divine Kingdom. It cannot be necessary to violate the due reverence either towards God or towards our fellow-men, in the course of such reflections.

There are certain questions of immediate interest at the present day, related to one another through their dependence upon a true doctrine concerning the Spirit, of which a brief discussion will be attempted in the following pages. They might have been considered separately at greater length, and they well deserve a more adequate investigation ; but it is hoped that through being connected together, however slightly treated, they may serve more directly as illustrations of the greater

subject to which they all belong. These questions are—the distinction between the Old and New Covenants; the opposition of the Spirit to the letter; and the relation of the spiritual or religious life to common life.

The Two Covenants.

The two divisions of our Bible are called the Old Testament and the New Testament. If we thought it worth while, at the cost of novelty of expression, to revive the true meaning of these titles, we should rather call them the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The books bound up together under each of these titles, are thereby declared to be collections of histories and other works illustrative of the Old and of the New Covenant respectively. In the wide sense thus indicated, the term New Covenant sets forth that Divine constitution of things of which the Gospel is the proclamation. It is therefore equivalent to the Kingdom of Heaven. The Old Covenant, on the other hand, was that system according to which ‘the Lord God’ governed His people Israel.

The relation of the New Covenant to the Old has been very differently described by different theologians. The disposition of the Puritan section of Protestants to regard the whole Bible as one book of uniform value and authority, has led them to smooth out, especially in certain particulars, the distinctions between the two Covenants, and has prevented them from doing justice to the testimony on these points of the Scriptures themselves. Liberal divines have gone to great lengths in

the opposite direction, seeing such a discord between the religion of the Jews and the religion of Christians as is scarcely compatible with the recognition of a Divine government of the Jews. But both parties agree in speaking of the New Covenant as a more *spiritual* Dispensation than the Old. This character, at least, is irresistibly evident; and the Scriptures of the New Covenant are full of the most explicit statements to the same effect.

In what does the greater or the less spirituality consist? In seeking to answer this question, we observe that the Scriptures themselves do not use the abstract epithet contained in it. Their method is to speak, not of a spiritual dispensation, but of *a Spirit*, given, poured out, leading, teaching, baptizing societies of men. The forerunner of Christ said, 'He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.' Upon Jesus Himself the Spirit of God descended to anoint Him for His work. He taught His disciples that the entrance into the kingdom which He proclaimed was through a birth of the Spirit. He declared to them that His Father in heaven would give the Holy Spirit to them that asked Him. He promised His more intimate followers that, after His departure from among them, the Holy Ghost should come down to them from the Father and Himself, to dwell with them, to manifest God to them, to lead them into all truth, to produce great effects upon the world. At His last interview with them, He bade them wait at Jerusalem for the fulfilment of that promise, adding particularly, 'Ye shall receive *power*

when the Holy Ghost has come upon you.' Events followed, in which these promises appear to have been exactly fulfilled. On a certain day, a few days after the Ascension, the descent of the Spirit on the disciples of Jesus was declared by symbolical signs, expressive of a mighty and fiery inspiration. To these signs corresponded the due realities. The Apostles were endowed with devout convictions and fervent utterance. They and those who were awakened by their words were moved to consecrate themselves to a new life as the subjects of the risen Jesus. This life was a life of contentment, of courage, of purity, of brotherhood. They held themselves to have received a commission for the imparting of truths to their fellow-men, by which the world should be blessed. They believed themselves to be bound, in the new Spirit, to their invisible Master, under whose orders and to whose glory they were henceforth to live. Every characteristic act of the new society implies that the Spirit of the Father and of the Son was really and with power dwelling amongst them.

The very constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven, therefore, according to the Scriptures of the New Covenant, rested upon the outpouring of a Spirit of truth and love as upon one of its main pillars. The practical teaching of the Lord Jesus, and of His followers, was in strict harmony with this spiritual character of the new kingdom. The Commandments were to be obeyed in the heart, and not only externally. God, as a Spirit, was to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. The whole

of the morality of the Christian Society was determined by inward principles rather than by outward rules.

And nowhere do the Scriptures give the least hint that after any number of years the Spirit who came down on the Day of Pentecost was to withdraw from the Church. If we, in this age, reckon our spiritual ancestry from that day, we are shut up to the creed, that a Holy Spirit of God is with us, to whom we are bound to look for guidance, for power, and for life.

The declarations concerning the Spirit, which we have just been recalling, are not always intended to point a contrast between the New Covenant and the Old. But it is often stated expressly, that the manifestation of the Spirit was one chief element in the difference between the two Covenants. Is it enough, then, in looking back to the Old Covenant, to say that it was wholly unspiritual; that for the Jews the Spirit of God was as if He did not exist? Such a statement would be very far from the truth. We must not be tempted by the desire of making a clear distinction into the error of denying that the Spirit existed and wrought before He was plainly declared. A single glance at the Scriptures of the Old Covenant will warn us not to exclude the Spirit of God from the operations which they record. If ever mortal man was *inspired*, the Hebrew Prophets were. When we think of them, and of the Psalms, and even of large portions of the historical books of the Old Testament, we should hesitate before we bring against the religion of the Jews the reproach of being unspiritual.

It is true, nevertheless, that the conspicuous feature of the system under which the Jews were governed, was *not* the declaration of a Divine Spirit moving in the hearts of men. The special proclamation of the Old Covenant is that of the *One invisible God ruling His chosen people by means of outward institutions*. When that proclamation of an unseen Lord is compared, indeed, with the idol-worship of the nations which surrounded the Jews, it cannot but be felt to be eminently spiritual. So necessary is it to remember that we speak of things according to their relations, and that we may both affirm and deny the same thing without contradiction, when we have a different measure in view. Under the Old Covenant, the Spirit was implied, but not declared. Inasmuch as it was implied, the Divine government of the Jews was spiritual; inasmuch as it was not declared, that government becomes, by contrast with the New Covenant, unspiritual. Similarly, under the New Covenant, external forms were not arbitrarily enacted, but were only organized as the natural vesture of spiritual things. Therefore the Kingdom of Christ is not a system of outward forms; but it nevertheless retains forms as the exponents of its spiritual principles. The forms were not, in the older age, without the Spirit; neither is the Spirit, in the new age, without forms.

‘The Law’ is a characteristic title of the system introduced by Moses. St. Paul draws an important distinction between the Covenant and the Law, pointing out that the Covenant was of promise, made with Abraham, and therefore taking precedence of the Law, which

was four hundred and thirty years after. The Law, he maintains, did not disannul the Covenant, which remained the fundamental basis of the dealings of Jehovah with the Jewish nation. The Law, in fact, was grafted upon the Covenant. Bearing in mind this distinction, we are warranted in using, according to the purpose of our argument, the Law and the Old Covenant as convertible terms. St. Paul himself does so ; for very soon after his careful distinction between the Covenant and the Law, he speaks of the *Two Covenants*, one of which was *from Mount Sinai*, which gendered into bondage. Whilst, therefore, we hold fast the principle that the Covenant was a declaration of the gracious will of God, calling a family into union with Himself, upon the basis of a promised blessing, we may speak of the legal institutions in which that will was expressed, as belonging properly to the Old Covenant.

Those outward institutions were numerous and determinate. The children of Israel were required by the legislation of Mount Sinai to live under a rigid and peculiar code which effectually separated them from surrounding nations. No history presents to us so complete an example of 'a law of commandments contained in ordinances.' The legislation which came to the Jews as Divine, affected every part of national and private as well as of religious life. In estimating the purpose and effect of this system, it makes the greatest possible difference whether it be regarded, according to its true historical character, as the expression of the will of a Righteous Lord who had delivered

the nation out of bondage, and was training it to prosperity and glory, or as the experimental legislation of an able ruler. But in either case, the records of the Jewish covenant exhibit a system of fixed institutions, and a vast body of general and minute regulations. And the character of the whole is local and national. The Jewish law was not so much a preparatory method of education for mankind universally, as the proper discipline of a nation living under such conditions—reckoning from such an origin, consecrated to such a God, and expecting such a future—as those ascribed to the children of Israel. Only let it be understood that, according to the Jewish history, their God Jehovah had not settled with them once and for ever in giving them the Mosaic code, but continued His superintendence over them, and ruled them by renewed utterances of His will from generation to generation.

Whilst external ordinances were thus so conspicuous a feature of the Old Covenant, all such ordinances were expressly subordinated, under the New Covenant, to the disclosing of the universal principles upon which the life of man is founded; in other words, to the revelation of the Divine nature. This revelation was invoked under the Gospel, where statutes and ordinances would have been invoked under the law. The eternal counsels of God, the Sonship of Jesus the crucified, and of mankind in Him to the Father, and the mysterious working of the Spirit, take the place of peremptory declarations of the will of Jehovah. It is in its unveiling of the relation between God and men that the spirituality of the New Covenant consists.

It is easy to uphold Christianity to the disparagement of Judaism, and to contend that all vestiges of Jewish practice ought to be expunged from our Christian religion. A multitude of arguments are ready at hand to use for such a purpose. But if we imagine that the Gospel revelation is more vague and less positive because it is more spiritual, or that it condemned the institutions of the Jewish covenant, or that it repudiates for itself the witness of external institutions, we are certainly not following the first preachers of this revelation. That the law was fulfilled in the manifestation of the Son of God, and was thereby justified and not condemned, is one of the plainest declarations of the New Testament. And the Church of Christ has always possessed institutions so manifestly analogous to those of the Jews, that it is almost impossible to resist the impression of some law of continuity binding the two dispensations together. There are two ways of pursuing spirituality: the one is that of attempting to get rid of forms, and trusting by this process to arrive at a spiritual residuum; the other is that of believing in the Spirit, and endeavouring to perceive in forms the witness they are designed to bear to the unseen Lord of our spirits. By the latter method we may best be preserved from the terrible tendency to deaden forms first, and then to trust in them, against which every true preacher of the grace and power of God, from St. Paul downwards, has so vehemently contended.

St. Paul himself showed plainly in his own conduct that the most anxious resistance to the tyranny of a dead

law did not involve of necessity any abjuration of the practices of that law. He adhered reverently to the institutions of his race. Those institutions would furnish matter for very interesting study to any one approaching them from without. A Christian, who is almost as much an inheritor of them as a Jew, cannot easily assume the critical attitude towards them. But we may admit that there is some ground for the charges frequently brought against the Jewish customs. That the slaughter of animals, and especially the profuse slaughter at the great festivals, would be revolting to modern refinement, cannot be denied. A corresponding rudeness characterises many enactments of the Mosaic law. And it is true that devout readers of the Bible are apt to put the sacredness of scriptural phrases as a veil between their eyes and the realities which the Bible describes. Let us grant all this; but let us be on our guard at the same time against deferring too obsequiously to modern delicacy. However we might dislike the shedding of blood as a main part of our ritual, this mode of worship could feed the spiritual life of a Paul and a John (not to name a higher name) without either hurting or blunting their sensibilities. It is mere matter of fact, that the whole system of the Jewish law could be received and felt as the noblest symbolism by devout and sensitive minds. The critical study of Jewish history, again, refuses to see in the living customs of a nation only an arbitrary system of 'types,' foreshadowing a great event in the future. And rightly so. But the Bible itself in neither of its portions binds

us to deny all significance, except that of prefiguring the future, to the Jewish ceremonial. A candid reader of the Old Testament would conclude that the Temple, the sacrifices, the Sabbath, and all the Jewish observances, were rich in spiritual meaning, as representing the direct intercourse between the children of the Covenant and their God Jehovah. If we suppose that the Gospel sets forth a revealing of the Divine nature in relation to man, then the more truly the institutions of the law were signs of a real fellowship with God to those who used them, the more effectual prophecies would they be of the manifestation that was to come.

Christian theology affirms that the ordinances of the law were fulfilled *in Christ*. He, as the Mediator between God and men, offering Himself in man's name to the Father, is the substance of which the law was the shadow. But the shadow represented not so much that which was future, as that which was behind the veil. The true worshippers amongst the Jews were always conscious that there was something to be brought out into clearness, something in the nature and purposes of God which they felt to be existing, but could not distinctly realize. And this is what, on looking back, we can see to have been the case. It is true that the Jewish customs were local and national; but what if the very calling and existence of the Jewish nation were a predictive type of the Divine calling of humanity? In that case, whatever deeply affected the Jew, might have its counterpart in the widest human relations, and might be 'fulfilled' in the One Head of mankind. It will be

better and more intelligible than abstract theorising, if we take some leading examples of Jewish ordinances, and endeavour to see how each is fulfilled in Christ, and what external witness of that fulfilment still remains in the Christian Church.

The Priesthood was one of the most sacred of the Jewish institutions, and, according to the books of Moses, was founded and regulated by Jehovah Himself. Every Jew was familiar from his youth with an order of men, taken from one family, specially set apart to administer the worship of Jehovah. This order, with the High Priest at its head, represented the nation in its worship. Through the priests the national worship, in its various parts, and especially its sacrifices, were offered up to God. The priest was constituted, on behalf of his fellow-countrymen, in things pertaining to God. The sacredness of the priestly order, it was well understood, gave form and distinctness to the general holiness of the nation; its existence declared that every Israelite ought to maintain an intercourse of peace and service with the Lord God, and that this intercourse was grounded upon the will and the loving-kindness of God Himself. When the Messiah had come, and had laid down His life, according to His own words, 'No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself,' and when His disciples had learnt, in the power of the Spirit, what was implied in His titles, Son of God and Son of Man, it became habitual to the Church of Christ to look upon His death as an offering or sacrifice, and upon Him as making an offering of Himself to the Father,

in the name of His brethren of the seed of Adam. He was therefore declared to be the High Priest of humanity, the Representative of mankind as to the service of God, keeping open for ever the way from the unclean and sinful state of men to the bosom of the Father. The Christian Jew would behold in the One High Priest the fulfilment of all that had been signified and effected through the priesthood of his nation; and he would feel it his duty to testify that men, though yet in the flesh, were raised to a partnership with an Invisible Priest, to whom they might always have recourse as a spiritual mediator between them and the Father. Then it would be very natural and reasonable that a new order of men should come into existence, whose function it should be to bear witness of the One Heavenly Priest; and so the Christian priesthood arose, to keep before the minds of men the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to assure them that *all* are made priests to God and the Father in Him.

The Temple was another remarkable object of Jewish reverence. There was but one temple of Jehovah for the whole people. It was a sign that Jehovah their God was dwelling amongst them, and making them one body. The houses of all Israel were gathered round the house of the Lord God as their centre. All the people were bidden to come up to Jerusalem to pay their homage at the altar of the one temple. Certain words spoken by Jesus Himself, suggested to His followers the thought that *He* was the true sign of the

dwelling of God amongst men. The name Immanuel spoke to the same effect. In Christ, therefore, or in Christ and His members, the temple was believed to have found its fulfilment. That the tabernacle of God was with men, and that God dwelt amongst men as His people, was evident to those who believed in the Son of God as revealing the Father to men, and as fulfilling His own words, 'Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.' After this it followed naturally that sacred buildings should rise over the whole earth, testifying that God in Christ was indeed a dweller with men in every city and village, and inviting all men to meet together to confess the presence of the Lord and Saviour of all.

The Sacrifices were closely associated with both the priesthood and the Temple. The religious worship of the Jews consisted almost entirely in making offerings to God; and these offerings were of various kinds, as cattle and sheep and birds, and wine, and fruits of the earth. The offering of the animals consisted in killing them at the altar. Everything connected with sacrifice was fixed by the minutest regulations in the Mosaic Law. The general idea of *an offering* ran through every sacrifice; but the various sacrifices were made to represent all the chief conditions of conscience in one who draws nigh to God. Daily surrender of the soul to God; fear and contrition on account of sin, general and particular; thankfulness on account of mercies; the homage of the individual and of the commonwealth;—all these and other inward emotions were drawn forth

by the Divine appointment of special sacrifices which Jehovah invited His people to offer and promised to accept. The sacrifices were so many utterances of the human spirit, and they were made at the same time assurances of the Divine-favour. Brought up in such a ritual, the mind of a devout Jew must have been impregnated with the idea of sacrifice. The whole relation of man to God must have been conceived of under the conviction that God was a Being who claimed and accepted man, and man a being who offered to God. The self-surrender of Christ, therefore, especially when consummated in the shedding of His blood, was at once described by a Jewish believer as an oblation or sacrifice. No doubt the voluntary giving-up of his life by any man to the service of God would have been called by the same name. What made the sacrifice of Christ of peculiar worth and significance was His nature. When He was believed to be the Son of God, who came down from heaven by the Father's will in order to bring back the hearts of men to God, and also the Son of Man, the Head and Root and Ideal of that which was truly human in every man, His offering of Himself to God was felt to be all, and more than all, that the sacrifices of the law had symbolized. His sacrifice was the pledge of peace between God and men universally, the effectual sign of a perfect atonement. To follow that sacrifice with the mind and heart, was to gain the true purgation from sin, and to enter by a living way into the sanctuary of the heart of God. Supposing this glory and power of the sacrifice of Christ to be realized,

it would be desirable that it should be kept before the minds of men, and that acts of fellowship with that sacrifice should be encouraged. A system of Christian worship naturally grew up, of which the principal element was that representation of the death of Christ for men which He had Himself ordained, in which much mention was made of the name of Christ and of His Cross and Passion, and which included also acts of bounty, such as would spring from the spirit of sacrifice in the heart. Thus men were called upon everywhere to approach the Living God, in the name and power of the sacrifice which the Son of God offered through the Eternal Spirit.

The Sabbath-day is perhaps the centre of recent controversies concerning the relation of Judaism to Christianity. It formed a chief feature of the existence of a Jew. Every seventh day was secured by stringent regulations as a day of national rest. The law declared it to have been given and secured to the people by the Lord their Deliverer. It was to serve practically as a barrier to protect the life of servants and the poor from drudgery. But it was made sacred by the highest associations. It was a sign of the rest of God in His creation; it was also a memorial of that redemption out of Egypt, which first gave to the children of Israel an independent national life. It was one of the most touching of the bonds by which the people were united to their God—‘a sign between God and them, that they might know Him to be the Lord who sanctified them to Himself.’ The sabbath spoke perpetually of rest

—of the rest of God in man, and of the rest of man in God. By the thoughtful Jewish disciple of the Lord Jesus, sabbath-days were held to be part of that 'shadow, the body of which was of Christ.' The Son of God raised again from the dead in man's nature, and going to the righteous Father, was seen to be the ground of God's complacency in His work, and the ground of man's repose in God. There needed some such meeting-point of God's rest and man's rest, in order that man might be perfectly at peace with God; and the blessed quiet of the sabbath, secured by God's law to His toiling creatures, was a prophecy of that satisfied rest of the spirit of man in his God, of which the Gospel of the risen Saviour was an offer. The way for man to enter into that rest was through faith in Christ raised from the dead. But when this was thoroughly believed—when the old sabbaths were felt to be worthless, except as testifying of the spiritual rest—it would naturally seem most unwise to throw away such a witness of the blessing secured to men in Christ, as the weekly day of rest supplied. A Lord's Day, commemorating the Resurrection, might gradually become the Christian sabbath, to testify to men that God had redeemed and justified them in His Son, and that He desired freedom and well-being both for their bodies and their souls.

Let us take as one more instance the Jewish Scriptures, the *books* of the Old Covenant. Other nations have had their sacred books, like the Jews. Wherever there are such writings, they are always most important and

characteristic. They deserve respectful study in themselves, and in relation to the history of the society by which they are revered. The writings which were sacred to the Jews, are familiar and sacred to ourselves. We know that the Old Testament in our Lord's time was at least very nearly the same as it is now. We know that by the Jews 'the Law and the Prophets' were looked upon with a degree of reverence which often degenerated into superstition. They were the various records of the people which Jehovah had taken into covenant with Himself, and they professed to connect the institutions, the history, and the destinies of the people at every point with the counsels of their God. It was the repeated assertion of Jesus of Nazareth, and the fixed belief of His disciples, that these Scriptures testified of Him. We might be glad to have some clearer expositions than have been given us of the way in which the Scriptures were understood by the first disciples to refer to Christ. But it is clear that Christ was held by them to be discernible by the enlightened eye throughout the Law and the Prophets. These Writings pointed to Him, and when He came they were fulfilled. It might well be a first thought, in the minds of the most devout believers, that the work of the Scriptures was done when Christ was revealed. But without detracting anything from the fulness and reality of His manifestation, it was found that there was still use for sacred books, new ones being added to the old, as testifying of the Son of God. Only, it was most essential that their use should be

subject to the acknowledgment in the Spirit of a Living and Present Lord.

We are now touching upon what we were to consider separately, the relation of Scriptures to the Spirit. Let us pause for a moment to repeat what has been indicated in these examples as to the contrast between the Old and the New Covenants.

In the former we perceive a system of government, local and national, and therefore temporary, administered by the One God as a Spiritual ruler, but by means of fixed outward institutions. This government was necessarily spiritual, through the reference of the outward institutions and of all events that came to pass to One Invisible God; but it was not grounded upon the declaration of a Spirit guiding the spirits of men. The Holy Spirit was implied and promised rather than appealed to and given. The New Covenant, on the other hand, is a kingdom founded on the unveiling of that Divine nature to which the Mosaic and other Jewish ordinances referred. Essentially, it is a spiritual constitution, in which the realities are the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and the spirits of men; but it is established upon earth, and mixed with outward and visible things; and therefore it has ordinances, which are naturally analogous to those of the Old Covenant, but which differ from them in having been spiritually organized and not arbitrarily enacted, and in testifying to what has been, and not to what is to be, manifested. These ordinances are intended to minister to a spiritual dependence upon the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit and the Letter.

I have just spoken of the sacredness and importance of the Scriptures in the eyes of a Jew. The very application of the term the Old Covenant (or Testament) to the Scriptures, which we find first in St. Paul (2 Cor. iii. 14), shows how completely those records of the Covenant were understood to represent the Covenant itself. Ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναγνώσει τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης, says St. Paul, in just such language as we might use ourselves. But in the same passage there is a striking contradiction to later usage. Ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη in verse 6 (the "New Testament" of our version), not only is not a title of Scriptures, but is expressly distinguished from a Covenant with Scriptures. St. Paul, in being made a minister of a New Covenant, became a minister not of *writ*, but of Spirit, and he glories in the superiority thus implied. It sounds paradoxical, but is no less true, that St. Paul boasted of being the minister of a New Testament which had no Scriptures belonging to it.

It will be worth while to consider a little more closely what St. Paul says when he makes that boast. At the beginning of 2 Cor. iii. he maintains his own authority against the rival claims of those who brought with them 'letters of commendation' from Jerusalem. Whatever others might do, he needed no such letters; at Corinth, especially, or in its neighbourhood, they would have been superfluous. He had a commendatory letter of another kind—one which Christ Himself had written

upon the hearts of the Corinthian believers, in the work wrought there, through St. Paul's agency, by the Spirit of the Living God. He magnifies this spiritual writing on the heart against writing that could be done with ink, or on tables of stone. And having begun by appealing to spiritual effects as better credentials in his favour than any letters, he goes on to glory in his *New Covenant* as better than the Old, because of this power of the Divine Spirit which supported it. 'God,' he says, 'has enabled me as a minister of a New Covenant, not of writ or letter, but of Spirit,' *οὐ γράμματος ἀλλὰ πνεύματος*. And it is proved that in the word *γράμμα*, or writ, he is now alluding to the writings of the Old Covenant, not only by the emphasis laid on the Spiritual Covenant as a New one, but by the argument which follows. The 'ministration of the Spirit' is immediately contrasted with the ministration by Moses 'written and engraved on stones,' *ἐν γράμματι ἐντετυπωμένη λίθοις*. And shortly afterwards we have the expressions, 'in the reading of the Old Covenant,' and 'when Moses is read.' St. Paul, therefore, having begun by showing that documentary credentials in his own favour were made utterly unnecessary by the power of the Spirit exerted through him, is led on to think of the dispensation which he proclaimed, as a Covenant expressly supported by the Spirit and not by documents, and as in that respect contrasted with the Old Covenant, which rested on a written law and a volume of books. 'I appeal to the Spirit, and not to a book,' was St. Paul's watchword against his Judaizing adversaries.

Now, as a matter of fact, this declaration of the Apostle was historically true. When he taught and wrote his letters, the New Covenant, of which he had been made a minister, *had no Scriptures*. No one supposes that our present Gospels existed in any authoritative form when St. Paul passed over into Macedonia and Achaia. The Book of the Acts was not yet written. St. Paul's own spoken word was of as much authority as any of his letters. He preached his Gospel, in short, without any part of what we call the New Testament to appeal to. Nor did the Hebrew Scriptures supply the place of a sacred book to the new Gospel. St. Paul revered them with all his heart, and contended out of them that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised to the Jews; but as the Apostle of the Gentiles, the Old Testament was—not quite, but almost—nothing to him. He did not begin his work of persuading Greeks at Athens or Corinth by demonstrating to them that the Hebrew Scriptures were inspired. He testified, indeed, that the God of the Jews was He whom the nations were feeling after, and through this discovery the Old Testament became precious to them. But at the beginning of his teaching, when he addressed Gentiles, he left these Scriptures on one side. What then did he stand upon? a Protestant Christian may ask almost indignantly. He himself supplies us with an answer. He stood upon the Word of God and the Power of the Spirit.

Paley, in remarking upon the absence of written books when the Gospel was first preached, quotes a say-

ing from Eusebius, which will sound a little strange to many of us: 'Nor were the Apostles of Christ greatly concerned about the writing of books, being engaged in a more excellent ministry, which is above all human power.' (Eccl. Hist. iii. 24.) But these words are in harmony with the views which the Apostles themselves expressed. They had no thought of setting up what they might write as of higher authority than what they spoke. But they were persuaded that when they preached their Gospel they were speaking not their own words, but the very Word of the Living God. They were conscious of the power with which that Word laid hold of their own hearts, and they saw that it had the same power upon other men. Here were their 'Evidences,' satisfying to themselves, demonstrative towards others. If they had been answered, 'Yes; but other teachers have also drawn large numbers of followers after them,' they would have contended, 'That is not what we mean. We point to spiritual fruit, vices forsaken, virtue put on, a whole new life created. And all this work attaches itself not to any theories or any persuasive support of them, but to an unseen Lord whom we simply proclaim, that Lord being a despised Jew raised again from the dead.' Whether these results might be explained away or not, it is certain that they were the Evidences on which St. Paul relied. Take a few words from his earliest epistle: 'For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.'

‘And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having
‘received the word in much affliction, with joy of the
‘Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that
‘believe in Macedonia and Achaia.’ (1 Thess. i. 5—7.)
And again, ‘For this cause also thank we God without
‘ceasing, because when ye received the word of God
‘which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of
‘men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, who effec-
‘tually worketh also in you that believe.’ (Ibid. ii. 13.)
We might quote passages without number to a similar
effect, but those plain statements ought to be enough,
setting forth as they do so distinctly, what was the
invariable ground of St. Paul’s Apostolic work. God
was speaking and calling men; God, with his Divine or
spiritual power, was supporting His own words; these
were the two convictions which made the Apostles strong
against all difficulties and disappointments. No better
expression could be given to these convictions than the
early words of ‘Peter and the Apostles,’ ‘We in Him
‘are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy
‘Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.’
(Acts v. 32.)

The more thoroughly the speeches and writings of
the Apostles are examined, the more plainly will it
appear that they thought and spoke and wrote—that
they spread the Gospel and planted Churches—in the
persuasion that a Living Spirit was with them, whose
proper fruits were all the virtues and graces of the
Christian life. Works of healing are mentioned and
appealed to, but not with anything like the same

frequency or decision as those spiritual effects, of faith, and hope, and love, which the Apostles knew and saw as accompanying the reception of their word—such as St. Paul describes in 1 Cor. ii. and xii. I am speaking here of the belief of the first preachers of Christ as a matter of fact. But, if we could clear our minds of the misgiving that those results were such as might spring from mere human activity and persuasiveness acting upon ordinary human motives, and could honestly believe them to be works of the Divine Spirit, we should not shrink from confessing the might of such evidences, nor wonder that an Apostle would rather appeal to them than to any documentary proof. It must be our blindness and unbelief as to spiritual forces, our suspicion that ‘spiritual’ may be translated into ‘arbitrary,’ ‘egotistic,’ or ‘fantastical,’ which makes us think books so much safer to rely upon than the manifested power of the Holy Ghost. We almost fancy that such societies as those of the first days of the Kingdom of Christ were the result of inclination and taste, and that men might at any time or anywhere do what was done then, if they happened to agree and have a liking for it. And thinking thus unbelievably of the Spirit, even religious people are prevailed upon to cry *against* St. Paul, Not the Spirit, but the letter!

Protests against idolatry of the Bible are thought not only dangerous, but sufficient to prove that the protester dislikes the Bible in his heart. But I know of no such protest in our own days so unsparing and vehement as those of St. Paul against the law of his fathers, which

he nevertheless honoured in his heart as God's law, holy, just, and good. It is superficially argued by some modern writers from these invectives of St. Paul, that he had been converted from the religion of the Jews, and had become an enemy to the system which he once looked on as a Divine Revelation—as it is argued from Luther's fury against the idolatry of the Sabbath Day, that he denied its authority and value. Nothing can be more untrue. St. Paul, as a follower of Jesus Christ, only became the more convinced that the Covenant of his fathers, and the written records of that Covenant, were from God. Earnest men, striving for great truths, are sure to be paradoxical and to seem to contradict themselves. Their inspiration only makes them the more fearless in such seeming contradictions. So it was with St. Paul, when he spoke of the Holy Writ of his countrymen. If the Law were upheld against Grace, he would protest against bondage to weak and beggarly rudiments. If written books were set up as the only authority against the living work of the Spirit of God, he would say, 'Not the letter, but the Spirit: the letter kills, the Spirit makes alive.' And yet no one could so well confess and set forth the truth of those Scriptures which he seemed to depreciate. If the Spirit were recognised in the lives and convictions of men, then he, on his part, would see the Spirit in the books also. When the Spirit was denied, the books became dead; the Law became an instrument of death to the hopes of man. But let the Spirit of Jesus be honoured, and the books also became living and precious. For then the

vail which blinded the reader's mind was taken away. In the same chapter from which we have quoted the words *against* the Scriptures, St. Paul says: 'Until
' this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the
' reading of the Old Testament, which vail is done
' away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses
' is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless,
' when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken
' away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the
' Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' Therefore,
without any real inconsistency, St. Paul is in the habit
of quoting continually with the utmost deference from
the sacred books of the Old Covenant; and what
Luther says of him may well be thought true, 'There
' never was any one who understood the Old Testament
' so well as St. Paul, except John the Baptist and
' John the Divine. . . . Oh! he dearly loved Moses and
' Isaiah, for they, together with King David, were the
' chief prophets. The words and things of St. Paul
' are taken out of Moses and the prophets.'

Who then is in our own day the true follower of
St. Paul and his brother Apostles? Not surely the
Christian who surpasses his brethren in a slavish and
superstitious worship of the words and sentences of the
sacred volume, who cries out most loudly that if one
assertion in those books be doubted, the whole cause of
God and of Christ is in danger, who knows no sure
ground for the believer to stand upon, except the
affirmation of the equal and absolute infallibility of
every verse in the Bible. Let the Christians of our day

look to it, lest in magnifying the Bible they deny the great lessons of the Bible. The Jews who rejected our Lord were great worshippers of the Bible; they thought they had eternal life in the Scriptures. The Judaizers who resisted the doctrine of free grace stood upon the prescriptive authority of the sacred books. As with 'the Temple of the Lord' in the days when the glory of Jehovah did really fill His House at Jerusalem, so now it is possible to ring the changes upon 'the inspired Word of God' in a spirit of blind and timorous superstition. But he who reads the Scriptures that he may honestly follow their teaching will feel himself bound, in these difficult days, to look to the Spirit of God, working afresh in each generation, for the highest and most convincing proofs of that which is to be received as true. If he is perplexed by the apparent confusion with which every variety of creed and every kind of spiritual excellence are now mixed up together, he will admit the necessity of being humble, patient, and cautious, but he will not slide willingly to the conclusion that there is no such thing as the working of the Spirit of God in men, or that if the Spirit wrought once, He has ceased to work now. He will perhaps feel driven the more by the intricacy of existing human relations to hope for the guidance of the One Divine Spirit, that he may not grow bewildered and be lost. But if he learns from the Scriptures what Spirit he may look for, and what grounds there are for believing in His continued presence, is he likely to undervalue those Scriptures? Such a result is impossible. Let a man

come to the Scriptures with a mind entirely unembarrassed by theories as to their infallibility, but with a modest and candid spirit, so that they may exert their natural power upon him, and, I had almost said, he cannot resist that power. Unfortunately, it is the tendency of the doctrine that an infallible Bible is the only ground of belief, to draw the attention of an anxious student to all its weakest points. If one link is unsound, he is told the chain breaks, and he has nothing to hold by. So, of course, he looks to the most suspicious links, and the study of the deepest and truest of human utterances becomes a hunting for possible inconsistencies and inaccuracies. But if the student can say to himself, "Whether every word in this volume be true or not, my faith in God and in the Gospel does not depend upon any such verbal perfection," he can go freely to the reading of each book to see what he can find and learn there. And then that which seems to reveal the most to him on any page, that which goes home to his conscience, and humbles him with a sense of unworthiness, that which warrants the best hopes for himself and for his race, will attract his thoughts. And what lover of the Bible will not be content to say that the Bible is its own best recommendation? But then we must let the books of the Bible really speak for themselves, which, of late years, they have hardly been allowed to do. Those who succeed to their own satisfaction in picking holes in the sacred books, have not been fairly challenged to account for those qualities in these books in which they cannot pick

holes. What English sceptical writer, for example, has ever attempted to do justice, as a historical critic, to the Gospels, to St. Paul, to St. John? It might awaken new thoughts in many an unbeliever, and half-believer, if he were to meet St. Paul according to the challenge the Apostle himself throws out when he says, ‘By manifestation of the truth we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.’

However that might be, if there is to be a choice between slavish subjection to sacred writings, and the free service of a living Spirit, there can be no doubt on which side the true follower of the Apostles will take his place. The most precious instrument of God must not be allowed to usurp the authority which belongs to God Himself over the spirits of men.

Spiritual Life and Common Life.

The questions we have been considering, though they may be said to belong to historical and speculative theology, have an immediate bearing upon ourselves, inasmuch as they testify of a Divine Spirit ever living and working, to whom we ourselves must be in some way subject. The Spirit who is the lawgiver of the New Covenant, whose power is higher than that of the most sacred books, is by His very nature a quickening Spirit. ‘The Spirit giveth life.’ What is this life, and to whom does He give it? What is the nature, what are the conditions of true spiritual life? No one who calls himself a Christian can deny that these questions practically concern himself and the society to which he

belongs. Those who believe that the very existence of the Church of Christ is due to a direct exertion and continuance of the creative force of the Spirit, ought to be deeply interested in all inquiries as to the mode and the marks of His operations in our own time. No theology, no religion, which claims a Christian origin, can be true to itself, without making the direct action of God upon human beings a leading object of its consideration.

The New Testament teaching as to the true relation of a living man to God, however mysterious it may be, is positive and undeniable. The whole man is claimed for God. He belongs to the Father, to Christ, to the Holy Ghost. The one Divine Spirit enters the human heart as a Spirit of worship, actuating the inward life, and making it a perpetual sacrifice to the Father. This teaching may be either right or wrong; it may apply to a few or to the many: unimportant, or of secondary interest, it cannot possibly be. It cannot be detached from the fundamental principles of the Christian faith, and leave them unaltered.

In our own day, a consciousness of the power and of the demands of the Divine Spirit has been awakened in the hearts of many thoughtful Christians, and has manifested itself in various forms of confession, protest, and practical activity. These utterances have been divergent from one another, and to some extent mutually opposed. It may be profitable, therefore, to bring together a few leading types of them, to see whether they speak unitedly in any harmonious voice. Let us name

first the movements which imply the necessity of something *special* and *extraordinary* in the spiritual life of Christians, and then those which proclaim the sacredness of *ordinary* life.

1. The agitation which, under the name of a Revival of Religion, swept recently over a portion of the United States of America, and after seizing with great force upon a district in Ireland, has made its pulses felt intermittently in various parts of the United Kingdom, may have disappointed the hopes of those who thought that a second Pentecost had dawned upon the earth; but it was a memorable phenomenon, containing much to interest and soften any Christian heart, and its very evils may be found instructive, if we are willing to study as well as to condemn them. And I need hardly say that its most characteristic feature was its appeal to the presence and power of the Spirit of God.

Almost all observers of the Revivalist movement confess that there were evils which associated themselves with the progress of it. But those who sympathise with it, have certainly the right to contend that it was remarkably free from some evils, which the history of similar agitations in former times would have led us to expect. Strong fanatical excitement has generally led to the proclamation of wild antisocial doctrines, and to indulgence in irregular and immoral practices. No such excesses, it may fairly be said, are to be put down to the discredit of the American or the Irish Revivals. The new zeal of the converts appears to have always run in the lines of the received belief and morality of

the religious public to which they belonged. Possibly, this orderly and manageable character of the movement, though in itself a matter to rejoice in, may be a sign that the heart of the people was nowhere very strongly laid hold of by it; and we may be inclined, on looking back upon it, to regard the Revival as more tame and superficial than it appeared to many at the time. But in some places the excitement was for a while absorbing enough; and it had a physical character, which secured immediate and lively attention wherever it broke out. Attempts have been made to defend these physical affections—the ‘striking down,’ the trances, and catalepsy—on the ground that by their means the real spiritual awakening was forced upon general attention. But almost all, even of those who rejoiced most in the conversions, saw in these morbid phenomena a discredit and source of weakness to the movement. It is well known that the singular contagious affections which were propagated to a considerable extent in Ulster, could be either fostered or repressed at will. To regard them as proper signs of a visitation of the Holy Spirit, was to do dishonour to true heavenly influences.

Yet these disorders, pitiful as in many cases they were, may be taken as revealing powers and functions in human nature which call for the recognition of spiritual life, and the confession of a Spirit to awaken that life, in order that they may find their due development. It seems to be certain that the conditions of the Revivalist contagion transcended all ordinary medical experience. Its dependence on *sympathy* was very remark-

able. Precisely the same affections recurred incessantly; the same mental emotions were repeated, the same order was followed, the same language was used. The movement began and was sustained by meetings for prayer. A deliberate and solemn pursuit of the same religious experiences resulted in impressions made on a few or on many, more or less suddenly, through which a sense of fellowship, resting on grounds in the unseen world, was acutely if not always wholesomely stimulated. Now, even if we see no value at all, but rather a great danger, in those sensations of happiness and peace and mutual affection, which claimed to rest on apprehensions of the Divine nature, but were too plainly connected with an overwrought state of the nervous system, can it be nothing to us that in the drama, so to speak, of an emotion half spiritual, half nervous, people did actually start from trust in the Divine forgiveness, to lead a pure and serene life, that they felt themselves drawn upwards by spiritual forces from debasing habits, and were at the same time united to one another in a new and animating fellowship? I do not wish to pronounce an opinion either in favour of, or against, the Revivals taken altogether; but I cannot help admitting that even if we may call them caricatures, they at least bring to our minds the great principles and examples of a life moved by the Spirit of God, as we have them in the New Testament, and in the best periods of the Church of Christ.

The beliefs and practices which are combined under the vulgar name of Spiritualism, form another and a very

direct protest, though to the common English mind a disagreeable one, in favour of special spiritual influences descending out of the unseen world upon the souls of men. The most active forms of Spiritualism have come to us from the United States of America, and have brought with them much that offends our taste. The stories of what has been said and done by deceased persons, who have put themselves once more in communication with those yet in the flesh, are such as most of us cannot hear without a smile. The theology with which the habit of holding intercourse with the departed has allied itself—that of Swedenborg and his followers—with all its truth and beauty, is so much opposed to prevailing opinions, so hampered with a strange terminology and a system of special revelations, that it has peculiar difficulties to overcome before it can be accepted. The strikingly eloquent discourses of the chief prophet of Spiritualism, though every hearer or reader of them must confess their fervent piety and high moral tone, suffer from the drawback of an inflated rhetoric such as English habits can hardly tolerate. And yet the beliefs thus commended to us have gained power over many minds; for the most part, no doubt, over those of an enthusiastic, affectionate, and imaginative temperament. Far deeper and fresher thoughts have been evoked by this Spiritualist movement than by the more commonplace Revival; thoughts which harmonize well, as I believe, with the true orthodox faith, but which often put to shame the ordinary level of our orthodox sentiments. Whatever be the right explanation of the marvels of spi-

ritual intercourse which are said to have been so abundant, it can hardly be denied by those who know anything of the religion of Spiritualism, that it raises visions of a life governed from another world and actuated by one spirit of love and joy, at which both the records of Apostolic times and the secret hopes of our own hearts forbid us to mock.

It may be suitable in this place to make a few remarks upon the present condition of that spiritual piety which was introduced into English life by the teaching and example of the great Evangelical worthies, and which has so far triumphed over the ridicule and opposition which once assailed it, that it is now raised to great power, and never spoken of without respect. That piety undoubtedly rested on a high and stringent doctrine concerning the quickening Spirit. Absolute regeneration—a total change of nature—by the special energy of the Holy Ghost, was maintained to be the only safety for any man in the prospect of the judgment to come, and the only ground of acts in the slightest degree acceptable to God. The practical religion of those who were recognised as truly converted, was confessedly distinguished by much ‘unction’—by the cultivation of a constant communion with God, and the subjection of all present and material interests to considerations drawn from another world. And the Evangelical piety of former generations is still faithfully and honourably represented amongst us.

But it is easy to see that what calls itself Evangelical religion is no longer what it was. The Venns, and

Newtons, and Simeons, would find the great religious party which they helped to establish much altered in very important respects by the prosperity which it has attained. There is a story that when some bishop was taunted by an enemy of Church endowments with the question, 'What would St. Peter and St. Paul say, if they could see those who profess to be their successors living in parks and riding in carriages?' he replied, 'Say? why, that things have been very much changed for the better, to be sure!' But it is not so certain that the pious men whose mantle covers the Evangelical party would be satisfied with the state of religion amongst their successors, now that they have the power to nominate bishops, and to prosecute the heterodox in courts of law. There are two directions in which the spiritual piety, at once deep and exclusive, so jealously cherished by the Evangelical teachers, has been running itself away. (1) The first is that of a coarse worldliness of thought and practice. How has it come to pass that there should be such a marked divergence between the Evangelical party-spirit, and what the world calls the spirit of a gentleman? Formerly, it used to be a reasonable boast, that the true Christian was the true gentleman. Courtesy, high-mindedness, consideration for private feelings, repugnance to intrigue and to intimidation, a certain dignity of demeanour, were developed, it was believed, even in the poorest and most ignorant by a true faith in Christ, and by the influence of the Holy Spirit. But these qualities, it is notorious, are now wanting in a singular degree in

the factious and Pharisaical portion of the Evangelical party. The imputing of base and sneaking motives to opponents; readiness to catch at any tittle-tattle slander against persons; a peculiar delight in private and domestic insinuations, which it is hoped may rankle; a marvellous thickness of skin, and slowness to retract and apologise when found out in a plain untruth; flattery of the aristocracy, and dependence upon the patronage of the great; outspoken bullying and threats of putting down by public clamour and persecution obnoxious teachers: this is, indeed, a sad catalogue of offences; but would it not be too possible to find examples of them all in the speeches and writings—chiefly the anonymous writings—of those who thank God that they are not as other men are, but are true Evangelical Christians? I do not charge so unchristian a spirit upon the general body of those who rejoice to call themselves Evangelicals: God forbid. I know well that many clergymen and laymen holding Evangelical doctrines are grieved by this spirit, and have no part in its utterances. But they do not seem to be so sensitive to the reproach it brings upon their cause, and to the deadly injury it works to the religion of the country, as they might reasonably be expected to be. It surely belongs to *them* to be the most earnest in casting out so detestable a leaven. How is it possible that true spiritual piety can long flourish, in alliance with so much that is ‘earthly, sensual, and devilish?’

(2) The second influence which has largely affected Evangelical religious life is that of the liberal spirit of

the age. The peculiar doctrines of Evangelical religion, such as the utter depravity of all the unconverted, and the necessity of drawing a marked line of separation between 'the regenerate' and 'the world,' do not easily enter into combination with the views of modern liberalism. And yet many excellent men, and whole societies, contrive to retain in some sense the traditions of that religion, and yet to be as liberal in judgment and action as any of their neighbours. The tendency of the religious public in general, it may be said, is to cling to their sacred traditions, and at the same time to abjure the exclusive spirit which they seem to enjoin. Hitherto, when persons of Evangelical opinions have shown themselves 'liberal and enlightened,' the external world has been content to applaud, and only the more rigid of their own school have uttered an occasional warning. But the question will be asked more commonly, as the phenomenon of a liberalized Evangelical belief becomes less rare, Can the old doctrines be held in earnest, together with so much concession to the spirit of the age? Must they not lose their vitality, when they are almost neutralized by saving-clauses in the pulpit, and not acted upon in daily life? This is in fact becoming, with the present course of events, one of the most serious questions of our time. The Evangelical creed, with its solemn and peremptory demands, is consistent no doubt with the gentlest compassion towards those on the outside of the fold; but it allows them no share in the reconciliation to God, or in the influences of the Spirit. With those, therefore, who

have not undergone the 'change of heart,' any fellowship except that of the saved with the ready to perish is precluded. The Church doctrine which gives the right of spiritual fellowship to all the baptized, is far more suited to a frank and tolerant intercourse than that trenchant doctrine of conversion. It is not fair to say that professed 'believers' do shut out from brotherly fellowship all who are not believers, or that they look upon all their virtues as mere splendid sins. But then, is not their doctrine sacrificed to the truer instincts of charity and humility? It is probable that many good and devout men are perplexed by this conflict; that they find more comfort in reading the biographies of the departed than in contemplating the confused religion of their living friends; that they would rejoice to combine the old reverence for the direct operations of the Spirit of God in some more real alliance with the recognition of common human worth and goodness. Meanwhile, Evangelical piety is still nobly and manfully represented in many a humble Christian life; and the world could ill afford to lose either its work or its testimony.

2. In opposition to all exclusive views of religious duty or perfection, a strenuous protest has been made of late years in behalf of the sacredness of common life. To affirm this sacredness, let it be understood, is something different from what is meant by the infusing of religion into all that we do. The most exclusive religion has always professed to claim the whole life of the religious as its subject and sphere. But it has been customary to regard the necessary affairs and relations

of men as in themselves common or profane, except in so far as they are sanctified by the touch of individual piety. 'Ordinary life *may be made* holy,' was the religious maxim. 'Ordinary life *is* holy,' is the protest of which I am now speaking. A great theological principle, that the whole world is a world made by God and redeemed to the Father by the sacrifice of the Son, has been carried out into the conclusions, that nothing belonging to the constitution of the world is to be called common or unclean, that national life and domestic life are both holy so far as they are true and genuine, and that the only way of sanctifying ordinary duties and enjoyments is by confessing them to be from God, and entering upon them with reverence and thankfulness.

The growth of these convictions may be traced in part to the courageous and practical faith of Dr. Arnold. That politics and history rest upon the Divine Will, as manifested in Christ, was most thoroughly proclaimed by Coleridge. In our own generation that teaching has been boldly developed, and has gained the ear of the world. The theory that production and trade have no root but that of selfish competition has been resolutely and practically denied, and the opposite principle that Christian duty and fellow-work are the true basis of national prosperity has been embodied in permanent witnesses, such as the name of Christian Socialism and the efforts of co-operative labour. Another movement, known by the good-natured nick-name of Muscular Christianity, and for which the motto, 'Walking and leaping and praising God,' has been suggested, has

vindicated the natural sacredness of the human body as the instrument of the spirit for its outward and everyday work. That all mental endowments and genial qualities are, antecedently to their use or abuse, gifts of the Spirit of God, is affirmed with a breadth which emulates the teaching of St. Paul himself. All the springs of human life, such as love, poetry, and science, are boldly treated as links which connect the existence of man with the eternal nature of God. These determined applications of the belief that God is the Creator of all things, and that every creature of God is good, have startled the world in general, and have awakened much alarm and hostility in the followers of an exclusive religion.

The first impression made by these doctrines may be that, if so much universality is ascribed to the creating Will of God and the movements of the Holy Spirit, we shall lose all that is distinctive and vital in the acknowledgment of a Father, a Redeemer, and a Sanctifier. To say that God is everywhere may be thought nearly the same thing as to say that God is nowhere; to say that all men are subjects of the Divine Spirit, as to say that no one is really inspired or regenerated. There is some justification, I believe, for the alarm thus raised. A loose pantheistic feeling would be only a little better than a practical forgetfulness of God.

But what, then, is to be done? *Not*, most assuredly, to reject a truth specially brought home to the mind of this generation—a truth shining plainly in the pages of Holy Writ, and enforced upon us by the first principles

of any true belief in God. No; the right course must be to look with greater simplicity to the Spirit Himself, whilst we theorise less about the limits of His operations. An earnest faith in the Holy Spirit of God is the true deliverance from spiritual difficulties and dangers.

Let it be granted, for example, that a belief in special and direct inspiration, which, as we have seen, is manifesting itself now as at other times in various forms, may easily lead to fanaticism, and self-worship, and irregular excesses. One remedy for this danger is to deny inspiration altogether. Another is to control spiritual excitement by hierarchical authority. Another, to turn men's thoughts from the uncertain motions of a living Spirit to the fixed words of the Bible. A better way than any of these, is to study reverently the mind of the Spirit, to learn what He really does for men, and with what kind of life He quickens them. For this knowledge, the books of the New Testament will be of sovereign value and authority. They will show that it is not the work of the Spirit who quickens men from above to take up human nature as so much passive matter to be stimulated and made sensitive, but above all, to act upon the conscious will, making the man who submits the most obediently to the Spirit the inheritor, at the same time, of the most genuine human freedom. And the same contemplation of the real nature of the Spirit will be the effectual safeguard against the evils, which it is feared may arise from a too wide assertion of the universality of the Spirit's power and presence. Let us forbear to

dispute whether the Spirit is here, and whether He is there; let us not perplex ourselves with the hopeless problem of defining where His influence begins and where it ends; but let us remind ourselves, and one another, that the Spirit of God, the universal Spirit, is Holy, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, and that His highest work is seen in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. No harm can follow from believing that *this* Spirit claims all creation as His, and is striving to govern every man. This is a very different thing from maintaining that the ordinary motives and sentiments of mankind represent the working of the Spirit of God, and are therefore to be acquiesced in as perfectly right and satisfactory. That would be a lazy and a corrupting theory. To believe that all the sound relations of men and things are constituted according to the mind of Christ, and that the Spirit of God, co-operating with those relations, is teaching every man to deny himself that he may please God, is anything but a luxurious faith. It might well seem on the contrary too awful to receive, if it did not support our best hopes as well as declare war against the evil that is in us.

The faith in such a quickening Spirit must be rooted in the most private and solemn convictions, and must be strengthened by personal experience. It was whilst he was musing that the fire kindled in the heart of the devout believer of old; and no one who lives a mere external life will ever know what the power of the Spirit is to stir up the soul within. But by adding fire to fire new heat is generated; and the instincts of men have

always responded to the truth, that the Spirit of God quickens societies rather than individuals. It is probable, therefore, that if there were a simpler interchange of serious convictions and hopes amongst God-fearing men, if the reserve which specially characterises our age and nation were overcome more frequently by a reverent sympathy, if that social life in one Spirit, of which the contagious effervescence of crowds is a parody, were more happily realized amongst us, we should know more assuredly that the Spirit of the Living God is still with us, and should renew the old demonstrations of the Spirit in the world around us.

We should have indeed a most powerful antagonist to contend with in that great abstract of the outward shows of things which we call civilization. There are a hundred arguments from the common course of the world to persuade us that the belief in a mighty unseen Divine Spirit is simply no longer possible. But we have strong reasons also for resisting those arguments. It cannot be nothing to us, that if we yielded to them we should have to look down upon the best of our fathers as deluded fanatics. And what would be the result to ourselves? Is there anything to attract us in the conclusion that we stand alone, each in his own strength or weakness, face to face with the resistless force of a huge mechanical world? Can we bear to forfeit for this the hope in an infinite Spirit of love and purity and joy, whom outward things obey, who deals patiently with every man, and by whose energy our feeble and drooping wills may be daily refreshed and guided? It is not safe

indeed to believe according to our wishes ; but when our wishes are unselfish, and reach after the highest virtues, to suppose that they deceive us, is to suppose that we are mocked by our Maker Himself with visions of goodness never to be realized. Before we admit such a paradox, we have a right to question with the utmost severity those impressions which belong to the domain of our senses. And after all, the battle of to-day is the old battle. The visible world has always had a wisdom of its own, which it has used to enslave the tenderer and more hopeful energies of the human soul ; and now, as of old, there is a truer wisdom taught to the humble by the Holy Ghost of God, and they who are thus taught are made free indeed. Where the life-giving Spirit of the Lord is, there is also liberty.

TRACTS FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

No. XII.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE TO THE AUTHORITY OF CONSCIENCE AND OF REASON.

AMONG the controversies of our time, relating to the foundations of religious belief, we are continually brought to the question, How does God speak to us in a voice which we can clearly distinguish as His? Is it only through the Bible, or is it also through other channels; as, for instance, the experience of common life, the records of history, natural conscience?

And though there may be few who, while deliberately stating their theories, would take up the extreme opinion that the written Word of God, or its interpretation by the Church, is the sole trustworthy source of our knowledge of God, or of His character; or who would entirely repudiate the authority of all truths of what we commonly call Natural Religion; yet many do so in practice.

If a passage of Holy Scripture appears to them, when interpreted as they have hitherto understood it, to be

contradictory to another, they feel it to be necessary to modify their view of its meaning in order to reconcile the two. But if, on the other hand, that which appears to contradict it, is not another text of Scripture, but what is affirmed to be a fact of history, or of science, or a dictate of our conscience and moral instincts, they are not troubled; they think their faith requires them simply to shut their eyes to the latter—to put down by force any protests of conscience, and to believe all such supposed facts to be delusions. We have seen many remarkable cases of this of late, especially with reference to the doctrines taught by geology. Of course, with respect to geology, it may be said, and said with great truth, that it is, by the confession of the highest authorities in that science, premature to dogmatise much upon it, because the science is as yet in a very unsettled state, and geologists are changing their theories continually. But some considerable authorities, even in Convocation, appear to go much beyond this, and almost to protest against Christians listening at all to statements of supposed facts, from this or any other science, which seem to them to contradict Scripture. In the indiscriminating protests made against the ‘*Essays and Reviews*,’ many have proceeded simply upon this ground, that some of the statements made in that book, drawn from physical science, from history, or from the unwritten law of conscience, have appeared to contradict what men have usually believed to be the meaning of Scripture. Some of these protests have not been directed only or chiefly against any improper spirit in

which the bearing of these supposed facts upon doctrines held sacred among us is stated; nor yet against the profession of belief in certain theories, by persons who have signed formularies held to be irreconcilable with them; but they have been directed also against the declaration of anything as a fact, which seemed irreconcilable with received doctrines.

I cannot but think that this habit of mind is doing immense mischief to the cause of faith in the Divine Revelation contained in the Bible. It brings men's faith in Holy Scripture, and their observation of facts, and instinctive feeling of truth, into most dangerous collision; it tempts some, who know the unquestionable truth of the doctrines of science, and history, to disbelieve in the Bible altogether, as the Great Book of Divine Truth; to hold it to consist of mere sacred but unintelligible *words*, which must be revered on peril of damnation, but which are out of all harmony with facts, as known to us in common life. Moreover it very much encourages that deplorable narrowness and bigotry, so common in our day, which, because it is not in the habit of looking through words, to the things of which the words speak, is unable to recognise any belief as true, unless it is expressed in the very words of the Bible, or of some other formulary to which they happen to have become accustomed.

Now, no one, I imagine, could possibly deny that facts, *if rightly apprehended* by us, and *if rightly interpreted*, would reveal undeniable truth relating to Almighty God and His character, with which our

interpretations of Holy Scripture must be reconciled. But then, the line of argument men adopt now, is not so much of denying the importance of facts, or of the Revelation contained in facts, but rather of demurring to the trustworthiness and authority of the faculties in our minds and consciences, by which we perceive and interpret facts.

It is against the notion, then, of the untrustworthiness of our faculties when applied to reading the mind and nature of God in facts, whether of science, of history, or of conscience; and, secondly, of our being *intended*, under the Gospel, to learn the mind of God only from Scripture and its interpretations, that I wish to appeal to Scripture.

On all sides of us, from all quarters of the great horizon of human thought, we are continually receiving news of what are affirmed to be facts. How, then, as religious men, believers in Holy Scripture, are we to deal with these facts? Are we to stop our ears and eyes against them, unless they happen to fit into the doctrines which we have gathered from Scripture? Most certainly we shall never induce the men of science and of criticism to do so. *They* will believe their own senses rather than our affirmations. And so we shall end in widening and fixing more irrevocably the chasm which sometimes separates religion from science.

Surely, to shut our eyes wilfully to any fact, or our ears to any earnest utterance of man's heart and conscience, is to be guilty of a sinful want of faith in God,

and to incur great peril of stopping our ears against Him.

When in old time the chief priests and rulers of God's chosen people, 'sitting in Moses' seat,' tried to silence the fishermen apostles, bearing witness before God and all the people, of facts; their answer was, 'we cannot but speak *the things we have seen and heard.*' They trusted their eyes and ears against the united voice of human rulers and priests enthroned in sacred seats of Divine authority, and interpreting by that authority the written Word of God. And their interpretation of Divine truth, taken from things which they had 'seen and heard,' was the right one; that of their adversaries, reading the Bible, as many of them no doubt thought, in humble faith, but really in dishonest and wilful blindness to facts, was false and blasphemous.

So when Job's friends set themselves to justify the ways of God to man, on the ground of a blind faith—a faith really in their own prejudices and 'traditions of men,' and righteous Job contradicted them on the ground of the things which his eyes saw, and his ears heard, the Divine Judge justified Job, and condemned his adversaries. Job trusted his clear sense of truth and justice, and passionately expressed the difficulties they suggested, and God justified him, and led him by that road into truth—led him to see at last the *real* answer to his difficulties. How strongly he expresses the necessity he was under of trusting his own inward sense of what was true! '*Can that which is unsavoury,*' he asks, '*be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?*'

(Job vi. 6.) No, in vain will you say there is ; my own feeling tells me it is not so ; I cannot without dishonesty deny what I feel to be true. You answer my difficulties with denials of what nevertheless my conscience tells me are plain facts. *‘How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?’* (Job xxi. 34.)

And it is because the writers of these Tracts take their stand upon the opposite principle to that of which I have been speaking, and are labouring to awaken the minds of all men to the consciousness that God, the God revealed in the Bible, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was manifest in Him, is, indeed, near us always, and speaking to us in a voice that we can, if we will, distinctly hear, through all common facts and common events, and by a Spirit that dwells in us, that I sympathise with them, and should rejoice if I could at all help them.

And so far as the authors of the ‘Essays and Reviews’ have aimed at the same objects—have called upon us manfully to look all facts, of whatever kind, whether of criticism, of science, or of history, in the face, and to believe that to deny any fact is as truly to deny God’s teaching, as to deny the words of the Bible is so, so far I cannot but believe they have attempted a work very much needed. That they have done so in a very mischievous and wrong way ; and that their book, as a whole, offers wanton offence to the feelings and belief of earnest and godly minds amongst us, I also most earnestly believe. But the practical con-

clusion from this surely is not that we ought indiscriminately to condemn the whole book; but that the work which we believe these writers have tried to do in a wrong way, and in some cases in a most unbecoming spirit, we ought to try to do in a right way.

I wish then to show first, that Holy Scripture assumes that we have the power, and with it the solemn duty—to be fulfilled like other duties which God commands, under penalty of tremendous consequences if we do it in a wrong way—of judging of truth and falsehood, right and wrong; and that, therefore, if God speaks in history or in facts of any kind, we can distinctly hear Him.

1. What was the ground of our Lord's strong condemnation of the Pharisees?

Was it not clearly this:—That the Pharisees practically disbelieved that man was made in the likeness of God; and affirmed that he was therefore unable to understand the meaning and spirit, as well as the letter, of God's law. The Pharisees believed that God was a Being far removed from man; a hard Master, issuing edicts which man was to obey at his peril, but of which he was not to presume to investigate the reason.

So, for instance, the observance of the Sabbath was commanded by God, and must, therefore, be practised in all cases, on peril of damnation. But the Being who gave this law was One whose nature, attributes, and purposes were utterly beyond man's ken. Man could scarcely more clearly understand His object and mind, than an

ox can understand that of a man. To go, therefore, one step beyond the letter of His commands ; to interpret those commands by reference to any other standard besides other literal commands, if such could be found, was to take a leap in the dark ; to venture upon a region most perilous to such a being as man. Obey and tremble, but do not presume to reason or consult your conscience as to the meaning of the command.

Now, evidently, if we grant their premiss, we must follow them to their conclusion. If God is, indeed, utterly unlike us ; if His motives are unintelligible to us ; if His moral nature is something inconceivable to us, compounded, if I may reverently so express myself, of materials different in kind from anything known to us, then evidently we cannot safely argue about the *reason* of anything that He does or says. We may obey whatever He expressly commands, but not in the spirit of His children, having a nature like His, and therefore able to enter into His mind, but only in the spirit of slaves who *'know not what their Lord doeth.'*

But one of the chief and most characteristic parts of our Lord's teaching, seems to me to be the utter contradiction of this whole theory ; the continual assertion that man, as God's child, has the power, and with it the duty, of learning to understand the meaning and object of his Heavenly Father's acts, and words. Throughout, He appeals to the conscience and to the instinctive sense of truth of His disciples, as sufficient authorities ; on the ground of which they were at liberty, and were bound, to disbelieve and protest against many of the sayings of

those Scribes and Pharisees who yet 'sate in Moses' seat,' and whose doctrines were supported by 'traditions of elders,' consecrated by the veneration of ages. Take a few instances.

In Matt. xv. 1—20, and Mark vii. 1—23, we are told that the Pharisees taught that certain external ceremonies purified the soul before God. But our Lord rebuked His disciples sternly for not at once contradicting and disbelieving the doctrines of these their appointed teachers. And on what ground? On the ground of the clear utterance of *their understandings*. 'Are ye also *without understanding*, and *perceive not*' that this *cannot be*? The fishermen disciples ought, He said, on this ground to disbelieve what they were authoritatively taught. Is this dangerous doctrine? All I can say is, it is our Lord's own doctrine.

Again, the Pharisees taught that it was wrong to heal on the Sabbath-day. Our Lord condemns them for so doing, as '*hypocrites*,' that is, as men who denied what they nevertheless, in their hearts and consciences, if they consulted them honestly, must have known was the truth. And on what ground does He rest the demonstration that they were wrong? On the example of David; and of their own practice.

First, on the example of David, who, in a case of pressing need, broke the direct command of God in the ceremonial law, and sacrificed it to what *he judged* to be the higher law of mercy to man in respect of his bodily necessities. And our Lord's argument clearly justifies David's act and its grounds. No one can read

the passage candidly without seeing that it, as well as the whole context, implies that David's act was right in the sight of God.

Secondly, and on precisely similar principles, He justifies His acts and those of His disciples, on the ground of the practice of the Pharisees themselves. 'What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.' (Matt. xii. 10—12.) Now, unless the Pharisees did well in the liberty they allowed themselves of pulling out the ox or the ass, such an argument would have been manifestly unmeaning.

But this liberty in which they allowed themselves was justified in their own eyes, simply by their instinctive sense of what must be the meaning and purpose of this Divine law. When their own selfish interests did not blind them, or lead them into wilful dishonesty, they saw clearly enough that their moral sense was trustworthy—a true voice of God. And I do not see what possible meaning can be attributed to the words of our Lord, unless they were right in so judging.

2. Again, our Lord in one place at least—Matt. xxi. 23—27, and the parallel passages—if not in more, seems to ground His own claim to authority as a Divine Teacher, upon the *testimony of the general conscience of mankind to Him*. When the Pharisees asked Him 'by what authority He acted, and who gave Him that

'*authority?*' He answered in effect that His authority rested upon the same ground as that of St. John the Baptist. This at least, is, I cannot but think, the obvious and natural meaning of His words: '*I also will ask you one question, and answer Me: the Baptism of John, was it from Heaven or of men? answer Me.*'

The Pharisees in their answer, with most characteristic hypocrisy, instead of saying out honestly what they really thought and believed, began inwardly to reason with themselves on the probable *consequences*, as they judged, of profession of opinion one way or the other. 'If we say one thing, such and such a *consequence* will follow; if we say the opposite, such and such another *consequence*; therefore it will be *safest* to lie—to say we do not know.' What then was the use of arguing with men in such a state of mind and conscience? They would never confess anything, however clearly they knew it to be true, if it did not suit their purpose. Therefore, the Divine Teacher refuses to argue with them at all; they must be answered 'according to their idols'—according to their insincerity.

This was no doubt the main motive, if I judge rightly, of our Lord's answer. But the answer also assumes clearly that one at least of the grounds on which our Lord's own authority rested, was the same as that on which that of St. John the Baptist rested. And what was that? Not miracles, for 'John did no miracles.' Not his miraculous birth, for surely that was no more remembered than the birth of our Lord; it could not have been known

to most men. But evidently what it did rest upon, and what justified all the people in listening to him while condemning Chief Priests and Rulers, was *the testimony of the general conscience to him.* ‘*All the people counted John a prophet.*’ The *vox populi* was in this case a *vox Dei.* How did the great Preacher in the Wilderness prevail? Surely by the same process by which St. Paul says he made his preaching to prevail, ‘*by manifestation of the truth, commending himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*’ (2 Cor. iv. 2.) He does not say ‘by clever argument commending himself to every man’s logical faculty,’ nor yet ‘by exhibition of marvellous *power*, over-awing them,’ but he says by *manifestation*, by simple exhibition ‘of truth, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.’

3. A similar appeal to the moral sense, as the ultimate judge of Divine authority, is made by our Lord, when, in the Sermon on the Mount, after warning us to ‘beware of false prophets,’ He makes the criterion by which we are to judge of them, not the agreement or disagreement of their doctrines with any traditional or other code, but their *fruits*—fruits discerned, of course, by the only faculty by which they can be discerned, the moral sense, the inward sense of right and wrong, of good and evil, given us by our Creator as our light and guide in such matters.

4. An unhesitating trust in the same moral sense on the part of a certain lawyer, in determining which part of the Divine Law was the most important—in *deliberately*

depreciating a part of that law relatively to another (Mark xii. 28—34), is not only not condemned by our Lord, but made the ground of one of His strongest commendations; as by itself indicating that he was ‘not far from the kingdom of God.’

Evidently, if the Pharisees who thought man incapable of judging of the mind and purpose of Almighty God in His commands to us, and if some great teachers in our time, who in this respect agree with them, were right, any such judgment of the relative importance of commands, all equally given by Divine authority, would have been most presumptuous.

5. Finally, our Lord seems distinctly to deny that His disciples were in a state of blindness to the nature and purposes of their Heavenly Father, when He says, ‘Henceforth I call you not servants, *for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth*; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.’ (John xv. 15.)

Such passages, then, in our Lord’s own sayings—and many similar ones might be quoted—seem to admit of no interpretation, but such as not only allows, but commands, as a duty we owe to God and Truth, the free use of our moral sense of right and wrong in judging of the Divine authority of teachers; in interpreting the meaning and intention of Divine commands; and in assigning their relative importance to them.

And if this were right even before the Day of Pentecost, and even for unlearned fishermen, how infinitely more so must it be for those, who, as St. John says,

'need not that any man should teach them,' because they 'have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things' (1 John ii. 20, 21, 27); 'who for the time,' according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'ought to be teachers, having their senses exercised to discern both good and evil' (Heb. v. 12—14); who are, therefore, 'wise men,' called upon 'to judge,' in some sense, even of what an Apostle says (1 Cor. x. 15, and compare ii. 14—16); because they have received the gift of the Spirit of God 'to guide them into all truth.' Surely, the *à fortiori* argument, drawn from our Lord's appeals to the moral sense of men in His own lifetime on earth, to prove the authority of the moral sense of Christians in the enjoyment of the full privileges of the Church, as stated in these and similar passages, is irresistible.

II. I proceed to show how the Apostles acted upon this principle.

In the book which gives an account of their acts, we find many striking instances of their taking the experience of their own lives, the events that met them in the exercise of their ministry, the success or failure of particular means they adopted for promoting the kingdom of God, as so many direct voices of God to them, declaring His Will, as certainly as a written Word of God, or a sensible inspiration of His Spirit would—and compelling alterations in their interpretation of the Bible.

Take, for instance, the great question, so serious in their time, whether or not the Gospel ought to

be preached to the Gentiles; whether the venerable rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law were essential to God's favour now as of old; whether those great barriers which the wisdom of God had originally set up, and which they had grown up in the habit of accounting so sacred, partitioning off God's chosen people from all other nations, were indeed to be broken down, and walked over as common things. They^{*} evidently, at first, had a clear and strong opinion that this was against the Will of God. The whole meaning of the ancient Scripture, as understood by most of them at that time; and many words which they remembered of our Lord Himself, who, during His own lifetime on earth, had always said that He was 'not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel,' seemed to many of them to show that these barriers were still to be kept up.

But while they believed this as a solemn truth of God—part of the Divine Revelation to man—and would have held it profaneness to act upon any other belief; they were startled by the sight of certain manifest dealings of God, which were inconsistent with it. They *saw* with their own eyes gifts of the Holy Ghost actually given to men of other nations. In the great gathering of the Apostles and Elders, recorded in Acts xv., St. Peter mentions what he had *seen* of this kind, as absolutely settling the question of what was the Divine Will. The evidence to which he appeals, and which he accounts conclusive, was simply that *he had seen Gentiles converted to God* without circumcision or any rites of

the Jews. ‘*Men and brethren,*’ he says, ‘*ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*’

* No one, I think, can candidly consider these words, without seeing that it was not mainly—certainly not only—upon the witness of any extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, that he here rests his conviction; but upon ordinary ones—upon the great fact of purification of the heart by faith as evidenced in the life and disposition. In another place (Acts xi. 17), speaking of the same facts—together, it is true, with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost—he says: ‘*Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gifts as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I should withstand God?*’ To resist such evidence would be, in his view, ‘to withstand God.’

Such *experiences*, then were considered by the Apostles as manifestations of the Divine Will, necessitating a change in their interpretation of the Word of God. I am not concerned with any dangerous consequences that some may suppose would follow from such an interpretation of these and similar words. I believe, myself, that the consequences which follow from shutting our eyes to the truth contained in them, are much more dangerous; leading in the direction even of the greatest of all sins, the attribution of Divine works, if not to

Beelzebub, yet to some other than the one only Source of true goodness. But what other interpretation can be put upon these passages of Holy Scripture? I believe none that is tenable.

If any one demurs to the applicability of such precedents to our use now, on the ground that the Apostles had miraculous gifts for reading the heart which we have not; I answer that such an objection goes the length of debarring us from all capacity for obeying our Lord's command, to judge men and systems by their fruits; and can only be maintained on the utterly untenable ground, that the men of whom St. John said that they '*needed not that any man should teach them, because they had an unction from the Holy One and knew all things,*' or those of whom the other similar words quoted above were predicated, were all of them miraculously inspired.

III. Now if we are to give way to facts of history, so also surely we must to facts of science—to facts of all and every kind, as soon as they are ascertained to be facts. This opens the whole universe of *fact*, of *truth* of every kind, to man, God's child, as a book of Revelation, written 'at various times, and in divers manners;' whence he may gather, and is bound to try to gather the knowledge of the Heavenly Father, and of His ways; and by the study of which he may hope to work out a more and more complete '*Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion.*'

Let me endeavour to show how the whole method of God's Providence, in revealing Himself to man, would

lead us to expect that He would speak to us through all facts.

Take the Old Testament—take the case of God's ancient people. Where, and in what directions were they taught to look for Divine teaching?

The Bible, it may be answered, was their great guide and light. No doubt this is true. The inspired books, gradually given, were the great source of Revelation. But observe what the Revelation contained in these books taught them as to the channels through which Almighty God conveyed instruction and warning to His people.

Observe the marvellously comprehensive character of the sacred volume—how it must have led men to expect to hear the Voice of God in all directions. It contained *History*—the record of facts in Providence, relating chiefly to one nation, but dealing with others, wherever they had to be mentioned, on precisely the same principles though variously applied; attributing all the events that happened to them to the same God, rewarding and punishing them, as He did the Israelites; and teaching men to draw lessons as to His character, from these His dealings, as well as from those with the chosen people. It spoke also of what we should call *natural science*, as represented in the wondrously comprehensive account of the Creation in Genesis; and in the profound thoughts, and passionate reasonings with God, of the Book of Job. It contained books of *Poetry* and imagination, as the Psalms and similar writings scattered through the whole Old Testament;

Moral Reflections, drawn from the conscience of right and wrong, deep-seated in the hearts of all men, in the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes; appeals to the *instincts and impulses of human love*, taken as representatives and images of Divine love, and as having their root in God, in whose image man, His child, was made, in the wonderful and beautiful ‘Song of Songs.’ All these were included in the Book given by God to enlighten His people. Surely they must have been intended to produce the effect, which in fact they did to so striking a degree produce, of leading them habitually to listen for the blessed voice of their Divine Teacher addressing them from all sides; to find there no mere *shadow*, no mere ‘regulative’ representation of Divine Realities, but the very truth and actual presence of them; to seek in all the provinces of thought and experience to meet God Himself.

And how effectively this discipline did answer this purpose must be manifest to all who, with open minds, study Holy Scripture.

How deeply and awfully did the Psalmists realize an actual Divine Presence, in all the scenes and movements of the material world. ‘THOU deckest THYSELF with light as it were with a garment; THOU spreadest out the Heaven like a curtain.’ ‘HE watereth the hills from above; the earth is filled with the fruit of Thy works.’ ‘The trees OF THE LORD also are full of sap; even the cedars of Libanus which HE hath planted.’ A thousand such sayings may be supplied by the memory of any student of the Bible. God was present to the

consciousness of every true child of Israel as really, as actually, as the sun and the light that touched his eyes, or the solid earth, the 'everlasting hills,' and adamantine rocks on which his feet rested, and which his hands handled. HE was actually there, looking him in the face, piercing him through and through, with the arrows of His dread revelations. This is one principal marvel of the Book of God; it is the Book that reveals man communing directly with God; reasoning with Him in profound awe, and reverence, but also in filial boldness, and most complete sincerity and honesty; wrestling with Him in prayer, seeking '*to come even to His seat*' (Job xxiii. 3), never hiding or dissembling any difficulties, but stating them with passionate earnestness, as a child who entirely trusts and loves his father, and is sure that somehow he must be Right, and Just, and Good, according to his own inward sense of those great words—if only he could see how.

Wonderful is this actual wrestling with God, of man's deepest heart and soul, revealed in Holy Scripture; wonderful the mighty swelling tides, and swift-flowing currents, of the unfathomed ocean of man's divine conscience, and man's infinite hopes and fears, under the sway and attraction of the great movements of Providence without, and of the stirrings of a mighty Spirit within, unveiled to our sight in the Book of Books; the Book which quite as truly reveals man in his greatness and his misery, as it reveals God; and which has for its great central light and glory, Him in Whom God and Man are one—God's sorrow and Man's sorrow—

God's struggles and victories, and Man's struggles and victories—are united.

With what awful intensity did the inspired men recognise God's Hand actually moving before them in the events of human history, stirring all that stirred ; holding still all that was still ! The strength of their expressions in stating the difficulties of Providence, is often very startling, and would sound to the weak and unreal faith of our time, utterly profane ; though it was, indeed, faith, not unbelief, that made them speak out all their difficulties so strongly ; it was their filial trust in God, often so nobly expressed by Job. Consider the words of Jeremiah : *'Wilt Thou be altogether as a liar unto me, and as waters that fail ?'* (Jeremiah xv. 18), or those similar ones of Moses : *'Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil intreated this people ? why is it that Thou hast sent me ? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people ; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all.'* (Exodus v. 22, 23). Or consider the many burning words of Habakkuk in contemplating the triumph of the Chaldæans over God's people : *'Art Thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One ? we shall not die. O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for judgment ; and O, mighty God, Thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity ; wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he ?'* *'Why dost Thou show me iniquity and make me to*

‘*behold grievance?*’ How refreshing are these strong sayings of inspired men, after the timid half-truths, the parrot-like repetitions and hollow echoes of unrealized traditions; the ‘*orthodox lying for God,*’ as Coleridge happily called it—denying manifest truths of experience, or of conscience, in the supposed interests of orthodoxy—sometimes to be observed in modern sermons and religious treatises. And is not the great reason of the difference, that the great men of God of old looked for a God present to them, Whose actual working they could discern in all things about them, and within them? Whereas we, as in our miserable unbelief we are ready to believe, are *not* taught by Him in any way we can clearly discern.

Do the words I have quoted from Habakkuk look as if he doubted his power of judging as to what was just, and what unjust? Did he quiet himself by saying, as some in our time would have had him say, ‘God’s justice is a different thing from man’s; I must not trouble myself to judge of such questions; they are beyond and above me.’ Or did he put down all such difficulties that met him as profane, and set himself, like Job’s friends, to contradict manifest facts; to say that there *was* ‘*taste in the white of an egg*’—that things *were* just, which his feeling and conscience plainly told him were not so? No; if he had, he would have missed most precious lessons which God was intending to teach him.

The enemies of God said that God was unjust. They appealed to facts. They showed how the Chaldæans,

that ‘*nation of robbers that dealt treacherously,*’ were victorious; how they oppressed the righteous and prospered. Habakkuk did not deny one jot of the force of these difficulties. He felt all their terror, and expressed it far more strongly than God’s enemies did. But God taught him to *wait*. ‘*The vision,*’ He says—the *sight* of the truth—‘*is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.*’ So Habakkuk answers, ‘*I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower; and will watch to see what He will say unto me; and what I shall answer when I am reproved.*’

It is manifest that the Prophet in these words meant, that God’s answer would come to him through *facts*, through events, which, from his ‘*watch-tower,*’ he would *see*. When he was ‘*reproved,*’ when his adversaries accused him of bearing false witness of God; because, they thought, God was *not* just—would not punish the wicked, or avenge the righteous—he would say nothing till he had something real to say. He would *wait* for God’s answer in facts, sure that in the end a complete and a true answer would come.

‘*Yes,*’ some will answer, ‘*Habakkuk might do this, because he was an inspired man; he could see what God did; he could discern amidst the maze of earthly events the Hand of God moving. But it is not so with us; we have no such Divine Teacher to guide us.*’ And so, in the same way, we are told that all our perception of the facts of Creation round us may be

fallacious, and that the doctrines we found upon such grounds, must be at once given up, if they clash with the Bible, or with what we hold the Bible to mean. Inspired men could see the meaning of facts, could discern God's working, and read His mind in them, but we cannot. 'Come without prejudice'—(or *with* all our modern prejudices? the *prejudicia* implanted in us by a modern English education?)—to the Bible, and you will infallibly see what that means; but you cannot see the meaning of history—that was the privilege only of inspired men.

Now, I cannot sufficiently express how miserable such a principle of interpretation appears to me; how utterly it seems to me to devoid the Divine Book of its use for the teaching of all nations; for the guidance of our steps through life in the actual modern world; how it implies that we, who live in the blessed light of the final Revelation of God—who are brought, we are told, into nearer fellowship with God than any of our forefathers—are really in a lower state than any of them; how it would lead us to look upon the Bible as a book of wonders unpractical to us, because recording a state of things different in *kind* as well as degree from that in which we are living.

IV. But I am glad to be able to appeal to some of our greatest authorities against all such notions, to show that they held that we are able to hear the Divine voice as clearly as men of God of old; that they did not hold that, though the Christians of the first age could be taught of God by facts, we cannot be so.

First refer to Bishop Butler.

It is utterly unintelligible how men of discernment can appeal to Bishop Butler as a witness only to human ignorance, and to the limitations of our human faculties, and not also quite equally to the certainty of human knowledge, and the trustworthiness of human instincts, within those limits. The 'Sermons' were confessedly written mainly with the view of vindicating the authority of conscience, or of our moral instincts, as truly echoing, and in some sense revealing, the dictates of Eternal Justice and Truth. This cannot be denied; though in speaking of Butler men seem often entirely to forget it. But the 'Analogy' (as Mr. Maurice has admirably shown, in one of the most valuable parts of his answer to Mr. Mansel), at least equally vindicates the authority of man's inward sense of truth.

For what is this great book?

It is an attempt to confirm the truth or probability of a professed Revelation, supposed to be of questionable truth, by its analogy with a system of things which, it assumes, all men *certainly know* to exist, and *have* the power to interpret. And what is this system of things? No less than the Constitution of Nature considered as revealing the manner of acting, the principles of moral government of the unseen God, who originally established, and who is now and for ever ordering that Constitution. What mighty powers of discernment of the inner heart and meaning of phenomena; of the real truth of things, and of their causes; must the author of such a treatise have attributed to man! For, evidently, if

man's faculties are not equal to the task of interpreting the 'Constitution of Nature,' and of interpreting, also, that vast and complex body of truth contained in Scripture, with which that Constitution is to be compared, the whole validity of the argument at once falls to the ground.

What can be the force of an argument supporting 'Revealed Religion' by comparing it with 'Natural Religion,' if there is no certain truth in the latter? And as to overruling objections to the truth of doctrines, drawn from facts, on the ground of human ignorance, if we can appeal to the facts of nature and history in *confirmation* of the truth of doctrines, with what consistency can we refuse to allow the force of objections drawn by the same faculties from the same source, *against* doctrines?

No book, therefore, more unequivocally affirms man's power of discernment of facts, and of their moral interpretation, as revealing the character of Almighty God, than Bishop Butler's 'Analogy.' I would refer to Mr. Maurice's very striking remarks to which I have already alluded, for an impressive comment upon the 'Analogy' so considered.

Next I appeal to Bishop Andrewes—also, I presume, an author not likely to be charged with dangerous rationalism.

In his controversy with the French Presbyterian Du Moulin, on Episcopacy, he has to consider the question, Whether or not Episcopacy is essential to the *being* of a Church, or only to its perfection? whether a Church

can be a true Church of Christ without it? and whether or not salvation may ordinarily be had in a Non-Episcopal Church?

Bishop Andrewes answers unhesitatingly, or even vehemently, in the affirmative. And he rests his verdict not upon the ground of any words of Scripture, nor upon any decree of the Church Universal, but upon *this* fact—that he *sees Churches standing* without it.

‘He must needs,’ says the great Bishop, ‘be stone-blind that *sees not Churches standing without it*; he must needs be made of iron, and hard-hearted, that denies them salvation. We are not made of that metal; we are none of those ironsides.’¹

Now what does the Bishop mean by ‘*seeing Churches standing?*’ Evidently seeing unmistakable fruits of the Spirit of God brought forth by them; of the reality and true nature of which fruits, therefore, he held that we were competent judges, and in deference to which he repudiated extreme views of the necessity of episcopacy and of apostolical succession.

Bishop Andrewes then did not refer the faculty by which St. Peter and the other Apostles perceived clearly the fruits of the Spirit of God in some uncircumcised men, and grounded upon that perception a new interpretation of the Divine Will, to any miraculous or exceptional privilege of inspiration granted to them as Apostles; but he claimed it as part of the heritage of God’s children in all ages and places. And in ascer-

¹ Bishop Andrewes’s Answer to Du Moulin’s Second Epistle, quoted in Wordsworth’s *Christian Institutes*, III. 239.

taining the mind of God, he did not refer only to the written volume of Scripture, or to the edicts of Councils, but to the records of experience, as understood by the faculties given us by God for that purpose. Like the Apostles in the beginning, he thought we were bound to interpret Scripture in accordance with the ascertained facts of history, and with the present dealings of the God of the Bible, as He is seen by us to be actually working, now and always.

Lastly, as to the trustworthiness of our moral instincts, and the duty incumbent upon us of interpreting Scripture in accordance with them, I appeal to another sufficiently safe authority—the late Professor Blunt.

In his ‘Hulsean Lectures’ for 1832, p. 67, occur these words—‘*A scheme of interpretation (of Scripture) cannot be correct, which sets our own moral instincts in opposition to God’s decrees.*’

We need not, I think, be very uneasy, while rationalising in company with Bishop Butler, Bishop Andrewes, and Professor Blunt.

But we ought to be uneasy, we ought indeed to tremble, if we ever venture, on the ground of what we suppose to be the meaning of any part of Scripture, to deny a plain fact, when ascertained by history, by criticism, by natural science, or by any of the instruments which God has given us for the purpose of investigating truth; lest, in so doing, we class ourselves in God’s judgment with those who tried by threats to put down some who were stating ‘*things which they had seen and heard;*’ or with Job’s friends, who did

this very thing, and so indeed were found, even while they 'thought they did God service,' to be really fighting against God,' and 'kicking against the pricks.'

V. But why should we be so in earnest upon these great questions? why should it be so important to vindicate for mankind the power to judge of right and wrong, good and evil, truth and falsehood?

I answer, first, because on no other ground can we hold firm any religious belief whatever.

Mr. Mansel in his Bampton Lectures, and in some smaller publications of an earlier date, has thrown the utmost contempt and ridicule upon the reasonings of German metaphysicians; has represented them as a sort of jugglery, a kind of intellectual thimble-rig. I do not profess to be able to follow him in all the marvellous metaphysical puzzles he has set before us; but I think I perceive that in this field of mental exercise he can out-do all the subtlest of German jugglers, and defeat them with their own weapons. Let the pea be truth; let the faculty by which it is attempted to detect its whereabouts be the logical faculty; let the thimbles be managed by the miraculous fingers of Professor Mansel; we may safely defy the cleverest of the German confraternity to tell us at the end of the performance, where is that pea. But after all, when it is over,—when the play is played out,—we must ask, and ask most sadly, What is truth—moral and spiritual truth—truth about God and His character? Have we no better answer to give to these most solemn, most awful questions, than these subtleties? Have

we no higher powers to call into play to give the answer? I believe Mr Mansel wrote his Lectures with the direct purpose of showing the vanity of *these* instruments; and that he has done this work admirably. As *argumenta ad Germanos*, his Lectures are most effective. But then, to common minds, he seems to have gone much further; and together with the German metaphysics, to have endeavoured to discredit the security of every other ground of human knowledge. There are indeed many noble passages in this book; but they are some in which, by a happy inconsistency, he appeals to faculties in which, in the rest of his Lectures, he endeavours utterly to destroy our faith. I know he denies the truth of the charge. But he would give us more satisfaction if he would tell us clearly what faculty in human nature he believes really is trustworthy? What tribunal has he left within us not discredited, to which we may safely carry our appeal on the question, What is truth? As it is, his book reads to men of ordinary minds, simply as an attempt to found upon the assertion of the impossibility of any man knowing anything certainly, a claim to impose his own belief upon all other men. It seems to us a very clever defence of the modern form of infidelity, which consists not in denying anything positively, but in complete philosophical scepticism; in denying that we know, or can know, anything about the great matters of theology. But it is peculiar to Mr. Mansel, that the conclusion he draws from this is, that he and those who hold with him are certainly right—that all other men are bound as they

fear God, to give in their allegiance to their belief. And he appears to teach us—and many men of great ability and acuteness, such as the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Pusey, and lately Mr. Woodgate in his comment upon the ‘Essays and Reviews,’ seem to teach the same—that our duty in matters of faith is simply *submission*. But submission to whom? To our teachers. But what if they happen to be Rationalists, Buddhists, Atheists? To this we never receive any satisfactory answer. I know nothing of Professor Mansel’s antecedents; nor of what the views of his own teachers may have been; but one would like to ask whether his views are the same as theirs, or different? If different, by what authority has he thought himself justified in abjuring their doctrines? Certainly whatever else may be his characteristic qualities, I should not have guessed one of them to be unquestioning docility to his tutors and governors, whoever they might happen to be. Had some great teachers of our time been his tutors, one cannot help thinking they would have found him very indocile indeed. Faith, it is said, is the gift of God. In *some* senses God’s mercy defend us from ever denying that so indeed it is. But surely this does not mean that the *arbitrary* will of God—if such a thing exist or can exist—fixes for each of us our belief. For if so, missions would be profane; all controversy would be wickedness.

In support of this strange doctrine of *submission*—submission irrespective, it would seem, of its object—submission in one man to one set of teachers, in another, we must suppose, to quite another, under whom Divine

Providence has been pleased to place him — as our one duty in matters of faith, we may often hear quoted our Lord's sayings, commanding us to become as little children, and to cultivate a childlike faith. But those who do so, forget that we have an inspired comment upon these precepts of our Lord, distinctly forbidding such an interpretation of them; distinctly limiting their applicability to the temper and disposition of the heart and feelings, and warning us against understanding them to command childlikeness of mind and judgment. '*Be not children in understanding,*' says St. Paul; '*howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men*' (1 Cor. xiv. 20).

It must, then, be of the utmost importance to maintain the authority of man's moral instincts, because on no other ground is it possible to build any sure belief of any kind.

But, secondly, it is important to do so, because we shall otherwise shut ourselves out from the use of one of the chief sources of knowledge of God, and of right interpretation of His written Word.

If God, our heavenly Father and Guide, is really with us *everywhere*—if, while He has given us His written Word as a light shining in a dark place—a voice speaking to us to direct us in our way, it is the very object of that light to help us to see Him working near us now and everywhere; and of that voice to enable us to recognise it when it speaks elsewhere—then must it be a wanton waste of our privileges, not to make use of those powers.

I believe that it is, in a great degree, in consequence of our neglect of these pregnant truths, that the common run of our sermons and religious treatises have become so proverbial for unreality, want of originality and freshness of thought and feeling.

Let me now give instances of dangerous misinterpretations of Holy Scripture, arising, it would seem, either from men's want of faith in the dictates of conscience or of good sense, when speaking upon matters that come properly within the limits of the authority, or jurisdiction of those faculties; or else from neglect of honest observation of the actual dealings of Divine Providence, as recorded in history; and giving great offence to honest minds.

1. In sermons, in tracts, and in books of fiction, in which men delight in what might be called *playing at Providence*—making a fancy-picture of what the writers would *like* the course of Providence to be—ordered according to what, on account of its merely imaginative character, has been called 'poetical justice' and without due sense of the solemn responsibility involved in thus interpreting Providence to men—we are often taught that virtue will always be rewarded by earthly prosperity, and sin punished by outward and visible judgments in this world; an assertion as manifestly contrary to historical fact, as the assertion which Galileo was forced to make was contrary to physical science. But many earnest and good men seem to think it their duty to shut their eyes to such facts. If they gave earnest heed to them, they would be led to see the undeniable truth, that Scripture, *as a whole*, and if single passages are interpreted accord-

ing to the 'analogy of faith,' does not teach any such doctrine, but rather the reverse.

2. Again, we often find in sermons and other religious treatises, some of the strongest texts in Holy Scripture, describing the wickedness of Doeg, of Judas, of the world in its fearful maturity of moral and spiritual corruption before the Flood, applied to *all* men, everywhere; including many who, in Scripture language, would have been called 'righteous,' 'blameless,' even 'perfect and upright;' and this in some cases in which Scripture distinctly limits the applicability of its words to certain specified persons. So Psalm liii. 4; '*They are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable; there is also none who doeth good, no, not one,*' is often quoted as if it applied to all men; to a St. John, or a St. Paul, a Nathanael, or a holy woman, in the maturity of their Christian goodness: whereas in that very Psalm, the next verse (v. 5), distinguishes between these enemies of God, and God's true people. 'Are not *they* without understanding that 'work wickedness; eating up *My people* as if they 'would eat bread?' It must be clear to any one reading the whole Psalm, that the 'all,' in v. 4, is meant to be affirmed only of a whole *class*—the ungodly that oppressed God's people—but not of God's true people themselves; and conscience surely would tell us, they cannot be affirmed of all men. St. Paul, in Rom. iii., quotes the passage, to show that *some* men under the law, *some* even of God's people, were utterly wicked, and that, therefore, the law was no sufficient security against

wickedness. But would any one seriously maintain, that he would have applied these words to Noah, Daniel, and Job? Neither, surely, would any one ever apply them to all holy and gentle Christian saints and martyrs—and some such there are, we may hope, in all congregations—if they kept their eyes and their consciences open to facts, and did not dishonestly shut them to the truth of things, as they exist in the world.

3. Again, we often hear dangerous and immoral apologies for, or palliations, if not actual denials, of the sins of patriarchs and Old-Testament-saints, springing evidently from the notion, that we are bound to silence the voice of conscience whenever it seems to condemn what we, at the time, hold to be the meaning of a written Word of God; and not rather to listen to it, that it may guide us to the true meaning. Hence grievous wounds inflicted upon the moral sense of our hearers; most dangerous collisions between Scripture and conscience, between what they erroneously hold to be the Word of God without, and what really is the Spirit of God within them; issuing too often in alienation of the souls of earnest men from the life-giving Word of God, because their teachers have led them to believe that it teaches some incredible things, which it really does not teach.

4. Another subject on which it is common to hear doctrines preached, incredible, because unreasonable, is the nature of that Eternal Life we are to look for in Heaven.

We may often hear it asserted that this is to consist

exclusively of worship, in the most literal sense of that word; that Heaven for man is an eternal Church-service.

This idea is founded upon an exclusive attention to certain isolated passages of Holy Scripture, mostly taken from evidently figurative parts of the Book of Revelation, which speak of Heaven as for ever resounding with songs of praise. But every Christian will allow that we are bound to be very careful not so to interpret these texts as to make them contradict, or be directly at variance with, other texts of Scripture, or with the fundamental verities of the Creeds—such, for instance, as the doctrine of the Incarnation, or of the Ascension. Yet this latter—the Christian doctrine of the Ascension of our Lord, as explained in our Articles—affirms that that which our Lord carried up into Heaven to live there for ever, was *human nature complete*: all the powers of a perfect man. It was not only the devotional, or contemplative powers of our nature, but the practical also; and the *feelings* also of a perfect man—personal affection and friendship for instance—that our Lord carried up with Him into Heaven. Does any one believe that these powers, being carried into Heaven, are to lie dormant there for ever? Is it not manifest that there must be some exercise for them all? Heaven, then, must be a wider place—the glorified nature of man infinitely more *many-sided* than some men seem apt to think. And though it is indeed true that Heaven will for ever resound with songs of praise, yet these songs may spring from an infinite number of different sources—from

pleasure in active occupation ; from the enjoyment of personal friendship and love ; from the contemplation of, and from every kind of occupation among, ever-new works of the Almighty Father ; from turning over new and varied pages of the Great Book of Creation and of Providence. Will any one maintain that a glorified spirit will be *more* spiritually-minded, more full of love of God, than 'God manifest in the flesh' was? Yet *He* had room in His human nature for personal friendship for friends ; as well as for the perfect Love of God. Or will any one deny that the Perfect Man delighted Himself in the contemplation of the flowers of the field, the fowls of the air, the great order of God's works? Surely there must be room in heaven for the infinite pleasure of studying God's works, for '*dressing and keeping*' the marvellous '*garden*' of a perfected universe, in all its infinite expanse, in all its unnumbered provinces.

This seems undeniably the doctrine of Scripture if taken as a whole, and if interpreted in harmony with those great Creeds, which so wonderfully embody the *leading* doctrines of Scripture.

But what I wish here to urge is, that men would have been led to see this to be the real meaning of Holy Scripture, had they been in the habit of interpreting it under the guidance of conscience and sound reason, and of the honest observation of God's actual working in Creation and Providence as manifest now and always. They do not so interpret it, because they think it dangerous and rationalistic to listen to these true voices

of God while reading the written Word of God. Hence manifold misinterpretations ;—hence doctrines taught in sermons and elsewhere, that no man of healthy mind and conscience can possibly believe.

And generally it is chiefly, unless I am much mistaken, from a distrust in that clear voice of truth within us, which is intended to be listened to with reverence and honesty, but which men endeavour forcibly to stifle and to fight against, as Balaam fought against the angel, that men are so apt to take texts apart from their contexts, and do not interpret single passages of Holy Scripture in harmony with the whole drift and purpose of it.

Men go into the living garden of Holy Scripture, full of flowers and fruits of infinitely varied colour, fragrance, and life, growing freely out of the soil and in the air, out of which Divine inspiration fashioned and produced them ; and, tearing them up into separate shreds, deprived of life and sap by being violently torn from the living world to which they belonged, they cut them into arbitrary, fantastic shapes ; then putting these dried shreds into the kaleidoscope of a frivolous, ever-shifting fancy, they shake it to and fro ; and bidding us look into the strange picture thus made up—(and if the pieces be but cut small enough, and the shaking be but persevering and skilful enough, there is scarcely any conceivable figure which they may not be made to assume)—they tell us it is Revelation—for is not every word in it a ‘text,’ or a piece of one? Men are led into this *kalei-*

diagnostic use of Holy Scripture by the habit of shutting their eyes to plain facts, and the ear of their souls to the clear voice of conscience, in common life, and thence practising the same blindness in reading Scripture also; in all of which fatal habits it seems to me Mr. Mansel does his best to confirm us.

VI. What, then, it may be asked, is the practical conclusion to be drawn from what has been said? What course ought we to adopt in the face of apparent collisions between Scripture and fact, God's Word and God's works? Let me endeavour to answer this question.

Now, most undoubtedly, great weight ought to be given to whatever Holy Scripture has always been understood to teach. If we are to pay reverent attention to all facts, and to the voice of the general conscience of mankind, certainly there is no truth to which these two bear such mighty witness as to the Divine authority of Holy Scripture. That Book which, for 1800 years, has received the unanimous homage of Christendom, in all its many divisions, as the very Word of God; before whose shrine a vast array of the men of greatest minds, the kings of the world of human intellect, have cast their crowns in devout reverence; to whose Divine glory and power in spiritual matters, an array of names, very far more deserving of our reverence, the saints and martyrs of Christendom, amidst all their differences and divisions, still bear consistent witness;—the Book which has been always confessedly the light and glory of the Church of

Christ in all ages and countries ; the source of all the noble lives which have been the ‘ salt of the earth,’ and, in more ways than we know, of the ever-advancing civilization of the Christian part of the world, as compared with all others;—this Book, surely, we may assume, must be indeed Divine. It has been said, ‘ We praise not the Gods’—not, that is, as if our praise could confer any benefit upon them, or as if they wanted it ; and I feel it would be a ludicrous presumption in me to praise the Bible, as if any praise of mine could add one jot to its claim to our reverence. But as some things I have said, with respect to the freedom with which the Divine Book should be studied, may possibly be misunderstood ; let me add here that I, for my part, have not the slightest shadow of doubt, that the Bible will hold its ground till the end of time as the very Word of God ; the great light of fallen men through the shoreless ocean of speculation relating to the nature of God and of man ; and to all the questions that most deeply concern us as spiritual and immortal beings. Like Him, Who is its one central light, in Whom all its many parts are one, I believe it may have to undergo in some respects a kind of death and dissolution of the sacred body in which its Divine Spirit may at any time walk the earth ; but that it will only do so to rise again in renewed and increased glory, fitted for a wider and more universal dominion. Neither can I ever believe that the great Creed, in the faith of which all the saints of Christendom have worshipped God in life and death, can be other than eternally true in all its fundamental

verities. I believe that the more honestly we face all the facts of history, of science, and of conscience, the more deeply shall we learn to feel its truth; the more surely shall we be rewarded in the end, by being able to answer all those who in the infancy of our faith supported it by 'evidences,' with the words of the Samaritan converts, 'Now we believe, not because thou hast told us, but we have heard it ourselves, and *know* that this is indeed the very Word of God.'

But as to the precise province and limits of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, we may, probably, often be compelled to adopt new theories in deference to unquestionable facts. There are very few intelligent and educated Christians now, who hold the verbal inspiration of the sacred writers, or who would deny that on matters of chronology, of bare words—such as what was the precise inscription on the Cross—they were liable to error; because there was not a '*dignus vindice modus*'—the miracle of inspiration was not wanted, and therefore was not worked. If we are driven ultimately to give up altogether the *scientific* inspiration of Holy Scripture; I do not see that that need alarm us. I believe the Bible will hold its own still, though in the great undertaking of endeavouring to render unto science, or unto history, the things that properly belong to science or history, so as, at the same time, not to fail to '*render unto God the things that are God's*,' we may have to adopt new principles of apportionment between these two provinces of true knowledge.

When science then and the Bible seem to us to clash, what are we to do? I cannot think that the advice lately given us by the Bishop of Oxford, that we should throw overboard any doubts suggested to our minds, as we should a loaded shell, is sound and wise. To do so would, I must say, seem to me a very cowardly proceeding. Is the house of our faith made of such brittle materials, that it can be so easily shattered? Surely all that such explosions will ultimately shatter, will prove to have been nothing worth the keeping; no real part of the faith, but some hollow idol which we have worshipped as Divine; but which the sooner it is shattered, the better for us. This advice goes to encourage men in the miserable delusion,—in which, we may hope and believe, the Bishop of Oxford would be one of the last to wish to encourage them,—that comprehensive knowledge of facts, and honest attention to the voice of sound reason, are enemies to Christian faith, instead of being its best and firmest earthly support.

Evidently our duty is, in such cases, to do nothing hastily, but, like Habakkuk, to keep our eyes open, and wait till we see unquestionable truth; and when we do so, to give way to it as we fear God. ‘I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower; and will watch to see what *He* will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.’¹

¹ Admirable instances of this honesty in facing facts, and in abstinence from saying anything when unable to see the way with certainty, may be found in the late Mr. Shergold Boone's most valuable two volumes of Sermons. See especially that ‘On the Dispensation of Pain.’

We must believe that God does speak to us intelligibly in all facts. The works of Almighty God must each bear the impress of His Nature. They are a coinage stamped with the superscription, and more or less with the image, of that Great King in whose kingdom we everywhere, and for ever, dwell.

And when a Hugh Miller, or other man of reverent and devout mind, at the discovery of a stone marked with the faint image of some ancient plant or animal long buried in the dust of ages, is seen to grow pale and tremble—as others might while *reading* one of the great and awful passages of the Bible, or written Word of God—this shows not his superstition, but his wisdom, and true faith. For stones are facts, and every fact must inevitably bear upon theology, upon the knowledge of the universal God, and faith. ‘Stones,’ and all things do indeed preach mighty ‘sermons,’ which he that hath ears to hear, and eyes to see, can read; and the Heavens and the Earth and all that they contain must inevitably either ‘declare the glory of God,’ or if we may without irreverence for a moment suggest such a thought, the *opposite* of His Glory. If the heathen sage could say, ‘*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto,*’ a Christian may equally say, ‘*Filius sum Dei Creatoris, Dei regentis, Divini nihil a me alienum puto.*’

Every work of God must be of infinite, unfathomable interest, for it reveals to man, whose mind is made in His image, some truth about the Will and Nature of Him in Whom we, and all creatures in Heaven and Earth, ‘live and move and have our being.’

And if we have faith in the Bible, as indeed *the Word of God*, we shall be sure that, in the end, all investigations of facts will bear testimony to its substantial truth; and that by the combined study of it, and of that other great Book of God, whose alphabet consists of *all* the facts of physical science, of human history, of abstract philosophy, a greater, and ever greater 'Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion' will be worked out for us by the honest researches of all who '*feel after God, if haply they may find Him*' in every province of His working; and that, at last, '*with purged ear,*' we shall hear how '*all creatures*' do indeed '*make a perfect diapason to their great Lord*'—that diapason being a version in facts of that which the Book of God expresses in words.

And although it is undeniable that some facts are of greater importance than others, and that it is part of our royal privilege, as children of Him who made all things, to be able to discern the relative importance of all truths; yet there is great danger of our abusing this privilege, by neglecting large and most important parts of the Divine Revelation contained in facts, under the delusion that they are not personally interesting to ourselves. The narrow and selfish spirit which has too often disgraced our religious inquiries, the dark Calvinism which has led men to accept contentedly a theology, which gave up other men to inevitable perdition, decreed, irrespectively of all merit—in any sense of that word—by the irresistible power of God, provided only it gave them ground for hope of happiness for

themselves, has unconsciously tainted the religious inquiries of many who would indignantly repudiate such a theology. They have not perceived that to allow the slightest suspicion of injustice, or partiality, or cruelty, in the Divine Government towards any creature of whatever kind, to lurk in the darkness of men's minds, is to strike at the root of all *security* for just treatment of all other creatures. If it is not absolute justice and mercy to *all*, that governs the Divine dealings, there can be no security for justice to *any*. The caprice which at one time strikes others, may, some other time, strike us. What avails it to assert that God, and not chance, governs all, if we build up again the falsehood we have just overturned, by asserting that it is chance or caprice which governs God? *Every* act, therefore, of the Divine government must, it is evident, have a personal interest for every one of us. If there is 'no respect of persons with God,' neither can there be any in theology.

All facts therefore have a high interest to every child of God. Even if we will limit ourselves to a merely selfish theology—care only for what we think concerns ourselves personally—still, even then, every fact is important to us, because every fact reveals the character of our God. Nor do I see how in the face of the progress of human knowledge, we can retain our belief in the Nicene Creed, unless we can, either by faith, or else by clear vision, maintain the belief that—

‘Though from us
Half hid, by falsehood's mists,
Creation is a look of God,
Its true expression—*Christ's*.’

But if this is to be done, it must be by fearless honesty in interpreting the Bible in harmony with right reason, with an enlightened conscience, and with all facts of experience. I cannot doubt that a very large part of that sad and terrible infidelity and scepticism, which has laid hold of some of our noblest minds, is owing to the causes I have, in this tract, endeavoured to state—to dishonest blindness to fact and truth, moral and intellectual, in their religious teachers.

Difficulties that meet us in speculation, and that are raised by some whom we call infidels, are often very angels of God stopping our way, because it is perverse before Him; and in shutting our ears to them, we are really, though perhaps more or less unconsciously, ‘resisting the Holy Ghost,’ and losing mighty blessings which we might have obtained for ourselves and our brethren.

And those who, because they believe, and are sure, that the Bible is indeed the very Word of God—a God ‘*not fur from any one of us*’—therefore discourage our looking elsewhere to find Him—in nature, for instance, in history, in our own consciousness—are scarcely wiser than a man who, being possessed of a map which he knew to be of wonderful accuracy and beauty, should therefore confine himself and others to the study of that map, and condemn those who go forth also to explore the country itself, which the map represents. Might not a rustic and unlearned countryman enlighten the learned possessor of the map, and be better able to explain the true meaning of some parts of it, than some one else who was learned chiefly in maps—because he knew the

things of which the map, however perfect, could only bear witness? If he described them in other words, and under names unknown to the learned, would that signify? Might it not be rather an advantage? We reverence the words of the Bible, but are in great danger of being blind to the Things, the Persons, of which it speaks. The Bible itself '*is not that Light; it only comes to bear witness of that Light.*' Only by listening to the actual voice of the Living God, the 'Father of our spirits,' speaking within us, in our souls, and '*feeling after Him, if haply we may find Him,*' as He moves and governs all things around us, can we prevent the Divine words of the Bible itself becoming hollow, unmeaning, and therefore soul-destroying idols, hiding God Himself from us.

NOTE ON MR. MANSEL'S BAMPTON LECTURES.

THE Reviews in the *Guardian* are, I think, always deserving of respectful attention, being evidently written by men of candour and earnestness, as well as ability. But when they threaten those who attack Mr. Mansel's Lectures with the 'fate' of Mr. Maurice, or Mr. Goldwin Smith, I must answer for my part, that I should infinitely prefer the fate of either of the latter to that of the former in this controversy. It seems to me, that with respect to the main substance of the charge made against Professor Mansel, namely, that he has advocated complete philosophical scepticism, and has really left us not a single 'speculative' truth that we can depend upon, there neither has been, nor can be any valid defence made for him. If human morality and Divine are different in kind, we had better leave off speaking

of the Divine attributes at all. If 'just,' 'merciful,' 'true,' as predicated of God, do not mean what they do when predicated of man, they are evidently utterly unmeaning to us. They may mean something, but *what* we cannot tell; they are words in an unknown language. I do not see how Mr. Mansel can escape the charge made against him by Mr. Goldwin Smith, that, according to his theory, he ought to affirm, not the Divine morality, but the Divine *immorality*. This word, this collection of syllables, 'morality,' means to us human morality, or nothing definite whatever. If we say that it means the same thing as human morality *with exceptions*, but that of the precise nature and extent of those exceptions, we can know nothing certainly; it is evident we destroy all possible secure trust in such morality, because the part of it in which at any time we place our trust, may happen to be one of the exceptions.

Mr. Mansel, one might have thought, with his singular logical powers, would have been the first to tell us that a word which represents no well-defined meaning, is a worthless sound. And with Mr. Mansel's theories all 'evidences' seem to me invalidated. We think we prove the Bible to be the Word of God. But how does that prove it to be *true*? 'Because,' you say, 'God is true.' Yes; but if Truth in God means something different from Truth in man, that proves nothing whatever. And if our ideas of Justice, Mercy, and Truth, in God, are false, we have no ground left to build any theology at all upon.

Again, how on his theory could the Church found the Creeds upon the Scripture? or how can we interpret 'texts' according to the 'analogy of faith?' What faculties have we equal to any such undertaking? I do not see how in that case we can adopt any idea of practical religion but that of the Pharisees, which makes it consist in a trembling repetition of the very words of Scripture, and obedience to the very letter of God's commandments; for the moment we go beyond that, we are trusting to faculties, which Mr. Mansel

tells us are incompetent for any such work. For my own part, much as I dislike the systems of philosophy and ways of thinking implied in many of the 'Essays and Reviews,' I would infinitely rather adopt any one of them, than that which seems to me so evidently taught in Mr. Mansel's Lectures. For though some of the former would lead us to deny or doubt almost all solid truth in sacred history; would reduce many of the noblest parts of Holy Scripture to mere fable; though others almost go the length of discrediting the use of words as conveying the real thoughts and feelings of one generation to another, or even of any one living man to another—for they imply doubt of there being any common ground on which all men stand, any common material of which all men's thoughts are composed—yet, at any rate, they all of them do leave us something real, something actually Divine and Eternal, to feed our souls upon; they do, most of them at least, allow that man's soul does commune with God Himself, and not only with some hollow and unreal image of Him.

Undoubtedly we must allow that with respect to our merely *intellectual* faculties—those by means of which we attempt to construct logical systems and theories of the universe—there must be a difference in kind, as well as in degree, between God and Man. Mr. Mansel's logical puzzles about the co-existence of the Infinite and the Finite, and the like, appear unanswerably to demonstrate this. Space and Time, we are taught, are, in some sense, delusions of our present state. We are not said to be renewed in the image of God in intellect; but we *are* said to be so '*in righteousness and true holiness.*' Most heartily do I agree with Mr. Goldwin Smith in the following passage in his book 'On Rational Religion,' p. 47: 'It would give no shock to our being, though it might perplex our understandings, to be assured that in another state of existence the laws of figure and number would no longer hold good; that two sides of a triangle would be together less than the third side, and that two and two would make five. But let us once be assured

that there is no certainty in the truths of our moral nature ; that, in another state, what is here vice may be virtue, and what is here virtue may be vice ; that the moral world, like the natural, is but a garment that shall pass away ; and our being will at once receive a fatal shock, the heart of our moral nature will cease to beat.'

In this, I think, that admirable writer, Mr. Isaac Taylor, would agree with Mr. Goldwin Smith, and so far sympathise with Mr. Mansel, as may be seen in his great book 'On the Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry ;' which contains many striking remarks on the nature of Inspiration. But I cannot believe he would agree with the latter, as to any essential difference between Divine and Human *morality*.

Unless the goodness that shone in our Lord, and that was apprehended by men in Him, was really *Divine* goodness, consubstantial with that of the Eternal Father ; and unless the goodness that we see in saints is not only a true *image* of that of God, but actually a *part* of that of God ; unless it is the very Spirit of God in them, consubstantial with the Father and the Son ; unless the life of saints is as much one with that of our Lord, as the life that is in the branch of a vine is the very life that is in the trunk ; I do not see what the practical meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is to us in this life. It may be a true report of things utterly inconceivable and inaccessible to us, but we cannot at all touch or commune with the great Realities of which the great Words are an unsubstantial shadow ; they may be the most sacred of all sacred words, but they are mere words after all to us ; the Great Being, the Real Person, God Himself, of whom they speak, is far from us ; we never commune with Him ; and all the supposed greatness of man, as a creature made to commune with his Creator, is a mere delusion.

TRACTS FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

No. XIII.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST IN THE LIGHT OF
(1) SCRIPTURE, (2) THEOLOGY, AND (3) ETHICS.

BY THE REV. J. LLEWELYN DAVIES.

*Παντὶ δόγματι καὶ λόγῳ τῆς ἐν τούτοις ἀληθείας ἐχομένῳ παρα-
φύεται τι ψεῦδος.*

THE recent volume called 'Aids to Faith' contains an essay by the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol upon the Death of Christ. This essay will be welcomed as an important aid to a certain kind of faith. The faith to be assisted by it is the tenacity that still clings to certain traditions by which the truth of the atonement is disfigured, from a fear that the abandonment of the traditions may be the loss of the truth. The aid given to this faith consists in the adhesion of a writer whose character stands so high as that of the Bishop of Gloucester, and whose learned and liberal orthodoxy has been crowned by so many rewards. Such an aid to such a faith is sure to be appreciated; but he who would do this service must renounce the hope of helping the unbelief of those who desire to believe, but to whom some apparent discrepancy between the doctrines presented to them and

the conclusions of morality or reason may have occasioned perplexity and doubt. The Bishop of Gloucester has thought it right to state the doctrine of the Atonement in the terms which have been felt to be most open to objection. In support of these terms he has appealed to the language of Scripture; and he has professed to deal with the difficulties suggested by the principles of morality. It is the purpose of the following pages to show that the Bishop has drawn unfounded inferences from Scripture; that his essay deals loosely with the general theology of the subject, and contains most unjustifiable imputations against the faith of his opponents; and that he has brought dangerous moral confusions, and arguments which darken the ways of God, to the support of an erroneous theory.

That God the Father inflicted upon the Son, as a substitute for mankind, the punishment which was due to the sins of men, and, being satisfied by this substitution, withheld the punishment from men, is the doctrine concerning the Atonement to which the Bishop of Gloucester has given his sanction. ‘*Thus,*’ in his opinion, ‘the Atonement was a manifestation of divine justice’ (p. 337). That I may guard myself carefully against any misrepresentation of the writer in so important a matter, I quote some of the passages in which the Bishop has expressed that doctrine:—‘The clouds of God’s anger gathered thick over the whole human race; they discharged themselves on Jesus only’ (p. 332). ‘He came to reconcile men and God, by dying on the cross for men and bearing their punish-

‘ment in their stead.’ ‘The wrath of God was
‘against man; but it did not fall on man.’ ‘On the
‘side of God, that terrible wrath of His, which is
‘revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and
‘unrighteousness of men, is turned away’ (p. 336).
‘So long as we believe that the wrath of God, because
‘of our disobedience, fell in the shape of affliction on
‘Him who alone had so acted as to please God, the
‘terms in which it may be expressed may be suffered
‘to vary’ (p. 351). This language is evidently intended
to be unmistakeable. The Bishop of Gloucester has
purposely entered into controversy with those who
have objected to such representations; he confesses
the need of caution in the use of terms, as when he
says ‘we are obliged to pick our expressions, whenever
we touch the subject of sin’ (p. 364): it would there-
fore be mere affectation not to take him at his word.

We find on page 341 the following complaint against
those who contend that vicarious punishment could
never be agreeable to God’s justice:—‘The most in-
‘cautious rhetorical flights of orthodox sermons are
‘selected for assault, in which a substitution of the
‘innocent for the guilty is spoken of under the forms
‘and phrases of human law, in the very points where
‘human law is not applicable, and the more deliberate
‘expositions of faith are put on one side.’ The quoting
of such rhetorical flights is surely legitimate when we
wish to exhibit specimens of the preaching of popular
preachers; it would *not* be fair to appeal to them as deli-
berate expositions of received theology. Neither would

it be safe, however, to quote any exposition, however deliberate, and from however high an authority it may come, as representing the general belief of the orthodox. The differences amongst those who appear to be fighting on the same side are too considerable to warrant an opponent in making the general body responsible for the language of a single divine. In the present instance, although it would have been impossible beforehand to select a champion who would have been more generally accepted by those whose cause he defends than the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, I am persuaded that it would be no less unfair to regard the passages I have extracted as representing the 'orthodox' belief, than it would be to select for assault the most incautious flights from the sermons of Mr. Daniel Wilson or Dr. Cumming or Mr. Spurgeon. We are bound to respect such indignant protests as that which I am about to quote. It comes from a Dissenter; but the Bishop's theory of the Atonement has notoriously found its strongest supporters in non-episcopal communions. The Rev. Newman Hall, who is understood to hold a very high place amongst Evangelical Dissenters, published in the year 1856 a little book on Sacrifice, in the preface to which he says, 'I believe ' that the view of sacrifice presented in the following ' pages is substantially that which is held by all Evan- ' gelical Churches.' That view, in one chapter, is very earnestly ' guarded from misrepresentation.' The true doctrine, says this author, '*does not represent Christ ' as having been punished* (p. 85). Punishment is neces-

‘sarily associated with the guilt of him who suffers it, and the displeasure of him who inflicts it. . . . As Jesus never participated in the guilt of man, and never was the object of the displeasure of God, He cannot, in the strict sense of the term, be said to have been punished’ (p. 87). Again, ‘*It does not represent Christ as appeasing the wrath of God.* This is, of all others, the most unjust representation, the worst perversion, of the evangelical doctrine. Than this, nothing can be more contrary to the teaching of the Bible and the general tone of Gospel preaching. We admit that, both in sermons and in hymns, expressions may be occasionally found which seem to favour this monstrous idea. . . . Most emphatically we renew our denunciation of so monstrous a notion as that the wrath of the Father is appeased by the death of the Son. This is heathenism in its most terrible form. . . . Let us rejoice in the full assurance, that “God is Love,” not wrath appeased. The stream of mercy has not been created by Christ;’ [the Bishop, on the other hand, ventures to speak of Christ as ‘the *Artificer* of forgiveness (p. 355)]; ‘but being eternal as God Himself, flows towards us through Christ, its channel’ (pp. 113, 115, 119). We see, from this admirable and energetic protest, how opposed the views of the Bishop of Gloucester are to that which is held, in Mr. Newman Hall’s belief, ‘by all Evangelical Churches.’

Another protest, representing a different school, is to be found in a recent pamphlet, entitled ‘The Atonement, considered in reference to Catholic Antiquity

‘ and existing Controversy.’ The author of this temperate essay, as the title would suggest, is one whose sympathies are with Catholic and Patristic theology. He professes to disagree with Mr. Maurice, but speaks with much stronger dislike of the view according to which Christ is our substitute for punishment, and of the view according to which the sufferings of Christ were only an apt and expedient demonstration of God’s anger against sin—‘the one failing to fulfil its own monstrous conditions of atoning and vicarious sacrifice, the other confessedly without anything to say for itself, or else seeking to erect into an article of faith the most unauthorized and *human* of conjectures—the one based on “a notion of justice which outrages the conscience to which you seem to offer your explanation,” the other on a notion of wisdom and expediency, which not any “certain warrant of Holy Writ,” but “our imperfect apprehensions” only, are pleaded as supplying’ (pp. 6, 7). The same author quotes from Dean Jackson what may serve as a comment on the passages given above from the Bishop of Gloucester’s essay:—‘For myself, I must confess, I could never understand the language of many professed divines, who would persuade us that the full vent of God’s wrath due unto sin was poured out on His Son. Whatever their meaning be (which I presume is much better than I can gather from their expressions), the manner of speaking (to say no worse) is very improper and, to me, unpleasant’ (pp. 7, 8). If I do not stay to explain the doctrine held by this

anonymous author and by Mr. Newman Hall, I hope I shall not be doing them an injustice. I only quote them as repudiating, with much earnestness and authority, on behalf of those whom they may be supposed to represent, the doctrines put forward in the Bishop's essay.

I. Let us now see what warrant the Bishop of Gloucester finds in Scripture for the notion which Mr. Newman Hall describes as 'heathenism in its most terrible form.'

It must be understood that the essay is not written against 'those who utterly deny the doctrine of Atonement.' 'It is directed to those who profess to attach 'to the sufferings of the Redeemer some preternatural efficacy, beyond that of mere example, yet who would 'substitute for the received account of their effect some 'other doctrine' (p. 325). There is some inconvenience in so vague a description of those against whom the essay is directed, and the phrase, 'to attach to the sufferings of the Redeemer some preternatural efficacy,' is not one which all of them would choose. But it may be inferred that the Bishop is dealing with opponents who are members of the Church of England, and who profess to accept the doctrine of the Church and of the Scriptures on the subject of the Atonement. For the purpose of the essay, therefore, it is superfluous to prove that the Scriptures speak in various unmistakeable terms of the redemption wrought through the death of Christ. That is presumed to be admitted equally by the Bishop and by those against whom he

writes. The Bishop is not to be denied, indeed, the liberty of stating the full doctrine of the Scriptures on the subject. But the controversial force of his argument from Scripture begins when he proves that the Sacred Writings teach the doctrine that the wrath of God, deserved by men, was fully discharged upon Jesus Christ, and so turned away from men.

The Bishop has adopted the best possible method in setting forth the testimony of the Scriptures. He has not mixed up isolated texts from all parts of the sacred volume, but has distinguished the special declarations of distinct books.

Taking the three first Gospels together, the Bishop draws three conclusions as to their language concerning the death of Christ. (1) Our Lord prophesied His own death to the disciples, as a destiny which it behoved Him to go to meet, in order that what was written in the prophets might be accomplished. (2) There is at least in the Gospels no contradiction to the doctrine of Sacrifice. (3) There is an allusion to Sacrifice in the words, 'Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Covenant' (pp. 326, 327). These observations are, as I conceive, undeniable; that is, when the true idea of sacrifice is accepted. But when the Bishop describes the doctrine of Sacrifice by putting in the mouth of the Saviour the words, 'I bear the wrath of God against your sins in your stead,' I contend that he is giving to the term Sacrifice a mistaken sense, upon which I shall remark further presently. Professor Jowett, against whom these observations upon the Gospels are

especially urged, instead of vindicating the true idea of Sacrifice, wishes to clear the death of Christ as much as possible from all sacrificial associations. With this aim I do not sympathise; but I may remark that the Bishop has not read Mr. Jowett carefully, for in the Discourse on Atonement and Satisfaction to which the Bishop refers (Epistles of St. Paul, vol. ii. pp. 556, 557), instead of saying—what the Bishop makes him say—that there is ‘no sacrificial allusion’ in the words of the institution of the Lord’s Supper, Mr. Jowett expressly implies the contrary. He selects those words, and some others from St. John’s Gospel, as *exceptions* to the general non-sacrificial tenor of our Lord’s sayings concerning Himself, and contends that the Lord Himself teaches us to interpret them as figures which have a spiritual significance. Professor Jowett might ask the Bishop in his turn, whether the remarkable expression, ‘*Drink ye all of this,*’ belongs to the purely Levitical language which he recognises in the sacramental words.

The Gospel of St. John is considered separately from the other Gospels. If it had been omitted altogether by the Bishop, his case would have seemed less weak. For what does he gather from this Gospel? (1) That the sinner was to look to the Son of Man upon the cross, and to have life through believing in Him. (2) That the true life of men is in eating the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking His blood. (3) That our Lord said, ‘For their sakes I consecrate Myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth,’ and that in thus speaking He probably referred to His death.

Does the Bishop suppose that by quoting these passages he is in the slightest degree obliging those who already 'attach to the sufferings of the Redeemer some preternatural efficacy,' to admit that our Lord, by His sufferings, extinguished the Father's wrath? In a somewhat rough style of criticism, indeed, upon the passage which speaks of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man, the Bishop speaks *as if* he were crushing some adversary; but I fail to see who is touched by his argument. I might take some exception to the Bishop's interpretation of this passage; but to do so would not affect the present controversy, and I am content to leave it as it is. I do not see, again, why the Bishop refers to our Lord's saying, 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,' a passage on which his opponents have been accustomed to lay great stress; but as he has before spoken of '*the hard necessity laid upon Jesus,*' it is a welcome observation, that our Lord 'takes care to distinguish *His* death from that of one who dies against his will in striving to compass some other aim.'

That it is possible to attach the interpretation 'that our Lord took off from men, by bearing it Himself, the punishment laid by justice upon them,' to one or two single passages, isolated from others which explain them, in the Gospels, is not denied, so far as I know, by any one. It is easy to quote the words, 'to give His life a ransom for many,' and 'Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,' and

to assert that no kind of ransom can be meant except the redeeming of men from the Father's wrath by suffering their punishment, and that the sin of the world can by no other process be taken away. But this is to beg the question. Those assertions are denied; and in support of the denial, we contend that other views of redemption and of the taking away of sin are elsewhere suggested in Scripture, in accordance with which it is reasonable to interpret the verses above quoted. It would be a different matter if there were any expressions in Scripture unmistakeably asserting the view which I am combating.

As regards the preaching of the Apostles, the Bishop of Gloucester reminds us that they proclaimed a suffering Saviour, who had died to save men from their sins. He thinks it 'only fair to infer that,' whenever Jesus was preached, 'the cross of Christ was not concealed.' So far the Bishop will carry all his readers with him. But when he begins 'to complete from the Epistles our account of the teaching of the Apostles on the doctrine of the Atonement,' we find interspersed between his quotations sentences which express his own view, but which have nothing to correspond to them in the Epistles. Thus, where he is referring to passages which speak of Christ as the mediator between God and men, and as binding up in Himself the interests of mankind, he uses the words, 'He is the second Adam that shall *redeem the sin* of the first.' I am not sure what the Bishop may have meant by 'redeeming the sin;' the Scriptures speak more accurately of redeeming

men from sin. But this and other statements of a similar kind are not supposed to be difficult to accept, for the Bishop proceeds: 'But there is another side of the truth more painful to our natural reason. How came this exhibition of divine *love* to be needed? Because wrath had already gone out against man.' And then follows one of the sentences for which the Bishop can appeal to no Scripture: 'The clouds of God's anger gathered thick over the whole human race; they discharged themselves on Jesus only.' He quotes, indeed, three remarkable sayings, 2 Cor. v. 21, Gal. iii. 12, 1 Peter ii. 24, relating to the humiliation of Christ, of which it is not easy to exhaust the meaning. If that theory of God's anger and its discharge were established by other evidence, these verses might with some violence be forced into agreement with it. But there is no excuse for asserting that the theory is itself simply declared in these verses. The first is 2 Cor. v. 21, 'Him who knew not sin God made sin on our behalf, that we might be made righteousness of God in Him.' This follows St. Paul's emphatic declaration, that all things are of God, who was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. St. Paul is beseeching his readers to accept that reconciliation. He testifies that God desires men to be made, through reconciliation, 'His righteousness' in Christ. With this aim, God had made Him sin on our behalf. Comparing together the two parallel expressions (which are yet not strictly parallel, for God desires us to know

righteousness in a way in which Christ did not know sin), we should conclude St. Paul's meaning to be that Christ was *made one with us in our sinful condition*, in order that He might lay hold of us—that is, of our *wills*—and bring us to the Father, and that so we might be made righteous with His righteousness. We should find a similar testimony in the terms, 'made a curse for us,' and 'He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.' Near the end of his essay, indeed (p. 361), the Bishop himself gives a true and eloquent interpretation of words like these, as applied to the dark hours of the Passion. 'All the inner horror of sin 'is revealed to Him. Sin in its nakedness is more 'horrible than death. And He sees it as it is— 'the blasphemous self-worship that it is, the revolt 'against God, the violation of order, the death in life. 'And all this sin is His, though He is sinless of it; 'for He has thrown in His lot with men, and has pro- 'posed to Himself the task of breaking down this foul and 'destroying tyranny. The mystery of that agency lies in 'the completeness of His humanity. He is no bystander, 'watching how men sin. He is one of themselves, but 'with the power of God over them to make their in- 'terests His own.' Will it be said to be idle for those who heartily accept such words as these to protest against the notion that 'the clouds of God's anger, 'which had gathered thick over the whole human race, 'discharged themselves on Jesus only'? Surely the difference is very great, and the objection justified by the fundamental principles of righteousness. But for

the present, I will only claim those earnest words as *the* interpretation of the verses which we are now considering. It is that which has been urged, though not always so powerfully, by those against whom the Bishop's essay is directed.

The teaching of the Epistles is further divided according to their authors. St. James, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Paul, are separately considered in the essay. As to St. James, few will question what the Bishop maintains, that this Apostle assumes in his readers, though he does not dwell upon it, a faith in Christ as a Redeemer. There can be as little doubt that St. Peter dwells much on the sufferings of Christ, of which he had been a witness, and that he applies sacrificial language to the death of Christ. There is only one passage in the Bishop's summary of St. Peter's teaching upon which I desire to comment. 'What does the phrase, "He bare our sins," suggest, but the goat that "shall bear" the iniquities of the people off into the land that was not inhabited? or else the *feeling the consequences* of sin, as the word is used elsewhere? We have to choose between the cognate ideas of sacrifice and substitution' (p. 334). The Bishop's words just quoted, describing the weight of our sins upon the sinless soul of the Son of God, would have been, probably, the truest answer to his question. But I would ask, whilst admitting to the full the sacrificial character of our Lord's death, and also recognising in the scapegoat a symbol of the true remission of sins through Christ, does the Bishop regard the

sending away of the live goat as representing the 'idea of sacrifice'? It seems rather to represent a result or accessory of sacrifice, than sacrifice itself. Still less does the feeling of the consequences of sin represent of necessity 'the idea of substitution.' The idea of fellowship or community of interests, as amongst members of a family, may, with at least as much justice, be expressed by it.

In St. John's writings, the Bishop quotes and refers to many passages, and at the end he mentions 'the substitution of Another who can bear our sins, for us 'who cannot,' as a point which 'comes out with abundant clearness.' But it is difficult to see on which passage the Bishop would rely, as establishing this substitution. That part of the exposition which seems to come nearest to it is where it is said, 'The means [of our redemption] was His laying down His life for us, which should make us ready to lay down our lives for the brethren.' But surely this passage is directly opposed to the idea of substitution. 'As Christ laid down His life for us, so ought we to lay down our lives for the brethren.' Who would speak of substitution in the latter clause? If we do not find it in this, we have no right to assume it in the former. If it should be said, that the word 'propitiation,' *ἰλασμός*, used by St. John, implies that kind of substitution, I answer again, that is to beg the question. It is perfectly arbitrary to attach to the idea of propitiation a theory as to the means by which propitiation is effected. If the theory is a true one, it must have other proof; the mere mention of propitiation bears no witness to it.

Not attempting to give so full a sketch of St. Paul's teaching on the subject of Atonement, the Bishop refers to a few passages which seem to him decisive, and of these he gives the interpretations: 'Christ came to reconcile men and God, by dying on the Cross for them, and bearing their punishment in their stead.' 'The wrath of God was against man, but it did not fall on man.' He leaves on one side the question whether we are reconciled to God only, or God is also reconciled to us, 'content to show that, at all events, the intention of God to punish man is averted by this "propitiation" and "reconcilement."' Now, what are the passages on which the Bishop founds these statements, so alien, I venture to say, to the whole spirit and tenor of St. Paul's teaching? There are two, 2 Cor. v. 14—21, and Rom. v. 6—8; of which it is said, 'These two passages are decisive as to the fact of substitution; they might be fortified with many others.' Let us consider these two decisive passages, and let the reader judge whether they do not rather decide *against* 'substitution.'

In the first, St. Paul is speaking of the condition 'in Christ,' which is seen, in the light of what Christ is and what He has done, to be the true condition for men. 'The love of Christ constrains or embraces us; our judgment being this—that if one died in behalf of all, then all died: and He died in behalf of all, in order that the living should no longer live to themselves, but to Him who in their behalf died and rose again.' We have here an important statement of what is well known as a specially Pauline doctrine. The death and

resurrection of Christ represent a death and rising-again for us. Because Christ died we are to count ourselves to be dead: because He rose and lived, we are to count ourselves alive. New relations, the ground of a new super-carnal existence, are revealed to us in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. To throw overboard this grammatical and characteristic and truly spiritual interpretation, and to adopt in its stead one which does violence to the words themselves and to the theology of the writer, is the only course open for those who would discover in this passage of St. Paul 'the fact of substitution.' The natural rendering of the words *εἰ εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν ἄρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον*, must give place to another, and a very forced and elliptical one. The words *ὑπὲρ πάντων*, 'in behalf of all,' must be translated 'instead of all.' In the words *τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἀποθανόντι καὶ ἐγερθέντι*, the second participle must be dissociated from the words which would naturally be connected with both. It is obvious that if Christ both died and rose again *for us*, we must not make 'for us' mean 'in our stead.' But it can hardly be denied that, according to St. Paul, Christ *did* rise again, as well as die, *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, and so our Church has understood him and believed. 'Our profession is to 'follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be 'made like unto Him; that, as He died and rose again 'for us, so should we who are baptized die from sin, 'and rise again unto righteousness' (Baptismal Service). 'For His merits who died, and was buried, and rose 'again *for us*' (Collect for Easter Eve). Compare also

the terms of the Nicene Creed: 'Who *for us* men, and 'for our salvation, came down from heaven . . . and was 'crucified also *for us* under Pontius Pilate.'

The next passage was Rom. v. 6—8. What does this say as to substitution? "The love of God" is 'proved by the fact that Christ died *ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν*, in 'behalf of ungodly men. For scarcely for a just man 'will one die, though for a good man perhaps some 'one will dare to die. But God commends His love 'towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ 'died for us.' It is scarcely possible to imagine any statement more destructive than this to the theory of a mere substitution to die a penal death. St. Paul expressly explains the death of Christ by the devotion of one man who would die for another man. It might happen, no doubt, that such a death might be a mere substitution. If a body of men were to be decimated, and the victims were chosen by lot, a friend might voluntarily take the place of him on whom the lot had fallen, and might or might not be accepted as a substitute for him. But this is simply a possible case, which has nothing to do with the principle of the devotion of one man who dies for another. His motive is not to satisfy a demand of justice by rendering an equivalent, but to save through self-sacrifice. As a man might die to save his wife from death or outrage, so Christ died to save ungodly men from the whole evil of their condition. Herein is love, a love most difficult for our hearts to believe in. In the theory of a substituted victim, on the other hand, is an aspect of what is called 'justice' 'painful to the

natural reason,' because it is so much more like *injustice*.

The phrase *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, 'on our behalf,' so frequently applied to every act of the Incarnate Saviour, would not be translated 'instead of' us, except in deference to a preconceived theory. *ὑπὲρ*, 'over,' comes to mean 'for,' says the Lexicon, 'from the notion of *standing over* to protect,' and therefore it strictly means 'in behalf of.' No doubt in many places this preposition may, without altering the meaning, be translated 'instead of.' But that is because it so often happens that a thing done 'in my behalf' is also done 'in my stead.' Whether we say that one who signs under a power of attorney does so in behalf of or instead of another, makes no difference. But it must not be argued from this coincidence that *ὑπὲρ* properly means 'instead of.' To say that Christ died *on our behalf*, does not of itself, as I fully admit, *exclude* the possibility that Christ died *in our stead*. What I feel bound to maintain is, that the former assertion is not identical with the latter. The Bishop says, in a note (p. 334), that if there were any doubt that 'for us,' in 1 Pet. ii. 21, means 'in our stead,' the 24th verse, which explains the former, would set it at rest. I answer, that when St. Peter urges Christians to suffer patiently, as followers of Christ, who suffered patiently on our behalf, there is every reason to take the words 'on our behalf' in their natural sense, and the sense so common in St. Paul and elsewhere, and no reason for turning them into 'in our stead;' and that the following words, 'Who His own self bare our sins in His

own body on the tree,' are better interpreted by the Bishop himself in the passage quoted above; whilst the reason given, 'in order that we, being dead to sins, might live unto righteousness,' implies that the death of Christ *represented or included* ours, and that what was sought by that death was, not the appeasing of the divine wrath, but our life unto righteousness.

With regard to the deep and solemn mystery of God's wrath, the language of the Bishop of Gloucester is startling, and might suggest to his readers an uncertainty whether he is speaking incautiously, or with more meaning than is fully expressed. 'The wrath of God was against man; but it did not fall on man.' 'On the side of God, that terrible wrath of His, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, is turned away.' 'At all events the intention of God to punish man is averted by this "propitiation" and "reconcilement."' These assertions are made so absolutely, and fall in so logically with the theory of punishment by substitution, that the reader might suppose, if it were not too improbable, that the Bishop of Gloucester held that the wrath of God against sin was extinguished once for all by the sufferings of Christ, and had no existence any longer. In reading them, I could not help recalling a remarkable sentence in the Bishop's Bampton Lectures (p. 56): 'Life to the godless must be the beginning of destruction, since *nothing but God and that which pleases Him can permanently exist.*' But, whatever these words may mean, the doctrine of the Bishop with regard to Divine wrath

and punishment probably does not differ from that of those with whom he agrees as to the Atonement generally ; for, near the end of his essay, we find the words, ‘ The blood of the Redeemer, all-sufficient as it is to cleanse the sins of the world, saves from wrath only those who repent and turn to Him’ (p. 365). It is strange, however, that whilst the Bishop was allowing himself to speak with convenient absoluteness of the effect of Christ’s sufferings upon the Father’s wrath, he did not perceive that, instead of expounding St. Paul, he was even contradicting him. For, at the words, ‘ that terrible wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, is turned away,’ we are referred in a note to Romans i. 18, where St. Paul does indeed say that that wrath is revealed, or is in course of being revealed (*ἀποκαλύπτεται*), but he says nothing about its being turned away. He virtually says the contrary. He testifies to a present and future and continual wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. He could not wish that that wrath, however terrible, should be turned away. ‘ We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that commit such things.’ God’s intention to punish man was not arrested by any punishment which had already taken place. ‘ God will render to every man according to his deeds, . . . unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth

‘evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile; but
‘glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh
‘good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile; for
‘there is no respect of persons with God.’ (Romans ii.
6—11.) It is true that this preacher of a perfect and
eternal Divine Righteousness speaks of being ‘saved
from wrath.’ But how was a man to be saved from
wrath? By entering into the state upon which there
was no condemnation; by being reconciled to God in
faith and obeying the truth. God is righteous to for-
give those who repent and turn to Him. So long as
sin exists, God will punish it in such ways as seem fit
to Him. No intention of His to punish sin has ever
been averted, without the previous doing away of the
sin. That the Atonement of Christ saves men from
wrath is abundantly asserted in the Scriptures; but it
only does so by bringing them out of the state upon
which the wrath of God abides, into that faith through
which they have life eternal. Nothing is clearer than
the distinction between the unbelief which is condemned
already and will always be condemned, and the faith
which lays hold on the forgiveness of sins, and so in-
herits favour and life: and St. Peter says that the
sacrifice of Christ, foreordained from eternity, was
manifested in time for men, who by Him believe in
God, . . . *that their faith and hope might be in God.*
(1 Pet. i. 19—21.)

The teaching of the New Testament on the doctrine
of the Atonement is summed up by the Bishop of
Gloucester in ‘three points or moments.’ The Ato-

ment (1) proves the love of God; (2) manifests the justice of God; (3) and demands in men a corresponding spirit of obedience. How far the worth and power of the Atonement are brought out in the Bishop's exposition is not here to be considered; the only objection now taken to it applies to the statement of the Divine justice manifested in the Atonement. The statement is as follows: 'God the Father laid on His Son the weight of the sins of the whole world, so that He bare on His own body *the wrath which men must else have borne, because there is no other way of escape for them.*' I have noticed the passages quoted by the Bishop which seem to come nearest to this view, and have contended that they bear no such meaning. The Bishop, indeed, asks with a manner of triumph at the conclusion of his appeal to Scripture, 'Now, in which of these points is there the semblance of contradiction between the Apostles and their Master? In none of them. In the Gospels, as in the Epistles, Jesus is held up as the sacrifice and the victim, quaffing a cup from which His human nature shrank, feeling in Him a sense of desolation such as we fail utterly to comprehend on a theory of human motives. Yet no one takes from Him His precious redeeming life; He lays it down of Himself, out of His great love for men. But men are to deny themselves, and take up their cross and tread in His steps.' Taking the *true* meaning of the terms 'sacrifice' and 'victim,' and understanding 'human motives' to mean earthly or carnal motives, I fully accept these statements. I do not think even Professor Jowett

maintains that there is any contradiction between the Apostles and their Master.¹ No other writer to whom this essay can apply would suppose so any more than Bishop Thomson himself.

After this review of the Scripture language on the subject, I will only make one observation. It is well known and universally admitted that the language of highest authority concerning the death of Christ runs very easily indeed into the forms against which I am now protesting, and which Mr. Newman Hall so severely characterizes as 'heathenism in its most terrible form.' Not only in the sermons and hymns of the Evangelical bodies are such statements to be found; they occur in the Homilies of the Church of England, in the writings of many of the Fathers, in the works of admirable divines. So much the more impressive is the fact, that they do *not* occur in the varied writings of the New Testament. They are plain and undeniable where we find them, in this essay and in those other places. No such unambiguous statements can be produced from the New Testament. The argument which remains for those who seek the countenance of Scripture for the doctrine that the sufferings of Christ were the punishment due to the sins of mankind, is that this hypothesis is necessary for the full interpretation of Scriptural assertions. That might be the case, although no passage in Scripture directly affirmed it. But upon

¹ 'We can live and die in the language of St. Paul and St. John; there is nothing there repugnant to our moral sense.'—Jowett, ii. p. 587.

the plain literal sense of words there ought to be no great and interminable difference between candid readers.

II. In passing to the general theology of the subject, we are met by a paragraph in the Bishop of Gloucester's essay, which it is impossible to leave unnoticed, but which I approach with sincere reluctance. It is one in which the Bishop makes a serious charge against the theological belief of those whom he is opposing. I quote his actual words; he is speaking of 'our present discussions about the Atonement':—

'When we are invited to discuss whether one man can ever bear the sins of another, and whether vicarious punishment could ever be agreeable to God's justice, we cannot but notice that the divine nature of Christ is never strongly asserted on that side, or assumed as an element in the argument. The death of Jesus is discussed as the death of a mere man. . . . The necessity of our position compels us to make the Atonement prominent. But all the faith is involved in the discussion. When the views of Socinus on the Atonement are brought forth again, his notions as to the Redeemer's person are probably not far off' (p. 341).

I need hardly say that the charge thus made, though made in the somewhat loose and disdainful style which is too perceptible in the essay, cannot be in the Bishop's eyes a trifling one. The question immediately arises, to whom it can apply. The answer to it is, that as regards any one to whom the general reader can by

possibility refer it, it is untrue; and not only untrue, but glaringly untrue, and the very reverse of the truth.

The only opponents named by the Bishop in his essay are Professor Jowett and Mr. Garden; and these are mentioned on the same page with the above extract. I have no call of any kind to defend Mr. Jowett's theology; but since reading the Bishop of Gloucester's essay, I have referred to the discourse against which his strictures are directed, that on Atonement and Satisfaction, in the second volume of the 'Epistles of St. Paul,' and I am bound to say that I am astonished at the direct contradiction it furnishes to the Bishop's accusations. At the close of Professor Jowett's essay, he describes certain aspects of the work of Christ, which he considers will be the most satisfactory to those who share his views. He selects three such aspects in particular; and these have all of them direct reference to the Person of Christ, and imply His nature to be divine. (1) He speaks first of the Pauline doctrine of communion or identity with Christ, a doctrine in itself incompatible with the view which regards Jesus as a mere man, and expounded by Mr. Jowett in terms which expressly declare Him to be divine. (2) He connects the death of Christ with His life. 'It is a death which, even more than His life, is singular and mysterious, in which nevertheless we all are partakers —in which there was the thought and consciousness of mankind to the end of time, which had also the power of drawing to itself the thoughts of men to the end of time.' Is this 'the death of a mere man'?

(3) The third light in which the work of Christ may be regarded is that of an inward need of peace with God. In Mr. Jowett's remarks on this, we find the words:—
'Enough of truth seems for him to radiate from the
'person of the Saviour. He thinks more and more
'of the human nature of Christ as the expression
'of the divine.' The last sentence of the essay is an allusion to the theological controversialists of past ages as now 'resting together in the communion of the same Lord.' Are these the notions of Socinus as to the Redeemer's person? Or are they to be found in this sentence from Mr. Garden's tract?—'The Atonement, the reconciliation of earth and heaven, of God and man, the redemption of man through Christ, is what is denied, I am sure, by no man who worships Christ as his God, and reposes on Him as his Elder Brother' (p. 21).

But there is another name more conspicuous than those of Messrs. Jowett and Garden in the controversies about the Atonement. The readers of the Bishop of Gloucester's essay will be sure to think of Mr. Maurice. In the work of Dr. Candlish, from which the Bishop quotes, and just before the passage which he extracts, the author speaks of something which is characteristic, 'not of avowed Socinians, but of divines connected with Orthodox and Evangelical Churches,' and in the next sentence he names Mr. Maurice. The Bishop may not be aware that, in ascribing Socinianism to those who question 'whether vicarious punishment could ever be agreeable to God's justice,' he is re-

echoing a newspaper taunt not unfrequently directed against Mr. Maurice ; but no newspaper, I believe, has ever been so reckless as to allege that ‘the divine nature of Christ is *never* strongly asserted on that side, or assumed as an element in the argument— that the death of Jesus is discussed as the death of a mere man.’ It is difficult to express strongly enough the falsity of this statement, as applied to the leading and best known author ‘on that side.’ It is positively made a complaint against Mr. Maurice that his theology is too exclusively occupied with the Divine Person of Christ. The Bishop’s ally, Dr. Candlish, refers to ‘what is probably the most attractive feature of Mr. Maurice’s theological teaching—the prominence given to the Incarnation of our Lord as fixing our faith upon a Person, not upon a system of doctrine’ (Examination of Mr. Maurice’s Theological Essays, p. 473). ‘It must be observed, however, that according to the theology of these essays [Mr. Maurice’s], the Incarnation is the one single fact in the history of Christ that has, or can have, any real doctrinal significance. . . . Hence this theology has the advantage of great apparent simplicity as compared with the ordinary theology ; it is less in danger of fixing our faith on a system of doctrine instead of a living Person ; for, in fact, it has only one doctrine properly so called in its Christology, and that one doctrine is, that Christ is a living Person’ (*Ibid.* p. 474).

I must refer again to the work of the same author on the Atonement, and would ask the reader’s especial

attention to what I am going to adduce. The Bishop of Gloucester tries to find the later theories of the Atonement in the theology of the early Church. The Presbyterian divine is fettered by no deference to that theology. He boldly depreciates it *because* it was too busy about the nature of God to concern itself with theories as to the 'plan of salvation.' The first chapter of his work on the Atonement is headed, 'The Formularies of the Reformation as distinguished, in regard to this subject, from those of the Patristic Church.' The three Creeds are contrasted with the Westminster Standards. The former 'were drawn up while the Church was on her way to the priestly altar, the monkish cell, and the scholastic den. . . . Even the Apostles' Creed itself, simple and sublime as it is, may be held in some measure chargeable with a fault, or defect, which afterwards became more conspicuous. It is chiefly, if not exclusively, occupied with the accomplishment of redemption; it says little or nothing about its application. The person and work of Christ, as the Redeemer, are the prominent topics' (p. 20). 'The Creeds, after going into the nicest details respecting the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the hypostatical union of the two natures in the one person of Christ, leave almost untouched the entire field of the sinner's personal history' (p. 24). The 'Evangelical' theology, as the writer proceeds to urge, starts from the fact of man's guilt; the 'Orthodox' theology from the fact of God's nature. Dr. Candlish would, no doubt, leave the theology of the early Church very willingly to Mr.

Maurice, and would claim the Bishop of Gloucester as a more enlightened disciple of 'the Westminster Standards.' Mr. Garden has consistently followed up his tract on the Atonement by another, which frankly vindicates the Creeds.

The very reverse, then, of what the Bishop of Gloucester attributes to his opponents is the truth. Instead of treating our Lord as a mere man, in order that they may evacuate His death of its worth, they contend that the worth of that death is to be apprehended by meditating on the nature of Him who died. They begin with the Incarnation, 'God in Christ,' and so come to the Atonement, beholding God as 'reconciling the world to Himself' in the body of His Son. They have often contended that if Christ is seen to be truly the Son of the Father, truly the Head of mankind, His death, followed by His resurrection, will be felt, even when it is not distinctly understood, to have a perfect atoning power.

And in thinking of the death of Christ as a sacrifice, they preserve the thought of the relation of the Son of God to the Father and to mankind. They behold Him offering Himself in man's name to the Father, in fulfilment of the Father's will. The Bishop of Gloucester does not so understand sacrifice. His language concerning sacrifice is the more surprising when it is compared with what he formerly said in the Bampton Lectures. He observes in this essay (p. 350), that the word 'satisfaction' 'has gone far to replace the word 'sacrifice. But the fundamental ideas of the two words

‘are not so far apart as is often assumed. Sacrifice, in the usage of the Bible, is the appointed rite by which a Jewish citizen who has broken the law, and forfeited thereby his position within the pale of the Covenant, is enabled to procure his restoration. It is a Jewish word, and belongs to the positive provisions of the Jewish policy, and not to general ethies.’ This hardly looks like ‘the fundamental idea’ of sacrifice. It seems rather to be one appointed effect of it in the case of the Jew. The writer is apparently conscious that he has not in those words expressed the fundamental idea of sacrifice: for further on, in the same paragraph, he says, that when we call an act a sacrifice, we mean that it is ‘an offering to appease the Divine wrath.’ Compare with this the following passage from the Bampton Lectures (p. 40): ‘The key-note of all the sacrificial systems is the same; self-abdication and a sense of dependence on God are the feelings which gifts and victims strive to express. Wherever there are men there is worship; and where there is worship there is need of divesting ourselves of something, to lay it at the foot of the throne of Him we adore.’ It is true that this account does not exhaust the meaning of blood-sacrifices; and it is true also, that special purposes were attached to particular sacrifices in the Levitical system. But the fundamental idea of an *offering*, as Mr. Garden has contended, belongs to all sacrifices; and when our Lord’s death is called a sacrifice, this is what we are to think of first. Nor is there any ground for saying that the word sacrifice is

used in the Bible in a special and technical sense, without reference to universal human obligations. The two most 'sacrificial' books of the New Testament are the Epistle to the Hebrews and the First Epistle of St. Peter. And in these we find the word sacrifice used according to its fundamental idea, in the sense of an offering to God. 'By Him, therefore, let us offer the *sacrifice* of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased' (Hebrews xiii. 15, 16). 'Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual *sacrifices*, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ' (1 Peter ii. 5). Will it be said that in these verses there is any thought of 'appeasing the wrath of God'?

The word 'sacrifice,' the Bishop says, does not belong to 'general ethics.' It is therefore 'a gain to us, as sacrificial usages become forgotten, to acquire a term which expresses the same idea, appealing to the principles of general ethics;' and this term is satisfaction, which is interpreted to mean the satisfying of a creditor. Does the Bishop conceive that, in the Christian mind, the thought of Christ's death, as the satisfying of a creditor, has actually superseded, in any degree, the thought of it as a sacrifice? If so, according to his own account of the matter, the scriptural representation of Christ's death has given place to one that is post-scriptural, and 'ethical.' But it is not clear what the Bishop means when he speaks of satisfaction as

appealing to 'the principles of general ethics.' Perhaps it is only a philosophical way of stating that the payment of a debt is universally held to be right. But this carries us but a very little way in the application of the term 'satisfaction' to the sufferings of the Redeemer. And the Bishop must know that the thought of paying the 'debt' of our guilt by the sufferings of Another is precisely what is alleged to *violate* the principles of general ethics. If he, and those who think with him, believe that they are appealing to the universal principles of right and wrong in describing our Lord's death as the satisfying of a creditor, we, on the other hand, object to such a description expressly on the ground of the outrage done by it to those principles.

I do not forget that the members of the Church of England, in their most solemn service, speak of the Lord's oblation of Himself as a 'satisfaction.' But in the use of this term they are not bound by the theory of any divine. They are to take it in a plain grammatical sense, such as shall be in harmony with the teaching of Scripture and of the Church. In the order of the Holy Communion, the dominating idea is that of sacrifice, as the offering of the living person of the Son to the Father. In this character we are to feed on Christ. It is mysterious indeed, but not utterly unintelligible, that we should be invited and enabled to feed on His body and blood, if He be regarded as a true spiritual sacrifice. But how can we be inwardly nourished by 'a mode of payment which God has

‘accepted instead of the debt of obedience which we ‘cannot render’? If, however, we let the word ‘satisfaction’ suggest to our minds the thought that the offering of Himself by the Son of God was perfectly satisfying to the Father—that in Him, dying for men, the Father was perfectly ‘well pleased’—then we may ask to be enabled, by the power of the same Eternal Spirit in whom He offered Himself, to identify ourselves more and more with His satisfaction, so that our reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice may, notwithstanding our unworthiness, be accepted of the Father. And why, let me ask in all earnestness, should we not agree to take the Communion of the body and blood of Christ as the true divine exposition of the meaning of His death? We should then most assuredly look on that death as a sacrifice; but the sacrifice would commend itself to us as a spiritual and voluntary offering, not given in the stead of men, but in their behalf, that they also may be transformed by it into a voluntary sacrifice to God. And this would become evident—that the more humbly we listen to that eternal voice of God which speaks to us in ‘the principles of general ethics,’ the more we should enter into the theological principles of sacrifice and communion, and should see their reasonableness and truth.

III. The Bishop of Gloucester complains that the objections offered to the doctrine of a vicarious punishment are the same now as those which have been formerly alleged. This appears to be true. Being thus old, these objections may be regarded as stale and

unworthy of any but a cavalier kind of treatment; or their being at once old and new may be taken as a presumption that they have a vitality sustained by truth. 'It has been said, that a translation of guilt is impossible, because guilt is personal; and that a doctrine which represents the innocent as punished instead of the guilty, and the guilty as escaping by this punishment, contradicts the first principles of justice' (p. 363). However long ago, and however often, this may have been said, I trust it will never cease to be said, when occasion arises. It sounds ungracious and injurious when the Bishop speaks of 'the views of Socinus on the Atonement being brought forth again,' but such a taunt is adequately met by the manly reply of Grotius—'Neque me pudeat consentire Socino, si quando is in veram veteremque sententiam incidit.' Having never read anything written by Socinus, I am very imperfectly acquainted with his opinions. But if he urged that guilt is strictly personal, and that there is no justice in punishing the innocent instead of the guilty, he bore a witness in which he is no less supported by Scripture than by the general conscience of mankind. Those who maintain the contrary have a very heavy responsibility to bear, in that they put a stumbling-block in the way of their brethren, and throw a cloud on that glory of God which shines in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is very difficult to follow the Bishop in the reasonings with which he meets objections, on account of the confusion in which, I must venture to say, the whole

subject appears to me to be involved in his concluding pages. Sometimes his language conveys the impression that he considers logical distinctions unworthy intruders in so sacred a province. He writes with warmth and eloquence, assumes that he is defending the one great doctrine of redemption against hostile attacks, and brushes away objections without troubling himself to notice precisely what they are. But a writer who deliberately undertakes a controversial work should condescend to acquaint himself with the views which he is denouncing. Logical distinctions may not be the most important things in the world; but they are ill replied to with logical confusions. And the Bishop himself in one place challenges his opponents to strict accuracy—‘If we are to appeal,’ he says, ‘to a metaphysical theory of Divine justice, we must analyse our facts more exactly’ (p. 359). So that those whom the Bishop is answering have a right to complain if they find themselves really, however undesignedly, misrepresented, and, still more, if important moral distinctions are impatiently slurred over.

The confusions to which I would especially call the reader’s attention are in the terms into which the supposed objections are translated, and in the Bishop’s language concerning Guilt.

An example of the first is to be found in the opening paragraph of the third part of the essay. The Bishop assumes that Holy Scripture contains ‘the doctrine,’ and that the Church has always taught it, and then describes the objections which have been made to it.

He specifies the repugnance to admit 'that the wrath of God could be appeased by the sacrifice of One who had done no sin in the place of the sinful.' That is a genuine objection. The reader is led to expect that the Bishop will deal with it. But he proceeds immediately to translate this into 'a reluctance to own that the sufferings of the just can ever be the consequence of the sins of others.' This is certainly much easier for him to deal with, but it has ceased to represent the real difficulty. The suffering of the just in consequence of the sins of others is such a daily and universal phenomenon that it would be mere madness to deny the possibility of it. Certainly no Christian divine ever denied that Christ suffered in consequence of the sins of men, nor objected to a doctrine of the Atonement because it involved this fact. We may well listen with impatience to an argument which is to show that the sins of men often cause suffering to those who did not commit them. But a few lines further, the Bishop gives another version of what would seem to be the same objection. 'When I am asked to believe that it is against the Divine plan that any other being should take away from me any of the consequences of my guilt, I think myself entitled to say that it is the correlative of this proposition that no one should have brought upon me any of the guilt and its consequences.' I should have thought it quite needless to consider what answer should be made to so imaginary and absurd a request. Every day, all the world over, the consequences of human guilt are being

stayed and cut short and 'taken away from' the guilty by the efforts and the virtues of their fellow-men. No one could possibly object to the doctrine that Christ took away from men some of the consequences of their guilt. To deny that Christ's sufferings were needed and accepted as a satisfaction to God's wrath, provoked by the sins of men, is a very different thing from pretending that Christ could not suffer from the consequences of men's sins, or could not remedy those consequences. But the Bishop labours to prove, and appeals to learned works—those of 'Broussais, Büchner, and Buchez'—to support him in the argument, that by the very law under which mankind exist, evil and sin are propagated from one to another; and this being so, he contends it is no more unnatural that goodness should be propagated. And he concludes, 'There is, ' then, nothing new or startling in the revelation of a ' great moral good bestowed on us without our effort; ' it is in harmony with the system under which we ' live, as members of a great family having common ' interests even in things belonging to the soul.' Most assuredly it is; but is this principle of *community* identical with any principle of *substitution*? Those whom the Bishop is endeavouring to confute have not only not denied the fellowship of the just and the unjust, they have been accustomed to insist upon it; and they have contended that this view replaces the notion of *substitution*, with which it is indeed incompatible. They can only desire most heartily that the relations of the Son of Man to His brethren should be inter-

preted by the common law or order under which God has constituted mankind.

It might be supposed, however, that when one man suffers in consequence of the sins of another, he is yet indirectly expiating his own guilt, whilst in the case of the perfectly Sinless One there could be no guilt of any kind to expiate. The Bishop assumes, though with no warrant that I am aware of, that some objectors maintain that it was therefore unjust for Jesus to suffer at all. What theory such objectors would hold of the life of Jesus is not easy to conjecture. Apparently they must either deny that He was sinless, or simply impeach the justice of the Father in allowing Him to suffer. That Jesus, though innocent, should willingly suffer for men's good, shocks no moral instinct. That such suffering should be a necessary substitute for the deserved sufferings of men in the eyes of the Father, is what we deny, and what the Bishop says nothing to prove.

I have shown how, in one instance, with reference to the principle of community of interest, the Bishop, in the course of his argument, changes places with his opponents and uses their weapons. It is singular to observe to what an extent he has followed this method. Thus, he taunts his opponents with 'appealing to a metaphysical theory of Divine justice.' It is notorious that this is what they have complained of the Bishop's allies for doing. Mr. Garden's tract, for example, which was specially before the Bishop's eyes, goes expressly to the point of declining such metaphysical

theories. 'We see the facts, that Christ did bear the burden of our sin and shame and woe, however determinedly we set our faces against the theories of the process whereby He bore them—whether of vicarious punishment or any other. . . . The most resolute decliner of such theories in regard to the work of Christ for our redemption may use the words of Isaiah liii. and all that other language of Scripture which so corresponds with it, in sincerity, as expressing what all inadequately he feels and sees when he tries to contemplate the agony of the garden,¹ and the darkness of Calvary. He can see and accept the fact, while he declines all theory respecting it.' The Bishop would have his readers believe, that when he is similarly insisting on the *facts* of Christ's sufferings and humiliation, and protesting against a metaphysical theory, he is in some way overthrowing the positions of Mr. Garden and others, who have been saying the same thing. Again, as to the use of 'forensic language.' The Bishop says, 'And since we are always invited in this question to discuss it in forensic language, and are told that no man can be allowed before a human tribunal to take upon himself the position of the criminal and suffer the punishment of another, because every one arraigned there must bear his own burden, we must remark that, if every one did actually bear his own burden, then human justice would have attained a perfection which it has never yet boasted.'

¹ The Bishop is wrong, therefore, when he says, 'Mr. Garden forgets Gethsemane altogether.'—Note, p. 361:

It is satisfactory to see that the Bishop would regard the bearing by each of his own burden as a perfection, at least in human, if not in Divine, justice ; but does he really mean and believe that his opponents are those who, by preference, apply ' forensic ' language to the Atonement ? Why, their writings are full of protests against the merely forensic view. The theories of vicarious punishment, and of satisfaction by the vicarious payment of a debt, are those which are called forensic. They represent God as a judge, men as criminals, the universe as a court of justice, the Saviour as interposing to avert the sentence of the Judge, the saved as standing acquitted before the bar of God. It has been the very business of the divines against whom the Bishop of Gloucester is writing to remind the world that these are not the leading ideas of the Gospel ; that the names of Father, Son, and Spirit, are those which are most significant to the hearts of men ; and that to be effectually reconciled to the Father in the Son of His love, is more than to be acquitted, on the ground of a punishment inflicted on another, at the bar of Divine justice. It is hard indeed upon them, to be taunted with always discussing the question in forensic language. What they have done has been to meet the Calvinistic theology on its own ground. You speak of the necessity of a satisfaction to Divine justice, and you say that, because of that necessity, Christ is to be believed to have suffered penally in man's stead : but would this really be *just* ? When you introduce the forensic scenery and forensic terms,

are you really adhering to the true principles of equity? To remonstrate in this way is the offence which the Bishop of Gloucester rebukes. And the modern answer to such remonstrances is one of which the Bishop avails himself with all the confidence of a true ally of Mr. Mausel. It is to say, that you cannot argue from human justice to Divine justice. The Bishop speaks of our 'rashness in impugning the Divine justice, understanding it so little' (p. 359). It is impossible to refrain from the retort, Then why, if we cannot understand the Divine justice, do you base your doctrine of the Atonement upon a particular theory of justice, and denounce those who simply decline to accept the theory? Why speak of justice at all, and of the Atonement as manifesting God's justice, if the principles of that justice are not within our comprehension?

But this question of justice, and the cognate one of human responsibility, are of such transcendent importance, that they ought to be raised above the level of mere controversial disputation. Nothing concerns man's highest interests more nearly than that the justice of God should come out clear and unclouded to the eye of the human conscience. Now, the Bishop of Gloucester makes no real attempt to vindicate the Divine justice in reference to theories of the Atonement. All that he attempts is to confound our notions of what is just. He pours contempt upon our 'private text-books of morality' and upon the ordinary justice of our law-courts. His answer is, that the supposed injustice is

not more unjust than some other. 'When I am asked 'to believe that it is against the Divine plan that any 'other being should take away from me any of the 'consequences of my guilt, I think myself entitled to 'say that it is the correlative of this proposition, that 'no one should have brought upon me any of the guilt 'and its consequences. It is surely not more repug- 'nant to God's justice that another should bear my 'guilt than that I should be guilty because of another ; 'nay, Divine justice will be more readily reconciled 'with a plan in which one who is entirely willing to 'bear my sin should take off its intolerable burden 'from me, who am earnestly desirous to get rid of it, 'than with a plan in which sinfulness devolves from 'one who did not mean his own faults to do me harm, 'upon me who by no means wished to inherit them' (pp. 352, 353). It cannot be denied that there are aspects of the world which seem to reproach the Maker with injustice. The unequal distribution of advantages amongst men may, to logical speculation, appear unjust, but the conscience does not cry out against that inequality. Nor does the suffering of one caused by the fault of another admit of no explanation but that of an ultimate injustice. But in the direct relations between the inward spirit and God, our conscience demands that we should be judged exactly according to truth. The Divine displeasure must be exactly proportioned to human guilt. If we could not believe that God blames us according as we are truly blameworthy, we should have nothing to support us under the superficial inequa-

lities of existence ; we should feel that we were drifting in a chaos.

But guilt, or blame, is not the same as immorality. The Bishop's language assumes that it is ; at least I know not how else to read it. The transmission of circumstances and qualities which contain the seeds of vice is to him the transmission of *guilt*. He seems to measure culpability by outward immorality. He argues against isolated responsibility by pleading the power of antecedent conditions. He shows that human law is unable to lay his own burden accurately on any man, wavering sometimes between putting a man to death as guilty, and pronouncing him innocent because insane. If all this reasoning means anything at all, it does away with *guilt* in the true and received sense. And this result seems to be accepted, in the following triumphant application of the reasoning : ' How, if these facts are admitted—if, instead of that perfect isolation of responsibility which some insist on, a joint responsibility is the universal rule—with what show of reason can they pretend that it is on this ground that the Christian scheme is untenable? Look into the black London alleys, teeming with ignorance, improvidence, and vice ; do you not see written in those faces eloquent in wretchedness, " We did not place ourselves here ; were the choice given us freely, we would not be as we are " ? Then what do we think of the consistency of those who see guilt brought on by others, but think it revolting that another should take it off ? ' (p. 354). I answer, we can see *guilt* neither brought on by

others, nor taken off, in the strict sense of the word. Those black alleys do not accumulate *guilt* on their unhappy occupants.¹ Every additional evil influence acting upon him from without makes the man *less* guilty in the eyes of truth and of God. We all feel this. We know that the best of us has no right to judge the most wicked of his neighbours. We are absolutely unable to measure real guilt, because we are ignorant of the circumstances which aggravate or palliate the sin. But God can judge rightly, because He knows all; and in His sight 'every man shall bear his own burden' (Galatians vi. 5). It is '*not* more repugnant to God's justice that another should bear my guilt than that I should be guilty because of another,' because neither is possible.

The Bishop of Gloucester appears to have forgotten for the time the vehement assertions of God's justice which abound in Scripture, and the appeals made to the human sense of what is right, as being qualified to recognise that justice. It is refreshing to turn from the pages we are now considering to the well-known chapter of Ezekiel (xviii.), in which the prophet maintains the perfect equity of God's ways. In order to

¹ 'The sins of common untutored people are nothing in comparison with the sins committed by great and high persons that are in spiritual and temporal offices. What are the sins done by a poor wretch, that according to law and justice is hanged, or the offences of a poor strumpet, compared with the sins of a false teacher, who daily makes away with many poor people, and kills them both body and soul? The sins committed against the first table of God's Ten Commandments are not so much regarded as those committed against the second table.'—*Luther's Table Talk*.

‘insist upon a perfect isolation of responsibility,’ Ezekiel *appears* to deny the facts of the transmission of good and evil tendencies. He does not really deny them; but it was, and is, more important, in prophetic exhortations, to insist on individual responsibility than to expound the law of transmission. A mischievous use may be made of the true law, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.’ It may be appealed to by those who wish to confuse the sense of personal culpability. Therefore, whatever may be the degree of hereditary transmission of good and evil, the people are to be taught that the All-seeing God will judge every man according to his real deserts. ‘Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal’ (v. 29). What is the Lord’s answer? A scoff at their incapacity to know what is equal and what is unequal in the Lord’s doings? No: that may be the reply of Mr. Mansel and the Bishop of Gloucester; it is not the language of inspired prophets. Here, as everywhere, the Lord seeks to commend His justice to the hearts of men, and to enable them to understand it. ‘O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.’

It would be doing the Bishop great injustice if any reader were led to suppose that he resembles the sophists who designedly confuse men’s notions of right

and wrong. He speaks of the wickedness of men with a genuine warmth and eloquence. He seems, indeed, to understand better the immorality of publicans and sinners than the sin of Pharisees. But it would be wrong to infer that he would in any way excuse or palliate the inward resistance to light and love of which the self-righteous are guilty. He has adopted a false notion of the Atonement; and the need of defending this is what has led him to assail our confidence in God's equity and man's responsibility. The *true* doctrine of the Atonement both receives light from, and throws light upon, the great double fact of the community of human interests and each man's separate culpability.

(1) We are all members of one body, sharing together, suffering and rejoicing together. This is a fundamental law of human existence, to overlook which would be a ruinous defect in any religious or ethical theory. Let us put by the side of this the announcement that the Son of God has been revealed, who is the head of this vast body, the fountain of true life to its members, the bond of their fellowship, the secret of their unity. Here, in the relation of the Son of God to men, and of men to one another, is a genuine mystery—not like the pseudo-mystery of substitution, easy to the understanding, painful to the conscience. It is a mystery which harmonizes and accounts for facts which no one can deny, a mystery which becomes the more believable with the growth of all true insight. That Head of our Body is revealed as a voluntary sufferer,

not seeking His own, bearing in love and sympathy the burden of men's sins and miseries. Need I say that suffering is thus glorified, that *it ceases to be penal only*, and that we have a revelation of it as of a power which unites us to God and to one another? In Him, the Son of God and Son of man, we see ourselves as we ought to be, as God has made us before we marred ourselves. In Him we see the ground of a true reconciliation with God—God loving and pardoning us, we accepting the love and pardon of God, and submitting to be members of the Son and of one another. We see the principle of sacrifice founded in God's nature, claiming and conquering every man. We are personally reconciled to the Father in proportion as the sacrifice of the Son becomes the moving law of our life.

(2) But although we are members of a body, we are also distinct persons. Although we are to 'bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,' it is also true, that 'every man shall bear his own burden' (Gal. vi. 2, 5). It might be shown that these apparent opposites are needful to one another—that a passive member could not be a real member of such a Body as that which we are in Christ—that a sense of distinct personal responsibility can alone enable us to discharge our true offices in the Body. We decline, therefore, to play off the one truth against the other, as the Bishop of Gloucester has done. We hold distinct responsibility none the less firmly because we believe in a real and mysterious community. But, with the sense of responsibility, comes in the sense of *sin*. When obligation is

revealed to the conscience of a man, there comes with it the knowledge, the self-condemnation, 'I am not what I ought to be, I am *guilty*.' If the man begins to argue, 'But after all, it is not my fault; I merely inherit conditions which compel me to sin,' he is deceiving himself—perilously deceiving himself. He knows better. He knows that he is not *compelled* to sin; that his own will, though he may feel it to be a miserable slave, is in fault. To him who is thus conscious of guilt, which no one brought on him, which is bound up with the inmost mystery of his distinct personal existence, but which would have no meaning unless he were related to Another and to others, the message of the Atonement comes, speaking to him of a sinless Son of God, the Head of the human race, the Mediator between God and men, who came down and suffered, with the express design that the sins of men might be done away, and that man might be justified before God. The Divine love thus manifested is what strikes him first; at the very moment that it softens him, it makes him more deeply conscious of guilt, more ashamed of himself than before. Every pang which the Saviour endured, every sign of His not shrinking away from the sin of men, affects and amazes him. He does not need to regard these sufferings as *penal*; it would utterly disappoint him to think of the Son of God as subject to His Father's displeasure.¹ His hope is in learning that when the Son

¹ The Bishop says, 'When all the vials of wrath were poured out upon His head, and when He did not shrink from receiving them, it'

of God thus suffered with and for men, the Father was well pleased with Him, and delightedly accepted Him. Beholding and believing this, he begins to know what Divine forgiveness is. He feels that the Father could not be satisfied without such a confession of human sin, such a sorrow for it, as the Son adequately offered to the Father, that men, His brethren, might share it in their weakness with Him. But the sinner has confidence in approaching the Father with confession and repentance in Christ. He understands that his sin has consisted in abiding in himself; that it can only be got rid of by a thankful dependence upon the one source of truth and righteousness and love. He accepts the free grace of God, begins a life of faith, is righteous before God, and receives a power from the Spirit to do righteous acts. Henceforth he perceives that his *sin*—that which presses on his heart and conscience—is in turning away from God and from his brethren; that the only redemption from sin is in coming to God through Christ, and submitting himself to the Spirit of Sonship and of Sacrifice. The death of Christ he accepts as *his* death; the life of Christ as his new life. So far as he is true to this law, no condemnation can

‘is idle to discuss whether this shall be called wrath or love; when He ‘smarted under all that we call punishment, it is idle to say that it ‘must have another name’ (p. 362). He taunts his opponents as finding a certain view ‘revolting.’ I doubt whether this is too strong a word for the impression made by this passage. Is it, then, idle to maintain that our Lord never for one moment believed that His Father was angry with *Him*; that He held fast the distinction between the Father’s feeling towards sin and His feeling towards the Son of His love?

touch him ; he has passed from death unto life, and he knows that he has done so, because he loves the brethren.

It follows from the very nature of these mysteries, and we most earnestly protest, that no such statements can exhaust the worth of what Christ is to us, and what He has done for us. But who can hesitate to choose between a belief in these living relations binding God and men together, and an acceptance of the barren, metaphysical, and forensic dogma, of an acquittal obtained through a substituted punishment, which supplies no food to the reason, and only confounds the conscience?

II.

THE DOCTRINE OF SACRIFICE VINDICATED AS THE
CATHOLIC TRUTH RESPECTING THE DEATH
OF CHRIST.

BY THE REV. FRANCIS GARDEN.

THE Tract on the Atonement, which forms the main part of No. III. of this series, is so exceedingly brief that its author might, in any case, be justified in seeking to complete his sketch, to fill in, to colour, and to illustrate so mere an outline. But what I venture to think would in any case have been desirable, has been made necessary by a recent publication. Amid many notices of the Tract in question, written in very varying spirits and tempers, there have appeared certain remarks on it, in the footnotes to an Essay on the Death of Christ, by a prelate of the English Church, which, in themselves and in their connexion with the text to which they are appended, imperatively demand an answer. Misrepresentation may be tolerated at the hands of anonymous journalists; it would be the opposite of respect to his high office, were I to bear it in silence from a Bishop.

To exhibit my case against the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, it will be requisite to look beyond the remarks he has made on myself. His Essay is professedly 'addressed to those who attach some preter-

‘ natural efficacy to the Redeemer’s sufferings for men, but propose to alter the terms in which it is usually conveyed.’ This is a little vague. What terms do we (for I seem in the sequel to be one of the persons indicated) propose to alter, and by whom are they conveyed? These are questions on which it would have been desirable to have clear light before starting. Not to pause on this, it is plain, from the tone of the Essay, that the preternatural efficacy in Christ’s sufferings which we confess, does not count for very much in the Bishop’s mind; and that the alterations which we propose, whatever they may be, are, in his judgment, very dangerous and destructive.

Being unconscious of any general wish to bring in alterations, I should not have been very apt to recognise myself as one of those to whom the Essay is addressed. As, however, Professor Jowett and I are the only two English writers referred to as censurable, I cannot escape the inference that I am of the number in question. In being thus classed with Mr. Jowett, I am sensible of a compliment, and I am aware that I am subjected to an imputation, the compliment and the imputation being equally undeserved; the former, because I do not pretend to compete with that gentleman in acquirements and accomplishments; the latter, because there is, as I have been at pains to show, a chasm between his mind and mine on the subject now before us.

Thus referred to, I cannot but see that I am regarded as one of those who have ‘lax views about the Atone-

ment' (Essay, p. 346), and that I must take my share in the insinuation that 'when the views of Socinus on 'the Atonement are brought forth again, his notions as 'to the Redeemer's person are probably not far off' (p. 341). At all events, such will be the impression made by the Bishop on his readers.

Under such imputations, coming from such a quarter, no man, certainly no English clergyman, has a right to sit still; and if he has made his contribution, be it ever so small and humble, to what he conceives to be the cause of Truth, he is bound to vindicate that contribution from an unfair account of its character and purpose.

While, however, I have a case to establish against Bishop Thomson, I have to thank him for one service. He has convicted me of a very inaccurate citation from Gregory Nazianzen. I at once plead guilty to the double fault of quoting at second-hand, and quoting from memory. Neither should be done where it is possible to avoid it, even in the way, as in this instance, of an *obiter dictum*. But while I acknowledge the correction, and shall take care, if the opportunity be given, to alter my words at the place in question, I am by no means prepared to surrender Gregory Nazianzen's language. It still seems to me favourable to the view in support of which I have appealed to it. Of this, however, in its proper place.

I must now give some account of the issue which the Bishop has raised. He opens with an account of 'the Scripture doctrine.' After going over a variety of

places in the New Testament, which more or less bear on the death of Christ, he sums up its teaching under the three following heads:—

‘ 1. God sent His Son into the world to redeem lost and ruined man from sin and death, and the Son willingly took upon Him the form of a servant for this purpose ; and thus the Father and the Son manifested their love for us.

‘ 2. God the Father laid upon His Son the weight of the sins of the whole world, so that He bare in His own body the wrath which men must else have borne, because there was no other way of escape for them ; and thus the Atonement was a manifestation of Divine justice.

‘ 3. The effect of the Atonement thus wrought is, that man is placed in a new position, freed from the dominion of sin, and able to follow holiness ; and thus the doctrine of the Atonement ought to work in all the hearers a sense of love, of obedience, and of self-sacrifice.

‘ In shorter words, the sacrifice of the death of Christ is a proof of Divine *love* and of Divine *justice*, and is for us a document of *obedience*’ (p. 337).

Now Bishop Thomson must be well aware, that of these three results, it is only about the second, and that in his longer statement of it, that there is any question between us. But about it there is and there will be question. Some will ask very anxiously if such a statement be true or false ; others if, be it true or, be it false, the acceptance of it is necessary. The former

class will plead, that the Bishop's scriptural citations do not seem to them to prove it, and that to them it is no 'manifestation of Divine justice' at all. For by Divine justice, they will insist on meaning a quality the same in kind with that which commends itself to their consciences as justice, either in themselves or others. Neither in themselves or others would they see justice in accepting the punishment of a substitute for the real offender, be that substitution offered ever so willingly. Does justice, such will ask, crave penalty in itself, or is justice satisfied with penalty in itself? Is the *fiat* of justice, For all guilt there shall be penalty; or is it not, The guilty person must bear his penalty, wrong must reap its harvest of sorrow, the sin and the sinner's wretchedness must be bound together? To say that asking whether one *man* can bear the penalty of another's sins, does not affect the question of a Divine Being doing so,¹ is to give them no answer; for their difficulty is not as to justice being satisfied with one *man* in the stead of another, but being satisfied with one *person*, whether merely human or at once human and Divine, in the stead of another.

The latter class, in whatever light they regard such difficulties, will meet them by saying, that whether or not they be conclusive against the notion at which they are aimed, they are uncalled for, inasmuch as that notion never formed part of the central truth revealed in the Atonement, and has never therefore been imposed on the faith and consciences of Christians by any com-

¹ Aids to Faith, p. 311.

petent authority. The whole representation of our redemption through Christ, as consisting in His, in any real sense, suffering in our stead the burden of Divine wrath which must otherwise have fallen on us, they maintain to be but one of many unauthoritative theories on the subject, and in its full proportions the most modern of them all. Granting it, therefore, to be tenable, or even to be true, we can have no warrant for imposing it on such as are unable to receive it, no warrant for denouncing as a heretic the man who doubts, or even the man who rejects, it.

This was the ground which I endeavoured to establish in No. III. of this series. In calling attention to the variety of theoretical explanations of the Atonement which has existed in the Church, I did not profess to write a treatise on the history of the doctrine. I devoted but 'seventeen lines' to the Fathers, because I did but appeal to a generally admitted fact, a fact which has been stated in the following words: 'The existence of these two ideas (that of ransom paid to Satan and that of satisfaction rendered to God) in the Church cannot be denied. The former—that of a ransom paid to Satan—prevailed from the time of Irenæus to the twelfth century; and as it went through a regular growth, and attained a much greater fulness and precision than it had at first, we must admit that it was part of the current belief, and not a mere accidental coincidence in the use of a rhetorical figure' (Thomson's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 168, 169). This fact was enough for that stage of my argument.

The fact itself, so distinctly stated by Dr. Thomson, the Bampton lecturer, would seem to be disputed by Bishop Thomson in his *Essay on the Death of Christ*. What the Bampton lecturer speaks of as ‘part of the current belief, and not a mere accidental coincidence in the use of a rhetorical figure,’ the Bishop speaks of as ‘for the most part rhetorical playing with words,’ complains of its being ‘put forward as if it were the sole and the serious belief of these writers,’¹ and sets against it a string of quotations from various Fathers, one or two of which may, perhaps, demand some consideration at present. The rest, as Bishop Thomson must well know, are such as we can all adopt, and, not even in the faintest way expressing or hinting at the notion, cannot bear upon the question, of substitutive punishment. But this is what I and others have to complain of. Every word in Scripture, or an old Father, that speaks of our salvation as proceeding from the cross of Christ, every phrase indicative of His bearing our sins and carrying our infirmities, every mention of His death as the sacrifice that has reconciled us to God, is arrayed against us, as though we were minded to deny the precious truths which they express.

As this applies to the Bishop’s citations from Ignatius and the *Epistle to Diognetus*, I need say nothing of them, but his reference to Justin Martyr calls for notice. In arguing with Trypho, the subject of Christ’s death could not fail of being touched on by this Father. Trypho concedes that Messiah must be brought as a lamb

¹ *Essay on the Death of Christ*, p. 311.

to the slaughter, but objects to crucifixion as the mode of His death, on the ground of the curse of the law against him that hangeth on a tree. In refuting his Jewish antagonist Justin calls our Lord's crucifixion 'the seeming curse' (*δοκούσαν κατάραν*), (*Dial. c. Tryph. 90*); says that 'the curse of the law lies upon crucified men, but not on the Christ of God' (*οὕτω δὴ καὶ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ κατάρα κείται κατὰ τῶν σταυρουμένων ἀνθρώπων· οὐκ ἔτι¹ δὲ καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Θεοῦ κατάρα κείται*), (*ibid. 94*); that the words *cursed is he*, &c. do not represent Him as cursed of God (*καὶ γὰρ τὸ εἰρημένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι ἐπικατάρατος πᾶς ὁ κεκράμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου οὐχ ὡς τοῦ Θεοῦ καταρωμένου τουτοῦ του ἐσταυρωμένου*, &c.), (*ibid. 96*); and that 'our suffering and crucified Christ was not under the curse of the law' (*ὁ παθητὸς ἡμῶν καὶ σταυρωθεὶς Χριστὸς οὐ κατηράθη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου*), (*ibid. 111*). I am not concerned at present with Justin's meaning or his doctrine further than to submit that it is impossible in the face of passages like these to claim him as an authority for the modern doctrine of substitution, in spite of the clause of a sentence which Bishop Thomson has quoted, and which, favourable as it seems to his cause, only serves to show, when compared with those others, how cautious we should be in our use of what tempts us as a pet citation.

I admit that the language of Athanasius has at first

¹ I do not think this adverb can well bring in the notion of time, as though Justin meant that our Lord had been, but was not still, under the curse. The other passages preclude this way of understanding him, and such a position would have been no answer to Trypho.

sight an air of expressing the vicarious doctrine. It is more modern in its aspect than that of many other Fathers, and certainly seems to connect Christ's sufferings not only with men's sin, but with the penalty due to sin. But Bishop Thomson admits that this Father did not reach a definite theory on the subject. Before citing him, it ought always to be considered that he grounded the virtue of our Lord's Passion on His complete identification of Himself with, not substitution of Himself for, us; and that he considered the penalty on sin as extending far beyond temporal death in our case, and the suffering of the Lord as bounded by that. Death and corruption, *φθορά*, the latter grasping the soul as well as the body, are what sin has brought upon us; our Lord bowed Himself to death, but could not be subjected to corruption. So that Möhler would seem to have reason in remarking that Athanasius uses penalty and death in different senses when he is speaking of Christ, and when he is speaking of us.¹ However, I admit that this Father comes frequently very near the modern doctrine in his forms of expression, and that, like Justin, he laid stress on our Lord undergoing the outward and visible part of the penalty of sin. But if, as Bishop Thomson admits, he arrived at no definite theory, he cannot well be cited as an authority for any such; nor do I see anything in the passages alleged which necessarily mean that our Lord in His own person sustained the real wrath of His Father, or underwent that worst, true penalty of sin, of which all

¹ Möhler, *Athanasius der Grosse*, p. 151.

else are but the outward symptoms, separation from that Father, the turning away of that Father's countenance, and the consequent invasion of death on the spirit as well as the body.

I have already pleaded guilty to an act of carelessness in regard to Gregory Nazianzen, the like of which I wish always to avoid. But, after considering the passage with all the care as yet in my power, I am not prepared to surrender it as an authority for the view on behalf of which I had appealed to it. The following are Gregory's words, to which I subjoin Dr. Thomson's translation: *φιλοσόφει μοι περὶ κόσμου καὶ κόσμων, περὶ ὕλης, περὶ ψυχῆς, περὶ λογικῶν φύσεων βελτιωνῶν τε καὶ χειρόνων, περὶ ἀναστάσεως, κρίσεως, ἀνταποδόσεως, Χριστοῦ παθημάτων, ἐν τούτοις γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἐπιτυγχάνειν οὐκ ἀχρηστον, καὶ τὸ διαμαρτάνειν ἀκίνδυνον.* (Philosophize about the world or worlds, about matter, the soul, about reasonable creatures higher and lower, about resurrection, judgment, retribution, the sufferings of Christ; for in these things to attain our object is not useless, and to fail of it is free from peril.) Leunclavius's translation seems to me utterly beside the scope of the context; and Bishop Thomson lays no stress on it. The latter argues, however, that by questions about 'the sufferings of Christ,' nothing more can be meant than questions about those sufferings themselves, whether they were bodily or mental, and the like. I find it impossible to imagine such speculations kept quite apart from the whole question now at issue. The nature of suffering and the reason of it; if mental

suffering, whether or not it be the endurance of wrath, are inquiries so bound together that asking one of them seems almost necessarily to involve asking the others. Nor can we think it so strange a supposition as Bishop Thomson regards it, that Gregory should have said of those questions that we may err concerning them without danger, when we consider that he himself shrank from two very distant extremes on one of them, seeing and proclaiming the gigantic difficulties involved now in the notion of Christ's purchasing us from the devil, and now in that of His purchasing us from His Father, and substituting for either a statement which leaves the whole question in utter vagueness.

Bishop Thomson refers to other Fathers, quoting some, and merely naming others. St. Augustine is dealt with in the latter way. A general reference to Augustine on a subject like this, neither passage nor place indicated, is a challenge which surely no man need accept. I will, however, ask Bishop Thomson what he makes of the following:—*'Mors peccatorum pœna est: in Domino munus misericordiæ erat, non pœna peccati Mortuus es in Adam, resurge in Christo: nam utrumque debetur tibi. Jam credidisti in Christum, reddes tamen quod debes de Adam.'* Aug. de Johan. Evang. c. i. Tract. III. 13. Language less expressive of the theory of substitution I can hardly imagine. However, I do not think it needful to deal with every citation of Bishop Thomson's from the Fathers. He has left my argument in Tract No. III. unassailed. His own statement when he has

done with them concedes to me all I ask. ‘None of ‘these writers’ (the Fathers to whom he has been referring) ‘worked out into a system the doctrine of the ‘substitutive sacrifice of Christ.’¹

It remains true, then, that when the Fathers endeavoured to explain the mode in which Christ redeemed us, they made varying and incompatible statements, and that of the different theories which have prevailed on this subject, ‘about the oldest, and one which has had ‘the longest ascendancy, is that which represents the ‘claim on us to have been the devil’s, and Christ’s ‘suffering, blood-shedding, and death, to have been ‘purchase-money paid to him, whereby we have been ‘redeemed from his hold upon us.’ This is all that I wanted for the argument which I was then pursuing. The point which I wished then, and wish still to urge, is, that the theory of redemption by substitutional punishment, even if it be true, cannot be essential, cannot be one of the necessary objects of saving faith. Holy Scripture does not teach it to every mind, great luminaries of the Church have failed of perceiving it, have used language altogether incompatible with it, and have endeavoured to explain our redemption through Christ by theories quite removed from it. No decree of the Church has ever enforced it, no one has authority to impose it on his brother.

But I went on to urge that amid this variety of theories there is a central substantial truth, which can support every approach to truth in those others, while it

¹ *Aids to Faith*, p. 346.

remains independent of the theories themselves. Whilst early Fathers were puzzling themselves to explain from whom Christ redeemed us, to whom He paid ransom for us, and were giving those questions the most incompatible replies; whilst schoolmen were maturing their elaborate systems of satisfaction; whilst Protestants were importing juridical and commercial ideas into the question, the Scriptures were teaching, the Eucharist was exhibiting, earnest hearts were lively feeling, that whatever else it might be, the Lord's Passion was and is sacrifice, was and is the sacrifice which sums up and comprehends the whole idea of sacrifice; was and is the sacrifice which binds together and quickens our imperfect sacrifices, giving them reality, substance, and power; was and is the sacrifice which takes away the sin of the world, and reconciles heaven and earth, the holy and the sinful, making peace between God and man. Amid all their conflicting theories on subsidiary points, there is no divergency amongst early Fathers here. Not all their systems of satisfaction banished the idea of sacrifice from the minds of Schoolmen. Protestants may perhaps learn, that, disagreeing in every other way of setting forth redemption through Christ, they have a sure meeting-point here. The ancient liturgies, impressively silent on all the questions we have been considering, are loud and clear on this. The Eucharist has never ceased to bear its high and solemn witness to this; and more recourse to the Eucharist, more recognition of it as the central rite of the Gospel, the central

feature of Christian worship, the main act of the Christian life, seems what is wanted for us, both to heal our divisions, and to lead us to the real, abiding, everlasting truth of the matter to which they relate.

To this subject I must return in the sequel, but I have first to defend myself against other misconceptions of the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.

I had been led to lay great stress on Anselm's disclaimer of the possibility of our Lord's having been miserable in the very worst of His sufferings. The same disclaimer is made by St. Thomas Aquinas. It seems rather absurd in such circumstances to speak of 'Mr. Garden, whose theory is that the Lord would 'never have felt misery.'¹ But let that pass. Bishop Thomson goes on to say, that I am 'here consistent,' forgetting 'Gethsemane altogether,' and quoting 'only our Lord's words upon the cross.' These words are in a footnote to the following in the text: 'If our salvation is to be made an easier work, if the price paid is 'to be abated, we must forget Gethsemane altogether, 'or deny it.' Now I did not forget Gethsemane, I expressly referred to it.'² Neither have I the smallest wish to make our salvation an 'easier work,' or abate 'the price paid' to procure it. I believe that our Lord drank the fullest cup of suffering to the very dregs. I believe that He not only underwent bodily torture, and expired in bodily agony, but that His soul passed into a depth of depression which we dare not attempt

¹ Aids to Faith, p. 361.

² Tracts for Priests and People, No. III. p. 23.

to fathom. I may and I must shrink from some of Bishop Thomson's language concerning Gethsemane, but I believe as fully as he can, that what took place there was the bearing down of soul as well as of body, the failing of heart as well as flesh, the sorrow that was even unto death. But there may be all this without that misery which Anselm and Aquinas justly pronounce impossible for the Lord, which I have called 'the invasion of death, not on the body, 'but the spirit,'¹ and 'in its completion the second death.'² It may be *de profundis* that the cry comes forth, but if it be unto God that it is raised, if it utters the words, 'I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait for Him; in His word is my trust,' there may be the extremity of suffering, the lowest depth of depression, but there can be no misery, no minutest element of the second death. Now, while we feel that when our Lord entered the garden, it was to pass into a conflict of spirit, and submit Himself to a sinking of soul, such as we cannot imagine, we must not allow ourselves to forget that He did so with the words on His lips, 'I am not alone, for My Father is with Me,' that in the height of the tempest His cry was; 'Abba, Father,' and that so far from His communion with heaven being intercepted, 'there appeared an angel strengthening Him.' And surely His whole self-abasement and sacrifice culminate in their termination; His obedience reached its highest power when

¹ Tracts for Priests and People, No. III. p. 6.

² *Ibid.* p. 10.

it became 'an obedience unto death;' His identification of Himself with us in all our shame and all our woe was consummated when 'He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.' Yet this act of undergoing, as before our sufferings in life, so now our tasting of death, was done with the words, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.'

But I claim rather more for myself against Bishop Thomson than that his imputations are unjust. I cannot help thinking that I have said nothing, be it in error or misconception, which would have so startled early Confessors and Fathers, the real entertainment and acceptance of which would operate so fatally, as what he has said in the following sentences. 'It (satisfaction) has gone far to replace the word sacrifice.' 'It is a gain to us as sacrificial usages become forgotten, to acquire a term which expresses the same idea, appealing to the principles of general ethics.'¹ That certain parts and certain times of the Church may have tended to what is stated in these sentences, I will not attempt denying. That the Church anywhere has been permitted long to remain in the state of mind which they indicate I shall be slow to believe. That the being permitted to pass into such state of mind and remain in it is a darkening of the sky above us, a fog obscuring the sun of the spiritual heavens, I very strongly feel. I must feel it if I still continue under the convictions which I expressed in Tract No. III. that the *sacrifice* of Christ's death is its essence, to which every other

¹ Aids to Faith, p. 350.

illustration of what it has done for us, is but in an outside and accidental relation.

There are divers aspects of our Redeemer's work. It is a many-sided whole even as it may be approached from many quarters of thought and feeling. Scripture exhibits now one, now another of those sides and aspects, according as it is dealing now with one, now with another. But I have contended and still contend that one abiding representation of it is to be found everywhere in Scripture. In whatever variety of lights it may occasionally be exhibited there, it is uniformly set forth as sacrifice. At the very outset of our Lord's ministry, He is pointed out as 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' In His great prayer, wherein we must believe His language to be the immediate expression of inmost and central truth, that language is sacrificial. 'For their sakes I sanctify Myself.' We read that He 'hath given Himself for 'us an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour,' of 'The blood of Christ who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,' of 'a Lamb without blemish, and without spot, who 'verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the 'world.' Surely, we cannot suppose these words to be but relative exhibitions of truth, partial illustrations, not direct statements. Such a view of them is altogether precluded in the Apocalypse, where the eternal glory of heaven is displayed to us, and we see in it this central feature, 'in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain.' Why should Bishop Thomson

suppose that the thoughts awakened by those solemn words are to die off from our minds, and give place to the notion of satisfaction? Surely the Bible has a living power, and a hold of our memories and hearts, beyond what any theory can have. And to whatever extent their long cessation may have caused us to forget any particular 'sacrificial usages,' how should the idea of sacrifice itself disappear, so long as it has its standing memento and embodiment in the Eucharist? There, surely, in that rite which no controversy upon it has been able to dissociate from the thought of sacrifice, is the Lord's death 'shown forth' to all eyes as no theory can show it forth. And though many elements were insinuated into the sacrificial view of it in the Middle Ages, which a return to purer doctrine has led us to discard, it may yet be matter of thankfulness that the sacrificial view itself was thus kept in prominence, and so hindered the complete supremacy of any of the theories of satisfaction. It may be that rare communions, treating the Eucharist as an occasional service, have had something to do with an obscuration of the sacrificial idea among us; but if so, the cause, thank God, seems in process of removal, and with its cessation the effect will cease too. If weekly Eucharists shall again become the rule instead of the exception, and if we learn to regard joining in them as the principal and central act of Sunday worship, to which everything else, prayers, lessons, sermons, are but accessory, sacrificial usages, and the sacrificial idea, will be familiar to us. Nor will it then occur to us that the term sacrifice

could ever be replaced by the term satisfaction with other than most grievous loss.

Yes! Sacrifice, as it is the predominating view of our Saviour's work in Scripture, must be the predominating view of it with us. We may not (for the New Testament refuses to bow to such a rule of interpretation) consider that it is called sacrifice merely for the sake of setting it forth either in Jewish or Gentile language. We may not suppose that it is called a sacrifice in order to persuade Jews and Gentiles to give up their sacrifices. Rather let us be sure that it is *the* sacrifice, which alone fulfils that idea of sacrifice which was fugitively and incoherently present to the minds and wishes of those who offered outward and carnal sacrifices in the old time, and that all which was true in their cravings, receives its satisfaction here. It is the one sacrifice which has intrinsic and substantial value, the one sacrifice which the Supreme Reason can regard with complacency as a worthy and perfect gift to the Father, the one sacrifice in which, as the old Israel in the Paschal Lamb, the true Israel of God is constituted and united. And as it is the antitype of the Paschal Lamb, so is it of sin-offerings too. For it is man's sacrifice, a filial acquiescence on the part of the Son of Man in the sentence of God upon man's sin, a practical Amen to that sentence, an acceptance of that sentence, which turns it from a doom into a blessing. But while we must needs view it as a sin-offering, let us not forget that it is, as I have said, the antitype of the Paschal sacrifice too, which had no reference to

sin, but was the permanent bond in which the nation of Israel was constituted. Let us not, with Bishop Thomson, call that 'a hard necessity' which our Lord delightedly underwent; let us not view as merely remedial and so far accidental that which is the abiding centre and bond of the whole elect creation: 'in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain.'

And, surely, the loss to ourselves and to our own practice in forgetting the idea of sacrifice would be unspeakable. For sacrifice is the very life and energy of love, and we cannot begin to love without wishing to sacrifice. But our sacrifices are so worthless in themselves that we shall have no heart to offer them, or we shall offer them in the spirit of the darkest bondage, unless we offer them through that real sacrifice which alone can give them life and value. Can a forensic or commercial view of Christ's work, as a satisfaction, throw that light on our sacrifices which is gained at once by viewing it as the grand reality of sacrifice?

I have spoken of the many aspects in which that work presents itself. I do not claim a clear vision of them all. I have not written, therefore, in condemnation of views which may contemplate some fragments or sides of the great truth of which no finite eye can grasp the whole. I said in my former Tract that I was 'not prepared to condemn every theory of 'the Atonement, which I have here represented as but 'accidentally connected with the central truth, and as 'neither imposed on me by the necessity for my own 'sake of beholding that central truth, nor by any creed

‘ or confession to which I may have bound myself.’¹ They who see and feel what I have been trying to set before them to be the vital central truth, will be willing to believe that it may have subordinate and accidental relations which have as yet escaped their notice, or to which they are as yet from ignorance or misapprehension averse. We may all of us well admit, that on a matter like this, we have still much to learn, that there may be truth in our brother’s view, which it would do us good to perceive and embrace. Only ‘ whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the ‘ same rule, let us mind the same thing,’ avoiding condemnations of each other which we have no authority to pronounce, ‘ and if in anything we be otherwise-minded, God will reveal even this unto us.’

Since writing the above, my attention has been called to a controversy which arose in the latter years of Elizabeth’s reign out of certain sermons preached by Bishop Bilson at St. Paul’s Cross, he having previously communicated their scope to Archbishop Whitgift,² who encouraged him to handle the subject as he purposed. They related to Christ’s Descent into Hell, a point then occupying a good deal of attention. Bilson stood up for the Hell to which our Lord descended being the Gehenna of the lost, but maintained that He went there in nowise as a sufferer, but as a victor, conquering and despoiling the whole territory. In arguing this he

¹ Tracts for Priests and People, No. III. p. 20.

² Strype. Whitgift. Vol. ii. pp. 361—364.

was led to deny that our Lord ever underwent personally the wrath of His Father, or ever suffered the death of the soul. Since Gherard, these propositions, pronounced by Bellarmine a new and hitherto unheard-of heresy, had become favourites among the Puritans, and Bilson's impugment of them gave rise to a good deal of controversy. He was induced by the Archbishop and the Court to expand his treatment of the matter, the result being two works, one of which, 'the effect of 'certaine Sermons touching the full redemption of 'mankind by the death and bloud of Christ Jesus,' appeared in 1599; the other, 'The Survey of Christ's Sufferings for Man's redemption,' came out in 1603. As the former is a small 4to. of 420 pp., and the latter a folio of 678 pp., I cannot be expected on so recent an acquaintance to give an accurate account of them. He furnishes, however, in the latter work, a table of 'the chief resolutions of this Survey,' in which it will be seen at a glance that Bilson repudiated the proposition that our Lord sustained in any real sense the wrath of His Father. The following, taken at hazard from the main body of the work, may illustrate Bilson's doctrine:—

'The words used generally by the Holy Ghost to
'express Christ's sufferings import that He gave Him-
'self for us to be the sacrifice, price, and the ransom
'of our deliverance. All which words hold no wrath
'conceived against Him, nor vengeance executed on
'Him; but rather the exceeding love and favour of
'God towards Him, as the only Sacrifice that God

‘ would accept; the only price that God did esteem,
‘ the only ransom that God would receive for the sin
‘ of the world.’

Of course, I leave open the great possibility of Bilson’s having said many things about which I should hesitate, and which might be urged against me.

From the little I have seen of these two works, I incline to believe that they form most important ingredients in the history of this question, and should receive very careful attention.

TRACTS FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

No. XIV.

[The Conductors of this Series of Tracts are particularly glad to place before their readers a vindication of that which seems to them the fundamental principle of the English Church, by one who is not a member of it. They could not have done so with perfect satisfaction to their consciences if they had not been able to unite with it a letter by a Clergyman, stating his reasons for adhering to those doctrines from which his friend dissents.]

THE INCARNATION AND PRINCIPLES OF EVIDENCE.

THE secret panic which besets the faith of England at the present crisis may be fairly described as hanging almost entirely on the following doubt:—‘Is it possible
‘to do full justice to the relative and wavering human
‘element in all religious history without throwing an
‘impenetrable mist over the absolute and divine? Is
‘there any fixed limit to the encroachments of human
‘uncertainty on Divine Certainties? Can a man who

‘honestly admits and fairly realizes the fluctuating character of the evidence of men, whether historical or spiritual, still enjoy without the slightest violence to his own intellectual sincerity any profound rest in the assurances of an Eternal voice?’ Were there not a growing fear that these questions may be answered in the negative, that all Revelation proceeding from God will gradually be sublimated into the abstract idealities of man, the volume of *Essays and Reviews* would certainly have had no power to awaken the strife of the last two years. This is the real fear at the bottom of the recent uneasiness:—Theology, it is thought, the divine foundation of all hope and rest for man, is in danger of being absorbed into a department of morbid psychology—into the mere higher aspirations of the *homo desideriorum* as he analyzes sadly what he *wishes* to believe. Not, indeed, that any large or increasing number of sincere men doubt as yet the existence of God, but that there is more and more disposition to speak of Him, as Mr. Mansel has indeed described Him, as the unknown and residual cause of a great number of undefined phenomena. Notice the great preference felt in the religious school of scepticism for the word and thought ‘Inspiration,’ as compared with the word and thought ‘Revelation.’ It is admitted that there are conceptions and feelings,—sometimes vague and shadowy—sometimes luminous and painfully intense,—which do not take their rise in our own finite natures, but indicate what is above and beyond us. ‘We can speak with confidence,’ it is

said, 'of human phenomena; we can be sure that
' some of our thoughts come from a higher and a
' better than ourselves—from "what we *deem* is Lord
' of All"—but we would rather keep to the word
' which denotes only the vague influence breathed
' into the human spirit—the word which uses as its
' symbol "the wind that bloweth as it listeth"—and
' abandon the word which forces upon us the other and
' absolute side of the same fact. We are sure that the
' flying lights and shadows which pass over our con-
' science come from some mysterious light beyond, but
' we do not know whether they be the result of direct
' or reflected rays, and we are warned by all the course
' of religious history that we must be content with
' these gleams of transient illumination as they are,
' without dogmatising as to the divine source from
' which they issue. The whole tendency of human
' thought and knowledge has been more and more to
' dissipate the fixity, and cloud with transient elements
' the extra-human origin—whatever it be—of the
' Divine oracles. Science and history have alike shown
' the inextricable fusion of human error and passion
' with higher thoughts; and hence a word like Revela-
' tion, which professes to lift our eyes from these
' strangely mixed phenomena of earth to the very
' processes of the Eternal mind, and to the very Acts
' of the Eternal will, seems now to us almost an irony
' invented by some keen thinker in the bitterest anguish
' of speculative imbecility.'

If this train of thought represents the state of mind

of the idealising school of religious doubters, the dogmatic confutations which are put forth in reply seem to me to be vitiated by the very same fundamental error—perhaps even in a more malignant form. Every step in the history of Dogmatic Orthodoxy has been an effort to fortify some reliable human base for a Divine infallibility—to slide in a false bottom into the abyss of Eternal Truth—to justify the exchange of the arduous duty of discriminating what God has told us of Himself, for some such (apparently) easier duty as discriminating what a given Church or a given book *states* that He has told us. I believe that the latter task is only *apparently* easier, for the moment we propose to ourselves any human test as a *final* criterion of God's voice, we assume an unreality which deprives us of all power to accomplish even that task adequately. The man who will accept a secondary authority because it is more within his grasp, in fact accepts it because it is less true and divine, and so inevitably loses his insight even into the full significance of that secondary authority itself, which is best and truest when seen in close relation to the first. If I accept any part of the Bible as a final and ultimate equivalent for God, I put myself into an attitude of mind which all but insures a shallow and false interpretation of it. If truly divine, it must be an impress of an infinite and Eternal *Life*, and to limit myself to the propositions it contains is to make language the *measure*, instead of the mere sign, of a living character. The Dogmatists, therefore, in trying to secure a safe human base of operations for

their campaign in favour of Divine Truth—such a base as an infallible Church or book—fall into a worse error than their opponents, who quite truly deny that there is any such impregnable human base for the divine argument, but erroneously suppose that in doing so they have disproved the power of God to reveal Himself. Both doubters and dogmatists take man, and not God—the finite, and not the Infinite—as the fixed centre of Truth, and it is obvious that such an assumption is one intellectual germ of Atheism. It seems sometimes strangely difficult to realize the significance of the truism that the Truth lies, and must lie, deeper than human certainty—that certainty rests upon Truth, not Truth upon certainty. *Our* grasp of the Truth can never be worth much; it is the grasp of the Truth upon us that men are willing to die for. And, therefore, the media by which Truth lays its hold upon our minds can never be exhaustively analyzed, because the analyst is himself smaller and feebler in every way than the power which holds him in its grasp. One living mind touches another at a thousand points, and no one can do more than indicate a few of them—but this incapacity to understand does not weaken the power of the practical hold.

Hence it seems to me that both the scepticist and dogmatist schools of thought alike assume erroneously, that the true method of procedure is this, ‘granting man and nature, to prove God and the supernatural,’—a Sisyphus task which I am sure must for ever fail. The sooner we clearly apprehend that the higher proves

itself to the lower, that the lower can only accept and welcome without measuring or numbering the resources by which that impression is made, the sooner we shall understand that we must neither expect to find human belief adequate to the eternal object of belief, nor human intellect adequate to exhausting the springs and sources of human belief. The best analogy to follow in considering Revelation (though even that is but a feeble one), is the sort of command which a parent has over the avenues to a child's convictions. Encompassing him, as he does, almost on every side, he can reach his inmost faith by a multitude of approaches, of many of which the child is himself unconscious. Many of the impressions made may be inadequate,—some of them owing to the deficiency of the child's education—or faculty may be refracted into positive falsehood—while *all* the avenues to his mind are imperfect and liable to error. Yet we do not doubt for a moment that the parent *can* impress effectually, though imperfectly, his character and will through these avenues upon the mind of the child; and we are sure that the reality so conveyed is wider and deeper than the method of conveying it, while again the only rationale which the child could give of his own impressions would comprehend scarcely any true picture at all of the depth of those impressions. I infer, therefore, that in all revelations proceeding from a higher to a lower mind, there is an intrinsic necessity that the reality revealed must be wider and more comprehensive than the modes of revealing, while the modes of the

revelation again are far wider and more comprehensive than the *evidence* which we can assign for accepting the revelation. There are three distinct levels in all impressions made from above on a lower nature :—First, the higher reality itself spreading out far beyond the channels of approach to the lower ; next, these latter extending far beyond the range of the reasons which the learner can discriminate and assign for his conviction. God must be infinitely greater than the sources of our faith ; these again must be indefinitely wider than the *evidence* which we give for our convictions. I suppose that most people must be conscious of states of mind in which they are unable to believe what yet they know to be far deeper and truer than their believing power. ‘It is too great for me—I cannot grasp it,’ we say, ‘and yet I know the deficiency is in me, not in the ‘reality ; and one reason that I believe it is, because I ‘am conscious that it is too great for my belief. I know ‘that any divine truth must task and often seem to ‘mock human belief ; when I can best believe it, my ‘mind is at its highest, but it escapes me again, not ‘from any shadowiness in it, but from the contraction ‘of my own spiritual and moral faculty.’ This is the state of mind only adequately expressed by the words, ‘Lord, I believe ; help Thou my unbelief.’ Such unbelief is, in a sense, even the evidence of truth, arising as it does, *not* from any *collision* between the Truth and the highest convictions of our minds, but merely from transcending them—from giving us the feeling of being lost in the attempt to embrace it. The belief in God

Himself is of this nature. Often it is unreal, because it overpowers us. We apply to Him the diminutive scale of thoughts and affections by which we measure our finite world, and the contrast strikes us with a shadow of surprise and awe. We forget that though He can prove Himself to us, He does so only after His own discipline and purification of those inadequate thoughts and feelings by which we can never hope to prove Him to ourselves.

When, then, we say that all belief ought to be upon evidence, we only mean, or ought only to mean, that there should be *real* powers and influences, and reasons constraining our belief and worthy to constrain it; we do not or ought not to mean that all which legitimately affects our own convictions can be so translated into language as to have at second hand the same influence over others which it had, at first hand, over ourselves. This is less and less true in proportion as the object of belief is raised above us. Probably the widest and highest part of the influences which oblige men to trust in a personal God has never been expressed in human speech at all, though many not inadequate efforts have been made to indicate the directions whence these influences come. I have denied the possibility of any *proof* of an eternal reality from the human side, though not of course of that human certainty which results from the proof of it from the divine side—that is, which results from its divine manifestation to us. But though I should regard the possibility of giving any adequate human proof of any truth as a sufficient and incontro-

vertible test that the truth proved was only of finite and human dimensions, there must be, of course, large portions of the real influence exerted over the mind by any Revelation which come within the range of the intellect, and can be detained for analysis and examination. The direction of a few converging rays can be defined, though many of them, and perhaps the very ones which give out the most divine heat, may be invisible to the human understanding. In the present essay I am anxious to indicate in this manner the direction of some of the influences which compel me to accept the Incarnation as the central truth of the Christian Revelation, after having rejected it first through the natural power of education, and subsequently from conviction during many years of anxious thought and study. If I can in any way succeed in doing for the Incarnation what has been so often done for the primary truth of Theism—in indicating, that is, some few really universal reasons why it should take a strong hold of the human conscience and intellect without aid from the *mere* external authority of either Church or Bible, I shall have done all I wish and more than I am sanguine enough to expect. It seems to me that no theologians have done more to undermine the true power of Revelation than those who have tried to force theology on men's minds by mere external authority, which has, I believe, no more right to influence the living faith of man than rays of light to affect the ear, or sounds to impress the retina.

A masterly writer, who has reviewed some of these

Tracts from the idealist and Unitarian point of view, has put very forcibly the great difficulty which occurs to every cultivated mind in discussing the fact of the Incarnation :—

‘ The truth is,’ he says, ‘ this school has never succeeded in settling accounts between the Eternal Divine facts, spiritually revealed by the ever-living witness, and the historical phenomena of the past, which, however connected with religion, are *cognisable* only through human testimony. In the joy of having found the former, even Mr. Maurice forgets the different tenure of the latter, involves them in the same feeling and treatment as if they, too, were entities apprehensible to-day independently of yesterday, and free from the contingencies of probable evidence. . . . The personal life of God in the world, of which his sense is so deep, seems to guarantee for him the particular Divine acts and manifestations enumerated in the Scriptures, and in the formularies of the Church ; and his one standing appeal to us is, “ Believe in Him who is signified, and you will believe the signs ; ” yet it is plain that no prior apprehension of God would enable us to divine, before they came, the forms in which His agency would express itself ; or after they have come and been reported, to separate the threads of reality from those of fiction in a narrative of mixed tissue. For knowledge of the Divine events, taken one by one, we are not less dependent on human attestation than for the biography of an emperor or an apostle, and it is vain to treat them as if they were

‘ deducibles from the primary spiritual truth, and were
‘ to stand or fall with it.’¹

Nothing can be better put. And it is needless to say that if we had no vestige of the Incarnation in history we should have no reason for believing it, though the want which it answers in the human heart would remain. But the question is not as to whether it is right to accept historical facts without historical evidence, but how far the belief in facts for which there is more or less historical evidence is legitimately shaken or strengthened by the tenacity with which they fasten on the conscience—by their power of ‘revealing the thoughts of many hearts’ in all races and all times. Some writers, like Strauss, for example, maintain that this power which some facts have of embodying human hopes and aspirations ought to render us *incredulous* of them as facts. Myths, he says, are human expectations, crystallized into the form of history; we ought, therefore, to believe much more easily what answers to *no* human hope than what does, for the hope may easily generate a fictitious echo of itself. Another school of writers maintains that historical beliefs should hang on historical evidence, and on nothing else; that the splendour of the Divine halo should be carefully shut out from the Gospel before we decide on its authenticity; that we should search into it as we search into the authenticity of Livy or Homer. To this school apparently the writer whom I have quoted belongs. Now, it seems to me that

¹ *National Review*, No. XXVI. for October, 1861. Article, “Tracts for Priests and People,” pp. 430, 431.

in both schools there is a great want of distinctness of thought as to what historical evidence really means. We say that a witness who has no previous prepossessions at all on any subject is the best witness to a fact, because he judges simply by observation and by nothing else. We should trust more implicitly a supernatural story from a plain strong-minded practical man, given to no nervous impressions, than from a morbid nature like Cowper's, or a superstitious person full of ignorant fears and wonders. The best testimony we can get for very simple *physical facts* of any kind is, so to say, *accidental* testimony—the testimony of men who have no theory, and no wish to have a theory. But what is a true and important criterion of the value of testimony in reference to very simple physical facts that come within the range of eye, ear, and touch, can never be legitimately generalised into a criterion of the general *evidence* of a complex, spiritual, moral, and physical event. Were we as a rule to mistrust the testimony of persons to events which could be proved to have been expected, feared, or hoped for by them beforehand, we should, in fact, often doubt events *because* they were probable. We judge of historical truth by two tests—by mere testimony, which is usually more safe if the event be (to the witness) entirely unexpected, but also by all evidence we may possess as to the causes previously at work, the knowledge of which necessarily tends to inspire expectation in all who have access to them, while those causes themselves tend to fulfil the expectations so inspired. And, of

course, the very existence of an antecedent presumption will sometimes tend to weaken the mere scientific value of human testimony, while it incalculably strengthens our evidence for the fact testified. An astronomer who has calculated a new perturbation in the planetary motions may be a worse witness, in case of imperfect observation, as to the *fact*, than a casual observer, who is quite unaware that any such phenomenon is expected. But still the knowledge which causes us to expect (even doubtfully) such a phenomenon is rightly regarded as weighing far more in favour of the event than the partial invalidation of the personal testimony weighs in the other scale. The best witness of simple physical facts is the witness without expectation; but the whole evidence for expected facts is usually far stronger than the evidence for abrupt and insulated phenomena. And this distinction has nowhere greater force than where the facts in question have their springs in personal character. Here we rightly prefer, and prefer almost indefinitely, the 'evidence' of intimate friends to the 'testimony' of strangers, and for the simple reason that so large an element in all human actions is other than physical—requires more than eye, ear, and touch, to perceive it—that no one who has not gained some familiarity with the character can see its actions with any clear apprehension of their drift at all. Just as no one would trust an unscientific man's evidence on a chemical phenomenon, because he does not know *what* to observe, does not see where the pinch of the case lies; so no one compares for a moment, in most

cases, the value of a friend's and a stranger's insight into a man's actions, unless where something is at stake which is likely to prejudice a friend's vision. In such cases previous knowledge of moral causes is far more important to the whole evidence than it is injurious to the impartiality of the testimony. Could the point to be observed in a chemical analysis be sharply and distinctly isolated, we would rather take the testimony of a man who had no idea what to expect than of a man who knew well what to expect; but it cannot; and therefore we say that the evidence of a chemist is worth ten times as much as the evidence of a non-chemist. And so also with regard to character: the very knowledge which helps us to criticize rightly, to some extent, no doubt, affects the independence of the testimony, since the expectation may infuse some colour of its own into the intellect; yet even so, that knowledge gives far more weight to the whole evidence than it takes from the weight of the physical testimony.

Now, to apply these considerations to God's Revelation of Himself. No doubt the religious yearnings, the mysterious hopes, the premonitory prophecies which precede such a revelation, to some extent shake the mere sense-testimony of those who come within their influence. The 'vision and the faculty divine' will, to some extent, perhaps, colour the testimony of witnesses. On the other hand, it seems to me simply unmeaning to say that the historical evidence in any large sense can be weighed without assigning the greatest importance to these prophetic visions and

hopes. It is surely untrue, then, that for the Divine facts of history we are 'not *less* dependent on human 'attestation than for the biography of an emperor or 'an apostle.' We are absolutely dependent on *some* human attestation for any historical fact; but I maintain that, beyond a certain limit, our belief in any such fact legitimately requires *less* external evidence in proportion as the previous knowledge or insight leading us to anticipate it is large or small. This is so, in some degree, even with regard to the biography of an emperor or apostle. If a newspaper tells us that a person of whom we have never heard has just attempted the French Emperor's life, we accept it as a mere newspaper rumour, and nothing more; but if it tells us that one whose fanatical political character and associations we intimately know, and whose vindictive vows we had recently heard, has done so, we attach far more importance to the intelligence. Its *evidence* is better, though it is certainly also true that the very causes which give us reason to believe it may have induced somebody else to invent or colour the rumour. We see a not improbable origin for the false testimony, if it be false testimony; but, for all that, we hold much more firmly than we otherwise should, that the character in question has manifested itself in this way. We have seen the causes at work which might have led to this effect, and though they might also have led to a false anticipation of this effect, we rightly hold the evidence to be much stronger than if we knew nothing of the matter.

But if this be true even of the evidence for ordinary human biography, it is surely true that the historical facts of Revelation, which satisfy our highest religious yearnings, depend in an infinitely greater degree for their true evidence on completely corresponding to and extending that knowledge of God which He has put into man in the shape of such hopes and yearnings. Of course, as I have already admitted, no one could believe in an historical revelation *without* a considerable mass of human testimony, because that testimony is as essential for the *how, where, and when*, of the Divine fulfilment of human hopes, as it is for the record of facts which faith had never presaged at all; but, given a certain substantial amount of such testimony, and I conceive that every man will, and must, be influenced in accepting or rejecting it by his own personal insight, or want of insight, into the Divine causes which might have produced such a revelation, and into the human wants which called for them. The principles by which we weigh the evidence of a historical revelation are *not* coincident with those by which we weigh the evidence for the biography of 'an emperor or apostle,' though, of course, they contain many common elements. My knowledge of what I may call the *à priori* probabilities, the moral presumptions of a human life, is entirely derived from the testimony of others. When I gain a strong and distinct impression of the individual character of the emperor or apostle, or any one brought into relation with them, I have, of course, a certain standard by which to judge doubtful evidence

concerning their lives, but for such strong and distinct impressions themselves I am wholly dependent on the testimony of others. This is not so with regard to Divine causes. The certainty with which we apprehend God's righteousness and love is the highest certainty of which the human conscience is capable; and hence, in judging of the truth of an historical revelation, much less in proportion depends on mere sifting of *testimony*, far more on the problem whether the facts accurately *fit* the Divine causes which we know to be in existence, and the human yearnings which we know to be of God's inspiration, than can ever depend on what is called 'internal evidence' in ordinary history or biography. In the latter case, the standard of 'internal evidence' is primarily derived from the external. In the case of Divine revelation, it is the first truth of our life, the deepest fountain of our being.

Well, then, to satisfy me of the truth of the Incarnation, there must be two distinct and coincident forces exerted on my mind. I must be historically satisfied that a Christ existed, claimed to be in some unique and eternal sense the Son of God and Lord of man; that He claimed the power to forgive sin, to search the heart, and to impose the yoke and the burden which set man free from all other yokes and burdens; I must be satisfied that others confirmed then, and through the history of the world have ever since confirmed this inward relation of Christ to their hearts;—of this much I must be sure as matter of history. And, secondly,

before I can credit the inferences to which this would naturally lead me, or rather decide between those inferences and the incredulity to which so many philosophers' minds in all ages have been forced, I must be satisfied, as matter of the deepest inward conviction, that those hopes, and wants, and prophetic aspirations, which stirred the nations of antiquity before the dawn, and which have stirred still more deeply the nations of the modern world since the cross was set up on Mount Calvary, are not only adequately answered, but purified and strengthened by Christ's Incarnation, and not without it. As soon as men are convinced of both these series of facts—historically, that the claim of the eternal Sonship was made by Christ, and accepted as a new life by the mass of His followers in all ages—spiritually, that the admission of that claim, and this alone answers the cry of the ages and of our own consciences for Divine light and help—the two coalesce into an historical faith, which is something far more than assent to historical testimony—namely, assent to testimony concerning facts whose roots of causation we discern running deep into the very constitution of man and the character of God.

I will speak last of the historical testimony, for I know that in most men's minds in the present day, and know too with regard to my own, that it is not here that the true difficulty really lies. The real stress of the doubt felt is twofold. First, there is a strong impression which I long shared, that no fresh human power, no new insight into the divine world is given by

faith in the Incarnation which would not be equally given by an unfolding of the same kind of Christian morality and worship without the burden of that stupendous mystery which staggers the human intellect. Secondly, a positive metaphysical contradiction is supposed to be involved in the assertion that an infant, a child, a growing youth, a Jew, one limited in knowledge, subject to temptation, sensible of national prejudices, liable to sickness, overpowered by death, could in any sense be personally identified with the eternal and uncreated Son of God. Now, to me it seems that it would be and ought to be fatal, at least to all human faith in the Incarnation if not to the fact itself, could it be shown as the first of these objections assumed, that the net moral and spiritual fruits of the Christian revelation can be reaped in full without accepting it. That it is *not* true seems attested by the clinging of the popular heart of Christendom throughout all the centuries to the confession that 'for us men and for our sakes the Son of God came down from heaven, and was made man, and died upon the cross for us;' but falsehood so often mingles with truth in the popular mind, that it is not easy to accept as decisive the blind instinct even of ages, on such a point. No man ever is really convinced by the mere spectacle of strong faith in others; all that such a spectacle can do is to fascinate our minds till we can enter into its meaning for ourselves. I will try and show them first what I think is given by the Incarnation, which would not and could not be given by the fullest manifestation of

Christian morality and piety,—were that possible,—without it.

1. We are told by it something of God's absolute and essential nature, something which does not merely describe what He is *to us*, but what He is in Himself. If Christ is the Eternal Son of God, God is indeed and in essence a Father; the social nature, the spring of love is of the very essence of Eternal Being; the communication of His life, the reciprocation of His affection dates from beyond time—belongs, in other words, to the very being of God. Now, some persons think that such a certainty even when attained has very little to do with human life. What does it matter, they say, what the absolute nature of God is, if we know what He is *to us*;—how can it concern us to know what He was before our race existed, if we know what He is to all His creatures now? These questions seem plausible, but I believe they point to a very deep error. I can answer for myself, that the Unitarian conviction that God is—*as* God and in His eternal essence—a single and, so to say, solitary personality, influenced my imagination and the whole colour of my faith most profoundly. Such a conviction, thoroughly *realized*, renders it impossible to identify any of the social attributes with His real *essence*—renders it impossible not to regard power as the true root of all other divine life. If we are to believe that *the Father* was from all time, we must believe that He was *as* a Father—that is, that love was actual in Him as well as potential, that the communication of life and thought and fulness of joy

was of the inmost nature of God, and never began to be if God never began to be. For my own part, I am sure that our belief, whatever it may be, about the 'absolute' nature of God influences far more than any one supposes our practical thoughts about the actual relation of God to us. Unitarians eagerly deny, I once eagerly denied, that God is to them a solitary omnipotence. Nor is He. But I am sure that the conception of a single eternal will as originating, and infinitely antecedent to, all acts of love or spiritual communion with any other, affects vitally the temper of their faith. The throne of heaven is to them a lonely one. The solitude of the eternities weighs upon their imaginations. *Social* are necessarily postponed to *individual* attributes; for they date from a later origin—from creation, while power and thought are eternal. Necessarily, therefore, God, though spoken of and worshipped as a Father to us, is conceived *primarily* as imagining and creating; secondarily only, as loving and inspiring. But any Being whose thoughts and resolves are conceived as in any sense deeper and more personal than His affections is necessarily regarded rather as benignant and compassionate, than as affording the type of that deepest kind of love which is co-ordinate with life;—in short, as a beneficence whose love springs out of power and reason, than as One whose power and reason are grounded in love. I am sure that this notion of God as the Absolute Cause does tincture deeply even the highest form of Unitarian faith, and I cannot see how it could be otherwise. If our prayers are addressed to

One whose eternity we habitually image as unshared, we necessarily for the time merge the Father in the Omniscient and Omnipotent genius of the universe. If, on the other hand, we pray to One who has revealed His own eternity through the Eternal Son—if in the spirit of the liturgies, Catholic and Protestant, we alternate our prayers to the eternal originating love, and to that filial love in which it has been eternally mirrored, turning from the ‘Father of heaven’ to the ‘Son, Redeemer of the world,’ and back again to Him in whom that Son for ever rests—then we keep a God essentially *social* before our hearts and minds, and fill our imagination with no solitary grandeur.

It will be said that even if revelation does manifest to us any of the secrets of the divine eternities, they can influence us only so far as they have relation to us, and that to know what God is to man is to know all that can affect our spiritual life. This is true, and yet it is, I believe, essential to know something of what God is out of relation to man, in order to realize fully what He is in relation to man. Even in human relations we are never fully satisfied with our knowledge of any character, however intimately related with ours, until we know what it is and seems in other relations also. It is not that we distrust others, but that we distrust ourselves. ‘Subjectivity,’ as it is called, clouds the eyes; we want to know how far our own individual deficiencies, and sins, and impulses, colour our vision. And therefore we weigh others’ experience as anxiously as our own. And just as we seek in this way to escape from the limitations

of our own individuality in human affections, we yearn for some similar escape from the limitations of man's moral experience in divine affections. No masculine mind, at all events, will ever be really content with what is called 'spiritual experience.' Special knowledge is never fully trusted except it stands on a firm basis of general knowledge. For example, *national* convictions known to be such, though we may give way to them, never really take possession of a man as a faith, until he finds them in full accordance with, and adding something fresh to, human convictions. To know God as He is to us, we feel that we must know something of what He is in Himself and without relation to us. Then we feel upon a rock: otherwise we cannot tell what we ought or ought not to allow for the refracting medium of human error and sin. And I believe further, that the craving to know Him *out of relation* to us is a sign of the maturity of the knowledge which arises from His relation to us. Just as it never occurs to a child to think of what its parents are to the outer world until the filial relation has reached a certain ripeness, when this further question seems to be the essential groundwork for a new and fuller filial knowledge,—so in religion, inspiration is first, revelation last; the former leading up to the latter.

It is objected, however, to this view, that such a yearning is a yearning for the impossible. 'All human knowledge must be human, that is, subjective, relative—not 'exhaustive, absolute.' No doubt; but there is a wide distinction between the mere subjectivity of our knowing

power, to which we attach no profound sense of insecurity, and the subjectivity of the field of immediate personal emotions, to which we do. I do not mean by this to distinguish between the intellect and the rest of man's nature; for in all knowledge of *persons* the intellect alone is but the smallest part of the knowing power, and is fully as liable to error as any other. I mean to distinguish the *disinterested* knowing power from the interested—the reliance which we place in our own apprehensions when they are in no way agitated by egoistic considerations from the hesitation with which we regard their assertions when they are. It is surely essentially healthy, and even a test of health, to measure the human by the divine, and not the divine by the human; just as a dislike and distrust of all the modern revivalist impressions is a token of health. And so, I think, to desire a solid foundation-rock outside humanity on which to build up human religion is a symptom of health. It is simply the disposition to trust more implicitly that which God says of Himself, when it does not *directly* and *primarily* affect our own personal life or self-love, but only reveals Him as He is, than when it affects us primarily and directly, and reveals Him only secondarily and indirectly. We can trust better our own moral experience when we have exercised it first on learning what God is, for we feel that we have a more open and calmer mind for apprehending His revelation of Himself than for learning the 'regulative truths' concerning our own duty. Of course, '*doing* His

will' comes before 'knowing' of *any* doctrine; but knowing *Him* comes before knowing and understanding *ourselves*. I believe, then, that the revelation of God through an Eternal Son would realize to us, if it can be adequately believed, that the relation of God to us is only the manifestation of His life in itself, as it was or would be without us—'before all worlds,' as the theologians say; that 'before all worlds' He was essentially the Father, essentially Love, essentially something infinitely more than Knowledge or Power, essentially communicating and receiving a living affection, essentially all that the heart can desire. This is not, then, relative truth for us only, but the truth as it is in itself, the reality of Infinite Being. It is first proclaimed to us, indeed, to save us from sin, strengthen us in frailty, and lift us above ourselves; but it could not do this as it does, did we not know that God was, and His Love was, and His Fatherly Life was, apart from man, and that it is a reality infinitely deeper and vaster than the existence of His human children.

And it seems to me that to know God to be in His own essential nature a Father, not merely a Father to us, is a very great step towards exalting the whole tone of our actual life. We are apt to take the Word as metaphorical in its application to God—a metaphor derived from human parentage. But such a faith teaches us that the most sacred human relations, which we feel to be far deeper than any individual and solitary human attributes, are but faint shadows of realities eternally existing in the Divine mind. It is customary

in many philosophical schools to regard the 'absoluteness' of God, the absence of all relation in Him, as a part of His Divine *privilege*. To me such a conception appears essentially atheistic, if really thought out, though, of course, practically consistent with the most genuine and fervent piety. Judaism never did think it out without hovering on the very margin of the discovery which Christ made to us. That discovery was, as it seems to me, in one aspect of it—that aspect in which it could be made only through an Eternal Son of God—this:—

'Never try to think of Me,' it seems to say, 'as a mere Sovereign Will; never try to conceive my Infinitude as exclusive of all Divine Life, except my own: my infinitude is not exclusive but spiritual, and includes the fulness of all spiritual life, eternal love. Think of Me as always communicating life, and love, and power—as always receiving love and obedience. Never pronounce the word "God" without recognising that diversity of reciprocal life which *is* the highest life—the reconciliation of law and fidelity, of inspiration and submission, of life overflowing and returning, which cannot be without a perfect union of distinct personalities.'

2. The Incarnation, if believable, seems to me to throw an intense light on the seeming contradictions of human nature—contradictions which are only brought out into sharper relief by a fuller knowledge of the Creator. The more we acknowledge the brightness of God, the more are we perplexed by contending thoughts as to the nature of man. The knowledge we have gained either humiliates and crushes us, or produces an

artificial elation. We either *crouch* with the highest of purely Jewish minds, or become urbanely self-content with the Pelagian-Unitarian thinkers. We either cry, 'Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips and dwell amongst a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!' or we congratulate ourselves that we are, by *inherent* right, children of God, 'born good' as Lord Palmerston said, and have no profound need, therefore, of purification at all. The humiliation alone, and the exaltation alone, are alike false to the facts within us and destructive of the true springs of human hope. The 'coal from the altar' which purified Isaiah's lips was a *special* deliverance from the abject humiliation of Oriental self-abasement—a kind of deliverance which is not universal enough for mankind; and, on the other hand, the persuasion that we ourselves are, in our own right, children of God, is a graver delusion in the other direction. What we want is some *universal* fountain of Divine Life within us which shall yet not blind us in any way to the truth that we ourselves are not by our own right children of God, but only become so through One who is. We need a reconciliation of the fact of the unhealthy egoism of our own individualities, with the equally certain fact of a Divine Light struggling with that egoism, and claiming us as true children of God. The Incarnation alone helps us adequately to understand ourselves; it reconciles the language of servile humiliation with the language of rightful children. Both are true. The

unclean slave and the free child of Heaven are both within us. The Incarnation shows us the true child of God—the filial will which never lost its majesty, which never tasted the impurity of human sin—and so still further abases us; but then it shows Him as the Incarnate revelation of that Eternal Son and Word, whose filial Light and Life can stream into and take possession of us, with power to make us like Himself. The Incarnation alone seems to me adequately to reconcile the contradictory facts of a double nature in man—the separate individuality which has no health of its own, and turns every principle to evil directly it begins to revolve on its own centre—and the Divine nature, which lends it a true place and true subordination in the kingdom of God. ‘We are not,’ said Athanasius, ‘by *nature* sons of God, but the Son in us makes us so; also God is not by *nature* our Father, but He is the ‘Father of the Word, dwelling in us; for in Him and ‘through Him we cry, “Abba, Father.”’ It is obvious that Athanasius uses the word ‘nature’ here in a much narrower sense than Bishop Butler. In the largest sense it *is* our true ‘nature’ to live in and through the Eternal Word. But what he meant—namely, that not by virtue of anything in our own strict *personality* or *individuality*, only by virtue of the Divine Life engrafted upon that personality or individuality, do we become sons of God—seems to me the very truth which St. John reveals:—‘He came unto *His own*, and *His own* received Him not: but as many as received Him, to ‘them gave He power to become sons of’ God.’ This

teaching, and this alone, seems to vindicate the Divine nature *in* us without leading us into the delusion that it is *of* us.

Two objections, however, will be made to this statement. It will be said that the same faith, in all its essence, may be held without the Incarnation; and secondly, that even if the eternal nature of the Son be granted as the source of human life and light, the difficulty is only pushed further back, and an intrinsic health and life ascribed to the subordinate person of the Son, which can only belong to the Father Himself. I have thought long and anxiously on both these objections, and will give what seems to me the truest answer to them. So long as we believe that we ourselves are, by the very essence of our own individuality, and not *through* the purifying and overshadowing nature of the eternal Son, children of God, we cannot but explain away and try to ignore the true struggle and weakness in us. We refer that weakness and that conflict to our 'finite' nature, to our childish shortsightedness, to our 'temptations'—to anything but the truth—which is, not that we are weak, not that we are childish, not that we are shortsighted and tempted, but that we have not in us, and can only gain through another, that *will* to be good children of God which would overcome temptation and frailty. But, then, it is said, Admit this—why cannot we look to the Father directly to give us this will? Thousands, nay, millions do thus look, and not in vain. But I do not think that, as a matter of fact, the faith in an eternal Father can

either be adequately realized, as I have before said, without the faith in an eternal Son, nor that, even if it could, it would fully answer the conscious wants of our hearts. We need the inspiration and present help of a perfect filial will. We cannot conceive the Father as sharing in that dependent attitude of spirit, which is our principal spiritual want. It is a Father's perfection to originate—a Son's to receive. We crave sympathy and aid in this *receptive* life. We need the will to be good *as sons*, and to this the vivid faith in the help of a true son is, I think, essential. Such a revelation alone makes humility divine, rather than human; eternal, instead of temporary and finite; such a revelation alone refers the origin of self-sacrifice to heaven rather than earth. And to make humility and self-sacrifice of essentially human birth is false to our own moral experience. We feel, we *know*, that those highest human virtues, humility and self-sacrifice, are not original and indigenous in man, but are grafted on him from above. This faith, that from the life of the Son of God is derived all the health and true perfection of humanity, is the one teaching which robs Stoicism, Asceticism, Unitarian and Roman Catholic good works, and the rest, of their unhealthy element of pride, by teaching us that, in some real sense, every pure feeling in man, everything really noble, even self-sacrifice itself, comes from above; that God's virtue is the root of all man's virtue; that even the humility of the child of God is lent us by Him who lived eternally in the Father's will before He took upon Himself our human life.

It may be thought that this is, in some sense, a transcendental and unreal philosophy. On the other hand, I believe it to be *the* root of the faith in the Incarnation in almost all ages. Certainly it was the root of that faith in St. Paul, the greatest of all Christian thinkers and teachers. To him, as much as to St. John, the faith that Christ was the Vine, and men the branches—that it was from His Divine life that the health and unity of the social system proceeded—permeated every letter that he wrote. The great Epistle to the Romans turns solely on this point. ‘Not I, but Christ that liveth in me,’ was the solution of all his difficulties concerning human good works. His want had been the assurance of a power close to his heart, not his own, by which the law could be fulfilled. He found this assurance when Christ was revealed ‘*in* him,’ and it solved for him the great problem of social renovation. Christ, the Head, sent a new pulse of life through all the members, which gave a due subordination to each, and yet held together the social body in a single coherent whole. The law had been a hard task-master to St. Paul—even the Divine life of the Father and Creator had not been sufficient for him—till this Divine fountain of sympathy, brotherhood, humility, and self-sacrifice, had been also revealed. This was the power and mystery of the Cross. Now, no longer need every good act of man’s be tainted by a sort of evil self-gratulation on thus fulfilling his duties as a child of God. The Son was revealed as the fountain of humility and the source of all true sympathy, as aiding

our prayers, fascinating our cold neutral wills with the fervour of His filial will, rendering it possible for us to love and hope and pray with full knowledge of the true source of human strength in Him whose love and hope and faith is eternal, and eternally in contact with our own hearts.

But, then, I have heard it said, this faith, if we hold it, only pushes the difficulty further back. If the eternal Son of God could be intrinsically good, though originating a new type of goodness—the filial and dependent—which He could not share even with the Father, why could not men in their finite sphere originate, *at first hand*, all the virtues of filial beings simply through their direct communion with the Father? I am sure I cannot answer this question; but is it not a question of fact? Why we are what we are, no one knows. But *is* there in us—in our individual selves or personalities—any essential *will* to good, any essentially filial free will? Surely we know that it is not so. That we have no essential will to evil, I believe. But the truest self-knowledge teaches us that our highest individual power consists in distinguishing between the Spirit of God and the spirit of self-will; and our only goodness, *not* in willing what is good for ourselves and out of our own love of good, but in surrendering the reins to One whose true love of good, and will to good, we can discern. If this be true, what have we to do with its mystery? That we *might* all have been, in free spiritual will, perfect children of God, like Christ, is conceivable certainly, but false. We *know* that our

highest nature is to be taken up into another's nature, instead of clinging to our own centre. The law of life for the branches is not the law of life for the trunk. Is not this enough for us? We see that the law of Christ's nature was a higher one—that in Him filial goodness is original—while we have only the power of gaining it by a voluntary submission to His life. The metaphysical difficulty, if there be one, may, perhaps, only be pushed further back; but then, as a matter of fact, we find it is *solved by being relegated*. He was a true Son of God, and we are not. We can only become so by admitting *Him* into our hearts; He needed nothing; eternal dependence on the Father was the *law* of His free will.

3. And this brings me to the supposed metaphysical contradiction in the fact of Incarnation, which I used to think fatal. That difficulty was, that an infinite being *could* not become finite, or take up a human form, except as a mere simulated appearance. To me, it would be far more painful to believe in the unreality of Christ's finite nature and human condition, than to give up Christianity altogether; in fact, it would involve giving up Christ to believe it for a moment. But this metaphysical contradiction, which once seemed so formidable, does not now exist for me at all. That the Son of God, even though eternal, co-eternal with the Father, may pass through any changes through which any derived being may pass, seems undeniable. When we note how little the powers which we ourselves possess, and which seem to belong to us, are identified with our

personality—how by a stroke of paralysis, for example, a man of genius is stripped of all his richest qualities of mind and reduced to a poor solitary *ego*—or if that be not so, how he lives in two worlds, in one of which he is a feeble, helpless, isolated will, and in the other (if there be another in which he is still his old self) a man of genius still—when we note this, it seems to me to be simply the most presumptuous of all presumptuous assumptions to deny that the Son of God might have really become what He seemed to be, a finite being, a Jew of Jewish thoughts and prepossessions, and liable to all the intellectual errors which distinguished the world in which He lived. If there is an indestructible moral individuality which constitutes *self*, which is the same when wielding the largest powers, and when it sits alone at the dark centre—which, for anything I know, may even live under a double set of conditions at the same time—I can see no metaphysical contradiction in an Incarnation. Indeed, the phenomena of *growth* are surely not less wonderful than those of limitation. If individual powers can be bestowed, and in some sense closely united with our individuality, they can be withdrawn. If infinite power and knowledge can be given by the Father to the Son, they can be limited as He wills. I am sure that Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew, a human being, ignorant of many things, only at times penetrated by the light of His infinite nature—One who could understand all human temptations, who looked forward to pain and death with human shrinking, and who saw the shortcomings of His disciples' love with

human anguish. What eternal reality, then, was it that was revealed in that life? The *will* of a perfect Son, still resting in that of the Father, and ordering the human passions and desires with the sole purpose of doing that Father's will. The essential difference, the only essential difference between the life of Jesus of Nazareth and of any human being, seems to me to be that His free will was always fastened, so to speak, on that of God's, so that, though He felt temptation, the predominant *passion* of His will (if it is legitimate to apply such a word as passion to a fountain of perfect freedom) prevented the slightest trembling in the balance; while the free will of all other men is intrinsically indifferent, and needs a divine countervailing force to aid it in escaping from the solicitations of human temptation. And Christ, in revealing this perfectly filial will, revealed it as the power in the protecting shadow of which, and by the sympathy with which, we might also escape the sin which He understood, but never experienced. It was not as an *example*, but as the very source of the divine light which was to stream into us, that His life was revealed. What the Incarnate Word *was* in Him, *that* it would have the power to make us, if we would but yield ourselves up absolutely to its guidance. In point of limitations, temptations, frailties, His life was no better than ours. The will alone was better, intrinsically better; and that will would engraft itself on ours, and guide and sway us, if we would but surrender the reins.

I have now, in a certain very inadequate way—cou-

sciously inadequate to the strength of my own conviction—explained why the Incarnation, *if it be a fact*, would to my mind be a new power, a new fountain of life and hope to man ; and I have said all that seems to me necessary to remove the only plausible *à priori* impossibility that ever got a strong grasp of my mind. But now, on what testimony can a rational mind justify its belief in so stupendous a fact, of which, even if true, the evidence would seem to be so far removed from the reach of human criticism ?

In the first place, it seems to me impossible for any one who accepts the historical records of Christ's life as in any degree genuine to doubt that Christ asserted for Himself a spiritual and eternal Sonship, which was the true and universal *ground* of all men's filial relations to God. I held the existence of this claim to be indisputable long before I held that claim to be justified, and I believe that all the more critical schools of Unitarians, both in Germany and this country, grant it—at least, so far as they admit the fourth Gospel to contain an authentic account of Christ's own words. Of course, it is quite a tenable position to admit the fact and deny the inference that what a mind so high and simple held concerning its own relation to God need be accepted by other men. But at present I only wish to discuss the fact of Christ's own expressed belief. And as St. John's Gospel—though to my own conviction the completest exposition of the truth of the Incarnation—is doubted by many sincere critics who accept the first three as genuine, I could scarcely rest my faith on it, did it not

seem to me that the other three, though certainly not compiled by nor originating with men who had thought out and realized the meaning of the revelation, were full of the same truth—full of it, that is, just in that shape in which it would be recorded by witnesses who had not yet found their way to its true significance. What, for instance, can be better identified with the personal preaching of Christ than the whole series of parables speaking of the prophets as imperfect messengers from God to man, whose teaching had failed to reveal Him adequately, so that at last He sent His ‘own Son’ to claim for Him His kingdom? Is it not clear that in all these a distinction *in kind* between the prophet and the Christ is meant to be imprinted on the heart? He, the last of the series, is not a servant of God, but ‘the heir.’ Again, it is recorded by all the synoptical gospels that Christ asks Peter whom men suppose Him to be. Peter replies that some say He is John the Baptist, some Elias, some one of the prophets. ‘But whom say ye that I am?’ Peter saith unto Him, ‘Thou art the Christ’—‘the Son of the living God,’ adds St. Matthew. And the same evangelist records the reply of Jesus:—‘Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.’ Can any assertion be stronger, that between God and Christ there was this mysterious, special, and hidden relation which eye could not see, which spirit could not discern, unless God Himself had breathed it into the conscience of the disciple? To say that the spirit of such a passage does not wholly refute

the notion that Christ's own conception of Himself was the modern Unitarian model-man conception, seems to me a violence to all true criticism. But it is not on one or two passages that I could rest such a belief. What is the spirit of all the three first narratives? It is this:—they describe and attempt to delineate a Man who spoke, with an authority of His own, of the secrets of God's spirit. At times He forgives sins, and treats the healing of bodily diseases as a mere pledge of that deeper power to restore health to the spirit. At times He speaks of His own lowliness; but though always with the humility of a Son towards God, it is in the attitude of a King towards men. 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me;' what an assertion for any man, however good, to make!—an assertion only the more inconsistent and incredible, the better he might be: an assertion, in short, which could only be made by One conscious that His spirit was in direct *organic* communion with the spirits of those to whom He spoke—such communion that love to Him and love to God were inseparable emotions. The language St. John puts into Christ's mouth, 'I in them and Thou in Me,' seems only a clearer enunciation of the whole spirit of the first three Gospels, which implies as direct a spiritual communion between Christ and men as existed between the Father and the Son. For example, take the words, 'He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.' This is not the language of a servant of God's, but of one

who shares His eternal attributes. The mere prophet speaks simply in the name of Him whose message he delivers, and does not regard his own personality as any necessary link in the chain.

The truth is, that the pervading and deepest characteristic of Christ's language concerning Himself is the humility, *not* of conscious unworthiness (like St. Paul's), but of conscious dependence, of filial perfection. And to me, the most touching and satisfying words that have ever been uttered by human lips, are those which no mere man could ever have uttered without jarring every chord in the human conscience:—

‘Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Beth-
‘saida; for if the mighty works which were done in
‘you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would
‘have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But
‘I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and
‘Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And
‘thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven,
‘shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty
‘works which were done in thee had been done in
‘Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But
‘I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the
‘land of Sodom at the day of judgment than for thee.
‘At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee,
‘O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou
‘hast hid these things from the wise and prudent,
‘and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father,
‘for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are
‘delivered unto Me of my Father; and no man

‘ knoweth the Son but the Father ; neither any man
 ‘ the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the
 ‘ Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that
 ‘ labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you
 ‘ rest. Take my yoke upon you, for I am meek and
 ‘ lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your
 ‘ souls : for my yoke is easy and my burden is
 ‘ light.’

Can there be, even in the Gospel of John, a more unqualified assertion that it is *the* Son of God who spiritually reveals to all men their Father, and so enables all to become true sons of God ; or that Christ himself knew himself to be that divine Son and universal light of man ?

Again—

‘ And He answered and said, An evil and adulterous
 ‘ generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no
 ‘ sign be given to it, save that of the prophet Jonah.¹
 ‘ The men of Nineveh shall sit in judgment with this
 ‘ generation, and shall condemn it ; for they repented
 ‘ at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than
 ‘ Jonah is here. The Queen of the South shall rise up
 ‘ in judgment with this generation and shall condemn

¹ I leave out the verse in which the very far-fetched parallel between Jonah's supposed adventure in the fish's belly and our Lord's three days' burial in the earth is interpolated, not only because St. Luke omits it and gives the natural significance to the passage, but because it destroys the whole force of our Lord's meaning, and is evidently a blunder of some Jewish scholiast. The whole drift of the passage is, that the spiritual sign is enough, and that the craving for a physical sign is bad. Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, because he touched them with a sense of their evil ; and so, too, our Lord claimed to be a sign to that generation.

‘ it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth
 ‘ to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a
 greater than Solomon is here.’

In short, I cannot open a page of the Gospels without finding in Christ a complete absence of that self-reproach which we identify with humility, but which only belongs to it among imperfect and sinful men, and yet the fullest presence of that filial humility which recognised dependence on the Father as the true law and spirit of life, which lived in the will of Another, and yet concurred freely in that will. Now, this combination seems to me, and is, I believe, unique in history. Wherever we find deep humility amongst men it is accompanied by self-distrust and self-accusations, as in the case of St. Paul. Wherever we find tranquil self-reliance it is *unaccompanied* by the dependent and filial spirit; it is found, if at all, in some Goethe, standing with serene brow above the clouds of human sorrow and weakness:—

‘ He took the suffering human race,
 He read each wound, each weakness clear :
 He struck his finger on the place
 And said “Thou ailest here and here.”
 He looked on Europe’s dying hour
 Of fitful dreams and feverish power,
 And said, “The end is everywhere.
 Art still has truth, take refuge there.”
 And he was happy—if to know
 Causes of things, and *far below*
His feet to see the lurid flow
 Of trouble, and insane distress
 And headlong fate, be happiness.’

Such is the attitude of the most complete human

self-adequacy; but it is not the attitude of Christ, who proclaims to us everywhere, 'I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.' And it seems to me that this unique combination of child-like lowliness with perfect kingliness and serenity of conscience extorts a witness to it from human nature which is equally unique. We say to our hearts, 'This is not an independent will, but a filial will; and yet this is not an imperfect sinful man, but one who shares the eternal life of the Father whom He reveals.' The ultimate distinction between Christ's human nature and our own lay not, it seems to me, in any exemption from human ignorance, sensitiveness, temptation, but in the ultimate divinity of His free will, which moulded itself according to the Father's will without a moment's trembling in the balance. Of the perfect concord, perfect submissiveness, perfect dependence of this will, He Himself was aware, and this gave Him His tone of authority towards man. But God's purpose was often concealed from Him on earth; He could discern only the general outline of His destiny, and this only with the fitful uncertainty of that prophetic prescience which estimates perfectly the evil and the good, and yet can hardly bring itself to believe in any even temporary triumph of evil. 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt,' is surely the highest expression of a perfect filial will full of humility, but wholly untouched by humiliation.

But it will be said, that, granting that Christ was

convinced of this ultimate divinity of His own nature ; admitting that His disciples believed partially and fitfully at first, more profoundly and spiritually afterwards, in the same truth—how can we accept such a stupendous assertion, on the evidence of men whom we admit, not only not to be infallible, but to be touched with all the natural limitations of their social condition, their nation, and their era? Must we not necessarily connect such confidence in their testimony with some doctrine of infallibility such as has turned the religion of whole countries into superstition, and built up the inflated theory of an infallible Church, or an infallible Bible? How can you take one of their beliefs, and reject another—accept the one which admits of no historical verification, and reject that which has been historically tested and disproved—hold to their Christology, and smile at their crude notions of ‘meeting the Lord in the air’—defer to their faith in the secrets of eternity, and push impatiently aside their demonology? Is there no substantial reason for leaving such a faith as that in the Incarnation, to be held by men who combine with it a superstitious treatment of apostolic authority, or the letter of Scripture? I hold not; and I think, moreover, that the faith in the Incarnation, in its largest sense, is absolutely inconsistent with this superstitious treatment of the human authority of apostles, or the literal text of the Bible. To me it seems certain, that Paul and John alone, among the apostles whose writings are recorded, had gained anything like a conscious grasp of this truth. The authors

of the first three Gospels, though they mention facts which point to it, as the rays from behind a cloud point to the hidden position of the sun, certainly had never grasped the magnitude of the truth that they were helping to reveal. Even St. Paul apprehended it, I think, only in relation to the *conscious* life of faith. He held, doubtless, that the Son of God had been the centre of Jewish unity and nationality, throughout the history of the Jewish nation; that the fathers of the nation who passed through the Red Sea 'did all eat 'the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same 'spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock 'which followed them, and that Rock was Christ.' He held, too, that Christ was equally the centre and root of the social unity of the Christian Church; that His life was in all its members, and the real bond of its organization; but I can see no trace that he had yet learned to extend the same truth to the whole world of heathen humanity, that he had grasped the fulness of St. John's teaching, that 'He is the Light which lighteth *every man that cometh into the world.*' To me the Incarnation seems to be revealed in exactly a similar way, and through similar channels of various degrees of authenticity, as the existence of God itself. We all hold that God manifested Himself through a variety of avenues to the mind of man—that at length He set apart one nation to witness more especially to His personal unity and righteousness—that through its means, without neglecting the manifold approaches to the conscience of the heathen world, the great truth

gradually struggled into the field of human vision, and convinced the world of its reality, without ever shutting itself up in the form of a logical demonstration. The existence of God lay at the root of so many natural facts, that it gained access to the mind, just as the personality of other men or the laws of nature gain access to the mind. In the same way, and in that way only, I hold that the Incarnation has proved itself;—Christ's own belief in the divinity and eternity of His own personality occupying exactly the same position in relation to this truth, that the belief of the 'peculiar people' in the government and providence of God occupied in relation to Theism. Both the Jews' conviction, that their destiny was guided by God, and Christ's expressed conviction in the divine eternity of His own life, were great powers to *aid* belief in other men; but without echoes in our own experience would and could not be decisive. And the gradual dawning of this faith on the imperfect and often contracted minds of Christ's followers produced, no doubt, as many false lights and colours, suffused their experience with as much special error, as the belief in the special relation of God to their nation produced in the minds of the Israelites. Every great and infinite truth dawning upon minds but half-prepared to receive it must create a certain degree of excitement, which will collect a fringe of broken colours round the central glory. That this was actually the case with the disciples of Christ, as well as with the Jews, I do not doubt. Their millennial expectations seem to me a clear

instance of it, and I believe there are others. But so far from supposing that this invalidates the great reality itself, I think it would be as wise to say, that the fanaticism into which the Jewish people frequently fell, in identifying themselves as '*the* people of God,' disproves the fact that they were separated by God for a special purpose.

But history touches this truth, not merely in relation to Christ's own life, or that of His immediate followers; it records a long series of connected facts which preceded, and a long series of connected facts which succeeded, this. Does the one seem to anticipate and to culminate fairly in the mere sending of a new and great prophet? Does the other seem to derive its vital influence over the ages from the mere enunciations of a great departed prophet? Or does the harmonious development of the world's history seem to require, at this point, some great focus of the world's life, some actual union of God and man—an Incarnation? There is no doubt that, at this point, the history of an Oriental people, whose great work it was to learn and to teach the personal government of a righteous God, blends with the history of the Gentile nations, with the fountains of Greek art and philosophy, with the system of Roman equity, with the whole civilization of the West; and all that it thus takes up into itself becomes coloured by a revolutionized form of the old Oriental faith. But may not the great crisis be accounted for by this very fact—the confluence of different streams of national life—without assuming any divine act

greater than the sending of a new and more Catholic-minded prophet? I think not; for I think the Jewish history culminated *before* the influence of Greece or Rome rushed in; and that the Christian began, in germ and essence, *before* the confluence alluded to, though it was materially modified thereby. To me it seems that both the Jewish history is truncated and the Christian history maimed without assuming a real Incarnation at the point where the two coalesce. The one would be a gradual ascent without a summit, a chain of purposes without a consummation—the other a wide and permanent stream, with a shallow and temporary source, a new life for man, without a new source of inspiration. I will try and explain my meaning further.

The Jewish faith in a supreme supernatural Will, by whose fiat every event of Nature and every duty of man was determined, had, clearly, I think, an overpowering and overwhelming effect on the national mind, as it grew into clearer and distinctive outline. Righteous it was, but this righteousness was of a kind impossible and almost terrible to man; the Law was brilliant light, but it cast a heavy shadow; the prophets said, almost in despair, ‘Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.’ It was felt that a link was wanted between the absolute, supreme, original Will, in whom all the universe rests, and the actual child-like life of human duty. The people of Israel, as I have said before, *crouched* beneath the brightness of that presence. Their prophets felt

more and more that it was not merely as a righteous King that God could reveal Himself so as best to purify and win back the nation ; there must be, they began to learn, *between* the Father and human nature, some being lowly as the latter, perfect as the former, whose kingliness would not consist in mere righteous power, but in righteous humility, who rules man as man learns to rule himself, by perfect obedience and homage to Another. Hence the series of prophecies which are said to be fulfilled in Christ, which in the truest sense *are* so fulfilled, but which in the prophet's mind were often applied to more obvious and visible rulers. There was a yearning for a spiritual king whose title to rule should be lowliness and sympathy, who should be greatest of all, because 'servant of all.' The prophets discerned such a rule over the human spirit as real, though the Ruler Himself was still behind the veil. Besides the Father, they began to speak of One who should be as 'a shadow of a great rock in a weary land,' of whom it might be said, 'In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them ; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them ; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old ;' of One who should suffer with us, and so rule us ; who should be 'wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities,' and by whose 'stripes we should be healed.' Through all the later prophets this vision of a Divine King, not original and absolute, not King in His own right, but by right of His humility, obedience, love for One above Himself, is

as a softening thread which subdues the awfulness of the old faith, and strives to bridge the chasm between the human world and the Immutable Jehovah. The Babylonian conception of a hierarchy of angels tended, no doubt, to deepen this vein of thought, and to bridge the chasm of that solitary Omnipotence in which the old Jewish creed had enthroned God. But it was a moral more than an intellectual insight which revolted from this stern type of monotheism. The Jewish imagination was overwhelmed by the weight of unrelieved absolute power. It asked for a Messiah, not so much to restore the nation's destiny, as to fill up this fearful chasm between the created and finite life of man and the awful will of God. There was a growing hope that some king would appear who would not only vindicate the truth of the ancient promises, but supply the missing link between the creature, who cannot rule, and the Creator, who cannot obey. Such a yearning, such a shrinking from solitary Omnipotence, seems to me to run through the prophecies of Isaiah, and the meditations of Job, with a vividness that no adequate critic can ignore. And how the yearning for a Messiah, and for a *union of divine and human attributes* in that Messiah, grew between the return from captivity and the birth of Christ, we find, I think, extraordinary proofs in the growth of the Alexandrine Judaism, represented by Philo, and the strong leaning of the higher minds among the Jews, such as St. Paul's, towards the spirit of its teaching. It is clear, I think, that no new prophet, however great, could have satisfied

this yearning, could have supplied the natural summit to this Jewish history, or the natural consummation of the chain of divine purposes which that history had embodied.

Again, looking from the chain of events which prepared the way for the Christian revelation to the chain of events which followed it, it seems still more difficult to believe that the latter could have derived their explanation from the oracles of a great prophet. Contrast the history of the Christian Church with that of Mahometanism. That Mahomet was a great and genuine prophet with a Divine mission, I heartily believe. His prophecy has engraved itself on the hearts of millions who have never felt the fascination of the Christian faith. But history shows in many ways that it has its root only in the past; there is no growth in the faith, no power of adapting itself to the new ages. Mahomet *as he was* rules Mahometans *as they are*. His word was petrified and crystallized in Mecca, and can assimilate no new truth. It is an inorganic faith—a faith not only founded on, but imprisoned in, a rock. But the history of the Christian Church is a history of constant growth in spite of sacerdotal resistance, and I believe that the upward force of that growth has ever been the communion with a living Christ. Theism alone, no doubt, has in it some expansive force, as the history of the Jews shows; but the immutability and infinitude of the eternal attributes on which it rests throw too awful a shadow over human life, and require a filial mediator in order to adapt them to the

changing colours of human affections. A growing and social religion must, I feel sure, blend indissolubly the human with the Divine. It was because Judaism was struggling upwards to this, that it did *not* become stereotyped and crystallized like Mahometanism. And every great era in the Christian Church has been marked by a new insight into the bond between the Divine and human attributes of Christ; the Father has been more or less vividly worshipped just in proportion as the life of the Son *in* humanity has been realized. To read the history of the Christian Church without the belief that Christ has been in vital and organic relation with it, seems to me to read it under the impression that a profound illusion can, for centuries, exercise more power for good than the truth. The Gospel, if it merely did for Christ, as Unitarians hold, what the Koran and personal traditions did for Mahomet, would have been an iron system of oracles, instead of a picture giving distinctness to, and interpreted by, a living inspiration; and the sooner it had been laid aside, except as a mere auxiliary to the living voice of God, the better. Surely all the expansive and adaptative power of Christianity to the purpose of the Ages has been directly due to the faith in a 'Light that lighteth every man which cometh into the world,' and in the incarnation of that light in the human life of Jesus of Nazareth. Without this belief in the inward light, the reverence paid to the external life is a mere idolatry; without the belief in this external incarnation, the inward light is too apt to nourish human

conceit and Pantheistic dreams. And I cannot understand the history of the Christian Church at all if all the fervent trust which has been stirred by faith in the actual inspirations of a nature at once eternal and human has been lavished on a dream.

It may be said that the importance assigned in this essay to the correspondence between a revelation and an inward want, is fatal to all doctrines of historical evidence—that if our belief in facts is in any degree to vary with our *wish* to believe in them, history ceases to be a science, and becomes more or less mythic. But I think the objection is very easily answered to any who do believe in God. *That* reality, it is clear, is not matter of historical evidence, though history and personal experience generate the human faith in it. And once accepted, the evidence as to any of His outward actions must consist of two portions—its correspondence with the faith He puts into our hearts, and the external testimony. I could hold no fact of historical revelation without external testimony; without Christ's assertion of His relation to the Father; without the evidence of St. Paul, and all the disciples, then and since, to His relation with their own spirits; in short, without the light which this faith throws on the history, both of the Jews and the Christian Church, I could not venture to build anything on the inward want of such a revelation. But with these external facts of history before me, I feel that I have far more right to build, and to build much, on that want which God puts into the heart.

than I should have to think any evidence I receive of a friend's actions confirmed by correspondence with what I had known of his character. But on this I have dwelt enough already ; I only return to it now to distinguish between a historical faith, which seems to me to have large historical as well as internal evidence, and a historical faith which seems to me to be accepted on no historical grounds. The faith in the 'miraculous conception' of Christ is not one which I feel it difficult to understand. It seems to me most natural ; I cannot deny that it may be true ; but I think no unbiassed intellect should accept it in the absence of any adequate evidence in its favour. Christ's words never touch upon it. It is embodied only in two mutually inconsistent passages of Matthew and Luke, written in a style much more like poetry than narrative, and quite distinct from the style of the rest of the Gospels. St. John, the great Evangelist of the Incarnation, does not appear even to hint at it. Jesus is even spoken of by the Jews in that Gospel as 'the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know,' and without any explanatory allusion of the Evangelists to the supposed circumstances of His birth. St. Paul speaks of Him expressly as 'of the seed of David, according to the flesh,' which, if there be any truth in the genealogies, must make Him the son of Joseph 'according to the flesh,' since through Joseph only is the lineage traced back to David. If, therefore, the miraculous conception is to be believed at all, it must be solely on the strength of two very inconsistent

passages in Matthew and Luke, both of which are wholly different in general texture from the substance of the general narrations. I am quite sure that no clear judgment would accept such evidence for any ordinary fact; and I do not think that its being linked into the structure of a supernatural revelation should alter the ordinary laws of evidence, even though it might be pleaded that, if true, it would convey a new revelation of Divine truth to the mind. The Divine facts of a historical revelation may, I believe, be rendered morally certain by the fulness of their answer to spiritual wants, where they are, on the historical testimony, *taken alone*, simply doubtful. But I cannot conceive that any proper historical fact can claim belief as history on the ground that it expresses a Divine truth, without, at the least, much more than sufficient testimony to bring it fairly within the historian's consideration. No doubt it may be said, that what would be quite insufficient evidence for an isolated fact would be sufficient if that fact be an organic part of a clearly historic whole. There are many facts unhesitatingly believed on very little separate evidence, simply on the ground that they appear properly to belong to others which are well established. This is no place to discuss how far this argument is or is not applicable to the 'miraculous conception;' but it seems to me to be one that has always been overworked by the theologians, and to be only trustworthy at all in very peculiar cases where a fragment of history that is absolutely part and parcel of a unique and otherwise

attested whole has been deprived accidentally of the evidence of its natural witnesses. I should think it hazardous in the extreme to confuse the wide distinction between moral belief and æsthetic impressions by surrendering to the latter in such a case as this.

And now, to come to an end, let me ask myself, and answer the question as truly as I can, whether this great, this stupendous fact of the Incarnation is honestly *believable* by any ordinary man of modern times, who has not been educated into it, but educated to distrust it, who has no leaning to the 'orthodox' creed as such, but has very generally preferred to associate with heretics, who is quite alive to the force of the scientific and literary scepticisms of his day, who has no antiquarian tastes, no predilection for the venerable past, who does not estimate this truth as part of a great system dogmatic or ecclesiastical, but merely for itself—who is, in a word, simply anxious to take hold, if he so may, of any divine hand stretched out to help him through the perplexities and languor, the joy, the sorrow, the storm and sunshine of this unintelligible life? From my heart I answer, Yes:—believable and more than believable in any mood in which we can rise above ourselves to that supernatural Spirit which orders the 'unruly wills and affections of sinful men'—*more* than believable, I say, because it so vivifies and supplements that fundamental faith in God as to realize what were otherwise abstract, and, without dissolving the mystery, to clothe Eternal love with breathing life. God Himself is not believable while we wander helplessly in the

labyrinth of mere natural phenomena, or lose ourselves in the mystery of the infinitudes, or surrender ourselves captive to the newest phase of 'modern thought,' or disguise our true natures with the affectations of antique mannerisms, or attempt to create Him out of our own conscience, or to find a place for Him in our dogmatic creeds. But whenever and however we so escape from ourselves as to acknowledge a living and Eternal Lord, then it seems to me to be not harder, but easier, to confess Him as something more than this; as One who has revealed to us the very essence of His nature through the Son who was with Him before the world was. It is not harder, but easier, to trust in a will unveiled than in one still veiled; to confess the Father of that Eternal Son who pours the light of filial love into every human conscience, and who has shown us that not power nor knowledge, but free goodness alone, is of the inmost essence of the Divine nature. I confess that human reason is wholly unable to comprehend Eternity, but it seems to me far easier to *apprehend* it, to take hold on it, to believe in it, *with* this revealing Incarnation than without it. To *fancy* that we trust in God may be easier while He remains simply what He was to Faust, the 'All-embracer, the All-sustainer;' but to trust in Him really, to believe He can help us to reduce the vulgar chaos of our English or American life to any order resting on an Eternal basis, is far easier if we believe that the very same mind is shining into our own consciences which entered into the poorest of lots among nearly the most degraded generation of the

most narrow-minded race that the world has ever known, and made it the birthplace of a new earth. To trust in God adequately we ask not merely to recognise His power, but to know Him as He is—His character, His *actions*, as distinct from our actions. The answer comes to us in the shape of a revelation that the Father is no solitary and self-enveloped Being, that there is One who shared with Him Eternity, who is always at the sources of our human life, who entered into our very lot in one of its least attractive forms, and of whom it is said, ‘This is my beloved Son; hear ye Him.’ Surely it is easier to trust in One so revealed than in any glory from which the veil has never been withdrawn. To me, at all events, it is so. This faith alone satisfies me that I do not aspire after anything ‘higher and holier than the truth,’ but that the truth which lays hold upon my mind is infinitely higher and holier than anything I can elaborate for myself. Without the Incarnation, Christianity seems to me a vague idealism. In it alone I find the Word, ‘who is quick and powerful as any two-edged sword.’

LETTER TO THE WRITER OF THE FOREGOING
TRACT.*Jan. 23, 1862.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE read the Tract which you have sent for our Series with intense interest. Those who are feeling after a foundation—those who are trying to tell others that one is laid for them—may equally learn from your experience. I thank you especially for explaining so frankly in what points you differ from the faith of English Churchmen. Nothing is so unsatisfactory as those concessions for the sake of peace which some affect. They do not lead to peace, but to suspicion. Whereas the simple, honest statement of the grounds of agreement which you discover with us, of the reasons which separate you from us, must lead to explanations by which both parties will be benefited. I know you will wish me to tell you how I have been led from your own premises to some conclusions which you at present reject. What I say will probably have no direct influence on your mind; at least, it will enable you to perceive more clearly how far we go together and where our paths diverge.

What I most rejoice in is, that you, a layman, have

been led to feel your need of a theology. The inclination of laymen, in all schools and sects, is to say that they want a *religion*, or that they want *ethics*; but that theology belongs to the professional divine—that with this they have no concern, except to watch against its intrusion into the sphere of practical life with which they are occupied. The *plausibility* of this language all must acknowledge; I have felt its *reasonableness* when I have observed what those theologies are which are most frequently presented to the acceptance of laymen; how much they must shock many of their deepest religious instincts, many of their strongest moral convictions. But the more we examine the origin and structure of these theologies, the more, I believe, we shall find that they shock the religious instincts and the moral convictions, precisely because they have been fashioned to meet certain religious necessities, or to fill up the gaps in an ethical system. The sense of evil in the heart, of a burthen on the conscience, leads to the formation of one kind of divinity; the desire of finding some power which shall enforce the decrees and maxims of morality leads to the formation of another and contrary kind. Both can appeal to the Bible, for it bears witness to the religious as well as the ethical need. Both can appeal to the experience of human beings, for all human beings know these needs. The theological systems which are so generated are necessarily hostile. And they are theological *systems*; notions and dogmas about the Divine Being, not messages or revelations proceeding from Him; with no

power but what they derive from reminiscences of His communications, or from the fever in the human spirit which craves for them, or from the violence of their opposition to each other.

I remember, thirty-two years ago, being led by a book of Mr. Irving's to feel that the basis of human experience and faith must be in theology, or the revelation of God; that human experience and faith can never be *its* basis. He took his starting point from the old Calvinistical ground. He affirmed the will of God to be at the root of all will, being, life, in man. The book was full of hard sayings which I could not digest. I am not aware that I have ever seen it since I first read it, and I never exchanged a word with the author. But the principle of it has remained with me ever since, and has been deepened by all I have read in the Bible, by the opposition of schools and parties which I have witnessed, as well as by the corresponding conflicts in my own mind. It would not have been so if Mr. Irving had understood by the revelation of God what so many of his countrymen and friends would at once understand by it; I mean, if he had identified it with the Bible. But with the sternest Presbyterian reverence for the words and letters of the sacred books, he perceived clearly that the revelation of a Will cannot be in a book, must be in a Person. The Eternal Will could only utter itself in the Eternal Word; that Word must become flesh and dwell among men, if the Will, full of grace and truth, was to make itself fully known to men.

It would seem to me strange—if anything in the teachings of God's Spirit can be called strange—that you, starting from the very opposite point to Mr. Irving—from the Unitarian instead of the high Calvinistical point, have been brought so nearly to the same result. You find many accepting the idea of a Divine Humanity as an *idea*. But necessarily, if it is only that, the human must be the basis of the Divine; you must rise from man to God; your conscience all the while protesting that you cannot so rise, that the God whom you conceive and create cannot be *the* God. You demand, then, that a Divine Humanity should come forth in act, in reality; that it should not grow in any sense out of our minds; that it should meet all the wants in our minds. You must have a Revelation of God Himself to His creatures, in One who is really not nominally a Mediator between God and Man. Surely this is to have your feet upon a rock against which the waves may beat vehemently, but which they will not shake.

This theological method is the oldest of all methods. The Bible begins with it in the first chapter of Genesis. God speaks. Man hears. But it is a new method to you, to me, to a great part of the Christian world. Another grows up with us, accommodates itself gradually to all our thoughts and studies. We feel the inconsistency of the two. But those who see the need of adhering to the one most strongly, are beset by recollections of the other. The mere Humanist can never quite get rid of a theological basis. The theologian will be cou-

tinually relapsing into the human. I detect this inconsistency every day in myself. May I tell you what appear to me instances of it in your Essay?

1. You used, you say, to find great difficulty in admitting an Incarnation, because you could not understand how an Infinite Being could be manifested in a man, subject to the limitations to which an individual, born in a certain place, growing up in certain circumstances, must be subject. You have overcome that difficulty. It does not shock you to think of Christ as the Son of God, and yet as liable to the ordinary feelings, even to the prejudices, of a Jew in the days of Herod.

That you have felt so deeply the necessity of an Incarnation as to be able to overlook this, or even a worse perplexity, is to me most satisfactory; I could not ask a greater evidence of the power with which the conviction has taken hold of you. But I cannot persuade myself that you have mastered the objection. I think it will start up again and again, and that sometimes it will appear to you almost overwhelming. I should have found it so if I had not been brought to the conviction that the perfect image of God cannot be merely a man. He must be *the* Man; the Head of the Race; the Person in whom the race is created; by whom it stands. Such a person, I think, the Evangelists set forth to us. The powers which they say that Jesus exercised, the sufferings which they say He underwent, belong to such a person. You, I suspect, feel the need of such a one as much as I do. But you feel as I did,

that, *contemplated from the human ground*, a universal man is merely the fiction of an antiquated realism. Here, then, is an instance in which fidelity to the theological method saves us from the most serious contradictions; brings our language and thoughts into harmony with that of the Old Church and its creeds; restores our understanding with simple and devout people; and, at the same time, enables us to complete that idea of a Humanity which is floating in the minds of all at the present day. The fact that Christ must have been born in some time and some place—that He must have been an actual child, and boy, and man—will remain. These are essential to the idea of an Incarnation. There may be, there must be, limitations involved in that birth, childhood, boyhood, manhood; but they will not, I think, be the limitations you have supposed inevitable. They will not interfere with the fulness of the Godhead bodily, *because* they will not interfere with the fulness of the manhood. And that fulness of the manhood will enable not some particular man, subject to particular conditions of time and country, but every man, in every time and country, to claim affinity with Christ, and through Him to draw nigh to the Father.

The prevalent talk about humanity, and a sense of its great unreality, if there is not such a Head of Humanity as this, has certainly been one influence in leading me back to that old Catholic doctrine. But I can trace my conviction of it more distinctly to a terrible question which was brought before me when I

was young by that work to which I have already alluded: 'If the Son of God really became man, must He not have entered into all the temptations of a man? Can the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews be modified? Does the writer's own limitation, "*yet without sin,*" empty the previous clause of its significance?' These are profoundly practical inquiries which cannot be evaded by those who are seeking for a power to govern their own lives, for a help in their own inward struggles. Mr. Irving was confronted by them. He found that he could not maintain the Incarnation in its reality and power if he shrank from the assertion that evil in all its ghastliness, in all its attractiveness, offered itself to the mind and will of Christ. That it was rejected by that Mind and Will no one could affirm more vehemently than he did. But to adopt any shift for the sake of making the conflict a less tremendous one than it is in the case of any son of Adam, seemed to him to be dishonouring Christ under pretence of asserting His purity, and to be depriving human creatures of the blessings and victory which He took flesh to give them. He therefore used language which inevitably startled and staggered those who knew what the suggestions of evil were to them, how much they seemed to involve a participation in it. I could not evade the force of their appeals to the testimony of our consciences as well as of Scripture. I could as little evade the force of his. It seemed to me that if there was not a way out of the difficulty the Gospel meant nothing. The Old Theology which Mr. Irving had grafted upon his Scotch

Confession showed me this way. According to *that* confession, the race stood in Adam, and had fallen in Adam; then a scheme of salvation, of which the Incarnation formed a step, was necessary to rescue certain persons from the consequences of the fall. Mr. Irving had begun to regard the Incarnation not merely as a means to a certain end, in which some men were interested, but as the very manifestation of God to men—as the link between the creature and the Creator. But what could the Incarnation on his previous hypothesis be but the descent into a radically *evil* nature? Some of Mr. Irving's Scotch opponents perceived the difficulty, and resorted to the hypothesis of our Lord's taking the unfallen nature of Adam. He regarded the suggestion as a miserable subterfuge, which made the relation between Christ and actual men an utterly unreal one. It led me to ask myself, 'What does that unfallen nature of Adam mean? Did not Adam stand by God's grace; by trust in Him? Did he not fall by trying to be something in himself? Could he have had a nature which was good independent of God more than we? Is not such a notion a subversion of all Christian belief? But *did* the race ever stand in him?' Old Theology taught quite a different doctrine. Our own Articles set forth Christ very God and very man—not Adam—as now and always the head of the race. They teach us of an infection of nature which exists in every son of Adam. They call that a departure from original righteousness. This original righteousness stands, and has always stood, in

Christ the Son of God, and in Him only. Here, it seemed to me, was the true practical solution of the difficulty. I could believe that the Head of Man had entered fully into the condition of every man; had suffered the temptations of every man; had wrestled with the enemy of every man; and that He had brought *our* humanity untainted and perfect through that struggle. And this because He had never lost His trust in His Father, His obedience to His Father, had never asserted independence, as Adam did, as each one of us is continually doing. His temptations become, then, real in the most tremendous sense. They were more fierce than any mere individual can ever undergo. He did, in truth, feel the sins—bear the sins—of the whole world. And every man may turn to Him as knowing his own special danger, his easily besetting sins, as having felt the power of them. And no man has a right to say, ‘My race is a sinful, fallen race,’ even when he most confesses the greatness of his own sin and fall; because he is bound to contemplate his race in the Son of God, and to claim, by faith in Him, his share in its redemption and its glory. I can therefore do justice to the Unitarian protest against the language in which many who call themselves orthodox describe the condition of mankind, just because I adopt the belief in the perfect divinity and the perfect manhood of the Son of God. I can, with the most inmost conviction, assert that in me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing, just because I feel that all good which is in me, or in any one, is derived

from the perfect humanity of Christ, and that apart from that I am merely evil. Just so far as I have been able to grasp this belief in a Head of Humanity—just so far the greatest problems of ethics seem to me to find a solution; just so far do I see a light in the midst of the deepest darkness, a hope rising out of the depths of despair, a unity which is mightier than all sects and divisions. Therefore I am earnest that you should consider whether you are not confusing this belief with that of a merely individual Christ, such as you were content with before you saw the necessity of an Incarnation.

2. This subject is closely connected with your remarks on the *Miraculous Conception*. I cannot be thankful enough that you have not climbed to the belief in an Incarnation through the belief of this Conception. That has been the modern process. Among Romanists it has been connected with Mariolatry, ultimately with that triumph of the Franciscan Humanism over the Dominican theology, which has produced the celebrated Papal decree of our day. Protestants flying from mere Church authority have made the evidence of the Incarnation depend upon the evidence of the Conception, and have made that depend upon the authority of the early chapters in St. Matthew and St. Luke. What course the early Church took you may gather from our services for Christmas Day. The Epistle is taken from the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; the Gospel from the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John.

There is no allusion to the Conception in either. The ground of the Incarnation is laid in theology. Both the Epistle and the Gospel testify of the Sonship of Christ before He took flesh. That the Word is made flesh is the all-important consequence of His relation to God and to man; *because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same.* But beginning from this ground, are we wrong in reading the account of the Conception on the following Sunday? Is it not the most reasonable account (I avoid the word 'natural,' knowing what an ambiguity there is in it) of the entrance of the Head of Man into the ordinary conditions of humanity? Is not a human father precisely the designation of the particular as opposed to the Universal Man? Is not the manner in which the Evangelists state that absence, accompanying it with all circumstances which can put honour upon the earthly relation, with none which can disparage it, the very simplest that could be adopted? Is it not an evidence in favour of the genuineness of the narrative such as no external testimonies could supply, let them be as numerous as they might? Give all weight you please to the discrepancies in the stories, and see whether they can outweigh the *positive* inference from the coincidence of the narrative with antecedent probability—supposing the idea of a Son of God and a Son of Man to be in itself true—the *negative* inference from the omission of all those efforts to give an independent worth to what is extraordinary in the incident, which we know have been so frequent in all the later ages?

3. I pass on to what is expressed and to what is implied in your use of the word 'demonology,' as applicable to some of the events recorded by the Evangelists, and to our Lord's own faith respecting diabolical or demoniacal influences. I do not stumble at your word or make you an offender for it. There was a demonology among the Jews; there is a demonology among us. What does it mean? A name is not enough to denote a deep, widely spread conviction. Where that exists there must be something beneath; something which must be more than an opinion.

The *fact* on which demonology rests is, that men find themselves to be in fetters. The power which is exerted over them is not a visible power; not one against which they can use visible weapons. It has no body which they can pierce. Therefore, a materialist is able always to say that it is imaginary. A philosopher who is not a materialist can say that it is *merely* a power over the will, and therefore that the will may always cast it off. The sufferer knows that both are mocking him and cheating him. The power is not imaginary, but real. He has *not* the energy to throw it off. Perhaps he ought to have it, but you do not give it him by talking to him about a will. Thus Naturalists and Moralists are alike at fault. There is a free space left for the magician. He can produce a scheme of demonology. He says he can do far more. He boasts that he can cast out devils. You tell men that he is a deceiver. What is the good of telling them that? They want deliverance. They must get it somewhere. Enchanters must

rule the world ; they will have people and princes both subject to them—and that as much in the nineteenth century as in the first—if there is no true power commensurate with their false power ; none that can show itself to be mightier than theirs. But who can find it ? Starting from the human ground, I affirm that no one can find it. I can only talk about spiritual agencies or mechanical agencies. Practically these agencies in men—these unclean, ferocious, mad impulses—are always defeating us. But if there is a divine ground, a Theology, such as you have found to be necessary—if the true God manifests Himself to men, manifests Himself in acts—how then ? Must not some of His acts have reference to this condition of man ? Must they not be some of His chief, His most characteristic acts ? If He is a Will, not a material Being—not a mechanical Being—must He not speak to the will in man ? If He is a righteous Being, must He not speak to it that He may set it right ? If He is a Deliverer, must He not speak to it that He may emancipate it ?

The battle of a Holy Spirit with unclean spirits, of God's true Spirit with spirits of falsehood, this is *the* battle of the New Testament ; of the New not as opposed to the Old, but as distinguished from it. *There* the battle is between the true God and false gods, the righteous God and the unrighteous gods, the unseen God and visible gods. *Here* the battle is between that God and these gods, working upon men and in men. And therefore the life of Christ among men must, I should say, be, primarily, characteristically a conflict with the

powers that bind the human will ; secondarily, and as implied in this struggle—as, in fact, a part of it—with all forms of bodily disease and derangement, and with all the elements of nature so far as they try to rule a voluntary creature made in the image of God. That the Gospels should therefore tell men, not now and then by accident, but continually as a part of their very scope and business, that Christ came to cast out devils, and should connect this power with powers over the bodies of men and over the outer world, is to me the greatest witness that they fulfil their purpose—that they are what they pretend to be, the records of the manifestation of the Son of God, of the Redeemer of mankind.

I have arrived at this conviction, having grown up, as you did, in the greatest horror of demonology, having been taught from my youth to explain the cases of casting out unclean spirits in any way rather than one which should assume that they were unclean spirits, and that Christ did cast them out. How natural—how reasonable—this feeling was in those who regarded Christ as a mere man, who looked upon the name Christ as not denoting that He was anointed with the Holy Spirit by the Father, and that He came to baptize men with that same Spirit, I at once acknowledge. I cannot express how I admire them for being able to retain their reverence for Jesus in spite of the difficulties by which they were beset when they were told, in narratives from which they derived their information respecting His work on earth, that He engaged

in what must have seemed to them unreal acts, and stooped to the use of what must have seemed to them unreal language. I see in that reverence, which I am sure was genuine, the tokens of a deep, inward faith, going below all the acts and operations of the understanding, living under most difficult conditions. At the same time, I have felt an almost equal difficulty in assuming, as many assume, that these stories, so characteristic of the Gospels, were true in their simple sense of the days of Tiberius, and yet do not apply in the same sense to the days of Queen Victoria. How, I have asked myself, can the Gospel be a message to mankind if this be so? The demonology of our times has supplied me at once with an answer to this question, and with a luminous commentary on the evangelical narratives. I see that we are on the edge of all magical notions and impostures. I see that no amount of scientific knowledge saves men from the belief of them. I see that early and ingrained habits of scepticism are favourable to the admission of them. I find no power adequate to encounter them but the proclamation of the Holy Spirit of God—manifested in the acts of the Son of God upon earth—manifested, after He had ascended, in the powers which the Apostles exercised, and in the unity of their fellowship. I want no startling manifestation of such powers; no repetition of the events which the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles record. But the faith in an enduring presence of the Holy Spirit; the faith that He is working with us against all the foul and dividing spirits which are

rending us asunder ; this, I am convinced, will be found, at last, the only deliverance from superstition, from fanaticism, from the tyranny and brutality of sects. How much the simple proclamation of such a faith will have to encounter from all schools—how much it is encountering from them at this moment—I dare not conceal from myself. Dr. Williams throws out hints that the inspiration of the Apostles was the same as that of Homer and Shakspeare. Those who want to condemn Dr. Williams resolve that *they* will establish the difference ; that *they* will separate the age of the Apostles from all other ages. What is the effect of his statements and of their proceedings ? Dr. Williams suggests—though he may not mean it—that inspiration has merely to do with certain intellectual or creative energies and faculties ; the idea of a *Holy* Spirit escapes ; the distinction which the Apostles lived to assert is merged in a vague hero worship. It is the feeling of the necessity of *this* distinction which has called forth the protest against his language in the hearts of simple Christians. But what will become of them if the adverse doctrines of Dr. Phillimore and Mr. Coleridge are to prevail ? Can they bear to think that the Holy Spirit is not truly given to them, as they have been taught in their baptism and confirmation that He is ? Can they bear to think that all their good thoughts and just works do not proceed from Him ? Will they tolerate the notion which one of the counsel against Dr. Williams is said to have endorsed with his authority—so expressly contradicting the Article on

Grace of Congruity—that *good* men may now and then expect to receive these inspirations, which we feel that we require because we are not good, because without them we must be wicked? Or will those who dislike intellectual glorification accept the doctrine that all intellectual powers, by whomsoever exercised—in whatever age—are not gifts, are not from God, and, therefore, can not have been bestowed upon man by the Spirit of God? See into what contradictions the desire to suppress one half truth by another is leading us! See how these advocates, who profess to be the champions of the poor man's faith—of the faith of the Church—are undermining it! St. Paul says, '*All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit*'—all gifts, powers, administrations in every age—'*dividing to every man severally as He will.*' The counsel of the Bishop of Salisbury dare not trust the Divine Spirit with this distribution. *They* must determine the kinds and degree of inspiration. Is not this to interfere with the prerogatives of God? Is it not practically to deny the words that the Spirit who was given to the Apostles should abide in the Church forever? And so, when those Bishops and lawyers have won their triumph, they will find that they have stripped themselves of the only armour with which they can encounter the pseudo-spiritualism of the day; just as by denying that we have any faculty for apprehending the Eternal and the Absolute many of them are stripping themselves of the only armour with which they can encounter the Secularists of our day.

4. It is not, as you rightly observe, by theories of inspiration that we can distinguish the Bible from other books. Nor can we distinguish it at all till the scheme of rising from the earthly to the divine, from the perverse to the straight, from our sins to the righteous being, which prevails so extensively in the religious world, is exchanged for that theological method which you have felt to be the true one. For here, as I have said already, I find the *differentia* of the Bible. It begins from God; it sets forth God as speaking to man; God as revealing Himself to man. So it puts its claims to the most tremendous test. It offers its message as one which can meet the different outlookings of men in all directions. It announces a Revelation of the God in whom all are living, moving, and having their being; whom men in all lands are feeling after if haply they may find Him. We talk of *the religion of the Bible*. We are turning the Gospel into one of the religions of the world, which is to be proved by endless argumentations and confutations to be better than other religions, when, if it is a Gospel of God, it should meet all other religions, it should satisfy all their cravings, it should sever them from those dark fantasies and superstitions which must spring up in every land and every heart when the creature who is formed in the image of God fashions God after *his* image.

So far as we adhere to this maxim, we must be at war with much of the popular *religion* of the day. But we need never be at war with the *faith* of the

truest people or even with the faith that is expressed in popular language, which is not of to-day or yesterday. This distinction no one has brought out better than you have done. Yet I think you have at times forgotten it. Your treatment of the Bible, though in spirit and intention immeasurably more reverent than that of numbers who boast of their entire devotion to it, will offend many whom you ought not to offend; simply, it seems to me, because you have not been sufficiently consistent with your own doctrine, because you have unconsciously dropped into the method of your opponents.

You think St. Paul and St. John entered into the meaning of the Incarnation; you do not think that the other Apostles and Evangelists did. I suspect you *mean* that those Apostles have taught you lessons respecting the Incarnation which the other writers of the New Testament have not taught you. To say so is honest and reasonable. Every one should confess obligations which he has received; no one should affect obligations which he has not received. Tholuck as honestly intimates that the fourth Gospel has never given him the same instruction which the three first have given him. Both of you are justified if we give the full import to the old expression, 'Word of God,' in connexion with the Scriptures. God speaks through sundry persons, and in divers manners; to sundry persons, according to their divers manners. But there has been such a confusion between the dead letter and the living Word—such a practical denial

that that Word is really the Light of Men—that you and many serious men shrink from the ordinary use of the phrase lest you should convey a false impression. And so you do, in fact, sanction the error of those who invest the apprehensions of men with a sacredness which is not theirs. ‘St. Paul and St. John saw these things.’ Yes! but who opened their eyes to see? Who taught them? Who used them as teachers of others? The old speech is better and safer! Let us go back to it! Let us beseech our countrymen to give it its full signification. Then they will not be afraid of any trials to which the Scriptures can be subjected. Then they will be sure God Himself is subjecting them to those trials. They will not dare to stretch forth their hands to save the ark from shaking. Then, too, they will be much more in harmony with the devout men, Catholics, Puritans, and Methodists, in former days, who never doubted that the same Word of God who spoke to Isaiah and Jeremiah spoke to them and in them; spoke through all the ages of history. If they mixed guesses and superstitions with that true and blessed faith, it was because they did not enough recognise the power of the Word of God; did not accept literally enough what Psalmists and Prophets say about *their* struggles with Him—*their* reluctance to submit to His teaching. And so we shall escape that which I am sure you hate as much as I do, the consequential, patronising tone in which some of our liberal interpreters treat the writers of the Bible. We are told to connect the inspiration of

Apostles with the inspiration of Homer and Shakspeare. But if we come to the criticism of Homer and Shakspeare with the same levity with which many of these critics approach the Apostles, three-fourths of the "Iliad" will be pronounced spurious, very few scenes of "Othello" or "Romeo and Juliet" will remain. I felt years ago—I feel more strongly every day—that the deeper our reverence for the Bible, the deeper will be our reverence for all great authors; the more we shall learn from them; the less we shall apply our own narrow canons of taste to the judgment of them. I felt years ago—I feel with greater strength every day—that the more heartily we accept the Bible, the more effectual will historical criticism become; that if we lose the Bible, we shall cease to feel any interest in criticism; we shall refuse to pursue it. For modern historical criticism, by demanding more than mere human testimony to confirm facts, by asking for the evidence which is contained in the facts themselves, drives us upon that divine testimony to which the writers of the Bible appeal—to the demonstration of the Spirit and of power in the course of the world's history, and in the consciences of men. Modern historical criticism, by attaching a new importance to all the supernatural ideas which have been in the minds of different nations—making them the very key to the explanation of institutions and of the records of the non-legendary times—compels us to inquire whether there is no background to these ideas; whether *all* history has not its foundation in the supernatural—in the revelation of God to men

through a man? If you will consider these remarks in connexion with those which you have made upon historical evidence, I think you may modify some of them without weakening the force of any. I heartily agree with the general principles which you lay down respecting it. I assent to your doctrine that the facts of the Bible require as much evidence as those of other books; nay, that those facts would never have been believed if they had not brought with them much *greater* and more *various* evidence, and that the human evidence would have been nothing if the divine had not corroborated it.

5. Before I close my letter, I must say one word upon a subject of which you have spoken briefly but most impressively. You have alluded to Christ's sacrifice. You have applied the theological principle to that. You have said, that except we can contemplate God as Himself the Author of sacrifice, the sacrifice of Christ as the act of perfect filial obedience, all its moral meaning is lost, all our sacrifices become self-willed efforts, therefore the reverse of sacrifices. This is language which you have learnt from the Bible; at all events, it corresponds with the very letter and spirit of the Bible.

And you are beginning where the Old Church began. No one with the most slender knowledge of the history of controversies is ignorant that the first ages were occupied with the questions respecting the union of the Son with the Father, that sacrifice was contemplated in reference to that union. So the Cross became the

symbol of the life of Christendom. It expressed the highest love and glory men could dream of. It expressed the divine nature. It expressed the perfect reconciliation of the divine with the human nature. It expressed the conquest over sin, death, hell. Very variously, as a writer in this series has shown, might the doctrine of the cross—the effects of the cross—be represented in the schools. Every representation might catch some aspect of the all-embracing truth. But that truth became also an inheritance for the people. It moulded institutions, language, art. All worship was grounded upon thanksgiving for a sacrifice that had been made; all government was said to be a devotion and a ministry appointed by God, exercised on behalf of His creatures. Those who would have the likeness of God must humble themselves as He who was the perfect likeness of God had humbled Himself.

What a truth! And making itself felt through what falsehoods! It is easy to represent mediæval devotion as if it were the most perfect form of self-denial and self-sacrifice ever exhibited to the world. It is easy to represent that same devotion as the most mercenary scheme of calculation ever presented to the world.

Each picture is true. The second could not be, if the first were not. If sacrifice is the divine principle—the inversion of sacrifice, the conversion of self-denial into self-seeking, must be the devilish principle. Think of the sacrifice involved in the words, 'Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God. Thy law is within my heart.'

Think of the sacrifice involved in the words, 'I will offer the first-born of my body for the sin of my soul.' All light is in the one; all darkness is in the other. But the darkness belongs to the nature of all of us—Christians and heathens, Protestants and Romanists. The moment God is forgotten as the ground of sacrifice, the moment Sacrifice is regarded, not as an act of obedience to the divine will, but as a means of changing the divine Will; there is the germ of every dark superstition; a Kehama begins to rise instead of a Christ. The moment sacrifice becomes a scheme for getting something from God He begins to assume the form of a Mammon. It was so in those middle ages. The foul Antichristian leaven mingled itself with the pure Passover bread. At last it leavened the whole Church—preachers, doctors, popes. When Tetzal, with his gross blasphemies, offered the indulgences to the German people; when the learned Eck, disclaiming the vulgarity of the salesman, yet defended the principle of the sale; when the accomplished Leo endorsed the traffic which he had suggested; it was clear that the ground on which the Church stood was undermined. If it had rested in men, and not in God—in men's notions of sacrifice, and not in the perfect sacrifice which Christ had accomplished—it must have perished.

Learned men like Eck thought that the people could only contemplate sin in the form of punishment; the remission of sins as the escape from punishment. The learned Eck thought that if any principle was set up in opposition to the trading

principle, the Church would be shaken. Luther, the son of a miner, knew that the doctors were wrong in the first opinion; for he had learnt what sin was, and what remission of sins was. He was sure that what he and every peasant wanted was deliverance from a burden pressing on the conscience—was reconciliation with God. He was sure that God had sent a message of Redemption and a message of Reconciliation. There was that in the people which could heed this message, as there was in the people which could heed the message of Tetzl. But Eck was right that, if that message were preached, there would be a great shaking in the Church. God shook it, for it had need to be shaken; and all the Ecks and Leos could not hinder what He had decreed.

And so what we call the Reformation came. A glorious Gospel of emancipation to the individual conscience rang through Europe. Three centuries of Protestantism have proved how mighty it was. But they have proved that the old tendencies may adapt themselves to new circumstances; that they may combine with the very doctrine which was called forth to combat them. The necessity for personal faith in the sacrifice may be pleaded as a reason that the sacrifice is not sufficient and perfect for the sins of the whole world; that it has not actually put away sin. So all that was implied in private and separate masses, as distinct from the one great offering, may appear again. The heathen doctrine, that sacrifice is to protect the man from his Father in Heaven, may again be substituted for the Chris-

tian doctrine, that it is the fruit of his Father's tender love, and is to destroy the separation between them, which is man's curse and damnation. The doctrine that the people can only care to be told of a deliverance from future punishment, and can only understand the remission of sin as a merchandise, may be propounded once more. Learned doctors may say now, as in the sixteenth century, that it is a matter of indifference whether the Father is set forth to men as the God of salvation or of destruction; whether Christ is set forth as one with the Father, or as having a different nature and purpose; whether our prayers are to be prayers to change the mind and will, or prayers that He would pour upon us His Spirit, and bring our minds and wills into conformity with His. Now, as in the sixteenth century, those who raise these questions may be thought by the rulers of the Church to be disturbing the peace of the Church.

Yes! and now, as then, it is true that God, and not man, will disturb a peace in which there is no peace. If we, who are called His ministers, are not jealous of His Name, He will be jealous of it. He will not suffer it to be confounded with the names of Moloch or of Mammon. Others will be raised up to deliver to our peasants and workmen the message of a redemption of their spirits which we have not delivered. It will be found now also that there are ears which can hear the Gospel of Luther, as well as the Gospel of Tetzl. There may be a Reformation in the nineteenth century, as in the sixteenth; and it may be a Refor-

mation which will not divide but unite—which will bring truths, as well as men, that have stood apart, into a divine fellowship. But such a reconciliation cannot take place till the selfish trading habits and notions which have defiled our faith have been destroyed by the Spirit and by fire. For it is these that tear us asunder; as was said in the last century, a truce which is grounded on the preservation of these is not a truce of God but of the devil.

I think you and I have been taught thus much: that the Reformation which some desire—a Reformation which shall make the union of the Divine and human nature in Christ *less* a belief of the Church, which shall treat the Sacrifice of Christ as *less* mighty, less all-embracing than men in any age have considered it—is not the one we want; not the one that can restore the theology and morality of England or of Christendom. It is the attempt to substitute some other foundation—a foundation of shifting, partial experiences—for that foundation which is laid in the person of Christ, that we complain of. It is the attempt to narrow the sacrifice of Christ, by our conceptions or the conceptions of any man, that we feel to be so fatal. Holding these principles as you hold them, I think what I have said of Christ as the universal Man, of His birth, of His conflict with all our spiritual enemies, of the Bible as the witness in all parts and by its unity against our narrow conceptions of God and of man, may in time commend itself to you. I can say, for myself, that the Bible, illustrated by the prayers and confessions of

a Church to which in my youth I did not belong, offers a continual protest to me against my own feeble apprehensions of the universality of the love of God and the sacrifice of Christ, against my temptation to contract the simple testimony of Apostles and Evangelists to my measures. I used to hear among Unitarians of a future restitution for all mankind. I never could take in their words. They sounded pleasant, but they contradicted all that I saw of the condition of the world; all that I felt of the evil in myself. Mr. Carlyle's doctrine that the bottomless pit for nations and for individuals is the pit of baseness and falsehood commends itself to my inmost convictions; it is, I am sure, high Christian doctrine. But if it is so, what comfort can we find in the vision of a merely merciful Creator, who pardons men, who, after a certain number of centuries or millennium, ceases to punish them? What matters that if *they* remain the same? Mr. Carlyle has shaken all benevolent schemes which turn upon the remission of pain to their centre. But he has done more. He has shown us whither the confessions of his own country are leading. He is, amidst many inconsistencies, the true modern believer in final Reprobation. He sees no hope that nations or individuals *can* be delivered out of the abyss of baseness and falsehood; only a few happy persons, scattered over different centuries, may honour 'the veracities,' and so earn a right to lord it, for a certain number of years, over the contemptible masses from which they are the exceptions. This ultra-Calvinism of the nineteenth century surely

forces us back upon the belief of a Divine and Eternal Will, who is working through all ages to renovate and regenerate human wills. Can we prescribe limits of space and time to the operations of that Eternal Will? Does not the Cross of Christ—if we take it, as St. Paul did, to be the manifestation of the Divine wisdom, goodness, Truth—testify of a love over which no height or depth, no principalities or powers, nothing present or to come, shall finally prevail?

Very sincerely yours,

F. D. MAURICE.

P.S.—This letter was written before the publication of Mr. Stephen's defence of Dr. Williams. That defence—so immeasurably superior, not only in argument, but in theological science and in reverence, to the essay which called it forth—has thrown much new light upon one of the subjects to which I have adverted. Mr. Stephen has shown, by a careful comparison of the English Articles with the Scotch Confessions, that they proceed on entirely different maxims in their treatment of the Scriptures, and that the difference cannot be explained by the usual hypothesis of a compromise between Romanist and Presbyterian systems, seeing that the Articles deliberately affront both those systems. He has shown, by a laborious induction, that whoever is determined to identify the statements of the two Confessions, must condemn as heretics a long line of English divines, drawn from all schools—the most conspicuous lights of our Church in their different ages. He has shown further—as became an advocate for whom the interests of his client must always be paramount to more general considerations, however much importance he may attach to them—that the charges against Dr. Williams can only be admitted if the English maxims are exchanged for the Scotch, and if, therefore, men the most unlike him in their opinions and their temper of mind fall under

the same sentence with him. Those who dislike the tone of this divine as much as I do cannot feel grateful to his prosecutors who have secured him a place beside Hooker and Jeremy Taylor.

But leaving the special question for the general, you will see how much Mr. Stephen's facts force us to inquire what the *ground* of the difference between these two methods of teaching is. It is not his business to go into this discussion; he would have marred his case if he had meddled with it. All he has done is to show that, *for some reason or other*, we cannot express ourselves about the Bible as the Westminster divines expressed themselves; that naturally, inevitably, in the sixteenth century as much as the nineteenth—English clergymen have fallen into language inconsistent with the Presbyterian formulas. Is this necessity the consequence of a less profound respect for the Scriptures than that which the Presbyterians on either side of the Tweed felt once or feel now? Certainly this cannot be charged upon the divines of the sixteenth or seventeenth century, whom Mr. Stephen has quoted. Nor can it be charged upon the Church as a Church. We introduce ten times as much of Scripture into our regular devotional services as the Kirk, or as any sect of English dissenters. What, then, does it mean?

In many of the passages which Mr. Stephen has adduced, it seems to be assumed that the Bible contains somewhere or somehow the *Christian religion*; and that this religion, not the letter of the book, is what we need to believe. I cannot persuade myself that this mode of stating the case will satisfy any one. I do not wonder that Presbyterians should say, 'Christian religion! what is that? Are we to have no divine history of a nation, no fighting, no polity? Is all that to go for nothing because it is not what you call your religion; because it does not suit your dainty tastes, or serve your personal interests?' I own I like to hear men using such language as this; esteeming the Bible as a political book, claiming it as a guide in political doings. I like the old Covenanter, with all his ferocity, who talked of the sword of the Lord and Gideon, better than the sentimental English Christian who reduces Old and New Testament into a record of his individual experiences and moods of mind, or than the dogmatical English Christian who only finds in it an announcement of opinions.

But the fact is, the *formulas* of the Scotch divines respecting the Scriptures have driven them from this historical ground. They cannot connect the life of the times when men were inspired with the life of the times when they are not inspired. The acts of

God are more and more shut up in the Bible. And so it must be while the *literal* force of the beginning of St. John's Gospel is practically denied by these assertors of the letter of Scripture—while the Living Word is assumed *not* to be now, not to have been always, the Light of Man. *That* is the denial which we are adopting into our minds from our Presbyterian instructors; that is the denial which our Bishops, when they turn persecutors, are compelled to enforce. And so the Word made flesh must cease to hold the place in our belief which He must hold if we are true to our Creeds; the written word becomes the substitute for Him.

Here, then, I find the explanation of the facts which we owe so much gratitude to Mr. Stephen for compelling us to notice:—Our Articles assert a principle which both Presbyterians and Romanists, for different reasons, have shrunk from asserting. Even our best thinkers and writers have been timid in proclaiming it; have often resorted to language like that about the Christian Religion in the Bible, rather than openly avow it. By so doing, they have put the authority of the Bible in jeopardy; they have left us to the mercy of narrow literalists or unreal ideologists. But the principle of the Article has mastered them if they have not mastered it. And the question of our day is, Shall this principle be utterly denied, or shall it be put forward more vigorously than it has ever been put forward? Which question may be the same with this: 'Shall the Church become apostate, or shall it do its work for the world, as that work has never yet been done?'

I.

ENGLISH VOLUNTARYISM.

THIS year of grace, 1862, is, as we have often been reminded, the bicentenary of the expulsion of the 2,000 godly ministers from the Established Church on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662. Looking upon this event as the origin of their nonconformity, the Dissenters have not unnaturally determined upon celebrating this bicentenary throughout the length and breadth of the land in such a way as to bring into prominence those principles for which their ancestors suffered, and which they hold so dear. And surely we, as Churchmen, when we remember the difficult and delicate questions which are continually arising out of the relation of the Church to those who dissent from her, cannot be indifferent to the strange and chequered memories which this bicentenary must recall, or deaf to the voices of reproof and warning which its celebration may bring to our ears. We may have errors to deplore, sins to confess, abuses to remedy, but surely, surely we shall not allow this year, thus uniting as it were in God's pro-

vidence the Church of the past and that of the present, to pass over, without earnestly and devoutly striving to ascertain on what foundation the Church of England really stands, by what power she still exists, and for what purpose she still claims our homage and our love. Controversies are sure to arise—ill will and discord may spring up to attest their bitterness¹—but it is not, I believe, in the lecture-room or the debate that these questions will be most satisfactorily answered, but in the quiet of home and family, in the retirement of study, in the secret closet, above all, in the exercise of that Church's worship, in the fellowship of her Common Prayer, in the solemnity of her Holy Communion; there, I hope and believe, amid the excitement of this year, will many a waiting spirit receive an answer to its inquiries, a solution of its doubts, a sure resting-place for its confidence and joy. *There*, too, I believe, as Churchmen, we shall be the better able to profit by the lessons which the remembrance of that eventful day of 1662 ought to teach us, to acknowledge more heartily the debt of gratitude we owe to those who forsook our Communion, to weigh more dispassionately the duties and the dangers, the responsibilities and temptations, of our position, to cherish more dearly, and to proclaim alike to friend and foe more earnestly and more lovingly, those priceless truths which God has intrusted to our keeping as a National Church

¹ Alas! I can now say 'have arisen,' and 'have sprung up,' judging from the painful disruption which has recently taken place in Birmingham.

—truths which belong alike to all, and which lie at the very foundation of national and individual life.

For 200 years, side by side with the National Church, Christian communities have existed on the voluntary system. Deprived by the Act of Uniformity of the advantages of the Established Church, they have sustained their own ministry with but slender help from Government; they have put forth mighty efforts of Christian zeal and enterprise, until, at length, what first they were compelled—reluctantly and painfully compelled—to adopt as a system they now honour and love as a principle. The retrospect of these 200 years, full of the memories of difficulties overcome, of triumphs hardly earned and nobly sustained, of political power and social prestige manfully fought for and won; of trials, disappointments, schisms, turned into motives for renewed energy and prayer; all these things have changed the nonconformist of to-day from the reluctant representative of the voluntary system into the ardent and enthusiastic champion of the voluntary principle. Government help is not only not sought, it is earnestly refused. We, as Churchmen, are called upon in no faltering voice to show cause for our occupying any longer our position as the Established Church of the land—a position which is declared to be a direct violation of our allegiance to Christ as the only true Head and King of the Church—a position full of weakness and danger to ourselves, of menace and wrong to those who differ from us. Into the controversial aspects of this question I do not intend now to enter, as I have

already indicated my own views in a previous tract,¹ and as there is not likely to be any lack of controversy upon it during the year. I wish to view the events of 1662 in the light which the history and experience of these 200 years have thrown upon them, to state some of the lessons which they suggest to my own spirit, and the influence they ought to exert upon members of the English Church.

For it were indeed strange that a people in the very midst of us, confessing so much of our faith, bound to us as men, as citizens, as Christians, by so many ties, and yet, ecclesiastically, so separated from us, and often actively opposed to us, should thus have lived and died, spoken and worked, amongst us, erected the memorials of their name and faith on every hand, stamped their influence upon all branches of our literature and politics, and should have had no lessons for us to learn, no voice of warning for us to heed, no bond of sympathy for us to feel.

It was in obedience to the voice of *conscience* that the 2,000 men gave up their livings, their earthly all. And what do we mean by this oft-used word, conscience? That wondrous voice which is within me, which is so interwoven with every element of my being, that if I lose it, if I stifle it, I lose my all; my reason, my will, my life become a mockery; the awful witnesses of what I might and ought to have been, but can no longer be; and yet it is so mysteriously above me that I dare not claim it as mine. It claims me as

¹ Tract No. V. First Series. Pp. 45—48.

the rightful servant of an Eternal King; it demands the allegiance of my whole life; it speaks with the voice of authority, restraining and guiding me; amid all my waywardness and selfishness, bearing witness to a spiritual centre, a divine foundation on which my life and hope and strength are based.

In the presence of this stern and yet blessed reality, how feeble and lazy many of our modern expressions about 'holding certain opinions,' or 'adopting certain views,' must sound. Truth holds, adopts, moulds us. We believe it, we speak it, we act it, not because it is ours, but because it speaks with a voice; it is armed with an authority mightier than our own. It was, I believe, and all men believe, in obedience to *this* voice that 200 years ago these 2,000 men abandoned their worldly hopes and prospects, and went forth, braving the hatred of a court which seems to have made its obligations the measures of its hate, and the jeers of a world which confessed no other god than ease or pleasure, no other conscience than self-interest.

It is, undoubtedly, quite right for the controversialist to remember other and previous persecutions and ejections, when the position of the parties was reversed; it is absolutely necessary for the student of history to mark all these events most closely; if he would gain a true insight into the political and religious movements of the seventeenth century; if he would understand the storms and tempests in which our laws and liberties were nurtured and moulded into form; if he would know through what alternations of prosperity and

adversity the Church has been preserved; to what dangers and temptations she has been exposed alike in each. But I cannot refer to these other stories of persecution, with which our annals are, unhappily, at that period so full, for the sake of toning down the respect and homage due to these ejected ministers. I would only indicate, in passing, my thankful appreciation of the Christian spirit which has prompted the English Church to bury in silence the memory of these dark and bitter days, to efface the remembrance of her past wrongs and sufferings by her renewed devotion to her Master's service, by the increase of her zeal, in word and deed, for all classes and parties in the nation. We shall now search in vain, in her calendar, for any anniversary to commemorate her sufferings and wrongs. Those who love truth for its own sake, and hate persecution for its own sake, will not balance the sufferings recorded by Walker against those recorded by Neal. The Presbyterian cruelty to malignants will be odious for the very same reason that the Five Mile Act is odious. We shall recognise alike, in each party, the distrust of their own Truth, the practical atheism to which all religious men are tempted by prosperity. We shall rejoice in the blessed lessons which Jeremy Taylor learnt in the school of suffering, as we shall rejoice in the lessons which Baxter learnt in the same school. The 'Liberty of Prophesying' and the 'Golden Grove' are fruits of the same tree as the 'Saint's Rest' and his noble 'Retractions.' It must, indeed, always be recollected that the West-

minster Assembly, whatever were their virtues, were *destroyers*, overthrowing maxims and customs which had stood for centuries, and which had moulded the heart of the English nation, forcing the Scotch system not only upon reluctant Episcopalians, but upon reluctant Independents; that they were regarded as tyrants, no less by Milton than by Jeremy Taylor. It must be remembered, too, that the victorious party at the Savoy Conference, whatever sins may be laid to their charge, were *restorers*, who substituted devotion for mere dogmas, so hindering, intentionally or unintentionally, a slavery which all sects would have found intolerable. But these considerations strengthen, do not weaken, my conviction that the example of those who gave up their incomes, for the sake of principle, is one which Churchmen cannot afford to lose; nay, that they may—by God's blessing, I believe, they will—derive a far greater blessing from it, than those Dissenters ever can, who make it into an excuse for party-triumph and for self-glorification.

Such a lesson was wanted in that age of profligacy and self-indulgence, wanted by the monarch, by the nobles, by the wits, by the tradesmen, wanted most of all by the successful clergy; by those of them, and how many there were is known only to the Great Searcher of hearts, who mourned in secret that the restoration of the forms which were dearest to them had not hindered a fearful desecration of the inner sanctuary—by those who refused to acknowledge that fact and were content with abusing the Puritans instead of humbling

themselves for the sins and miseries of the land, who had so far forgotten, in the hour of their triumph, the meaning of their position as the ordained ministers of the Gospel, as to believe they were best showing their devotion to the Church and king by being violently *anti-puritan* and *anti-republican*. But, amid the fearful moral and spiritual degeneracy that marked the period of the Restoration, we must never forget there were noble teachers of righteousness among the established clergy of that day; men who, like the author of the Morning and Evening Hymn, bowed to no court Baal, who could denounce the sins of men and women in high places, not less courageously, if more courteously, than any Covenanter or Puritan. But it may be doubted whether their *words* would have been effectual, if the *acts* of men, whom they could not understand, who could not understand them, had not borne witness on the same side. Their solemn declaration that all power and property were held for God, and must be freely devoted to Him, must have penetrated many a heart, must have nerved many a spirit to a deeper consecration to God's service. It must have taught many a Churchman to ask himself more earnestly what a National Church really meant; to inquire how its claims could be reconciled with that freedom of will which is essential to God's service; to see more clearly, despite the prevailing vice, the Divine standing-ground on which the Church and the nation were alike resting.

Nor has this lesson lost any of its value by the lapse

of time. To nation and Church alike, this truth ever requires to be taught, not by word only, but by action—if needs be, by suffering. Our perils have not been diminished by two centuries of growth in all material resources, in all outward comforts. These should be new motives for trust and confidence in God, new claims to devote all we are and have to Him, new warnings to look upon all our earthly resources as His gifts, as stewardships for which we must give account to Him. They *are* temptations to the worship of mammon or fashion; not *only*, as I shall try to show presently, to members and ministers of an established Church, but certainly to all of them, from the archbishop to the poorest curate, from the noble to the beggar.

The Dissenters of 1862 claim these heroic 2,000 as their spiritual ancestors. It is good for them, I believe, to do so—good for them to feel that they are related to the past, that they are not merely absorbed in the controversies of the present moment—good, in the most emphatic sense of the word, for them to be reminded of men who, as theologians, were vehement asserters of the will of God as the only ground of all that is right among men; who affirmed that the Church did not stand on the will of bishops, kings, Parliaments, or *people*. They are assumed to be the founders of Non-conformity, and, as such, they are claimed by anticipation as the champions of the Voluntary Principle. I am far from disputing the effect of voluntary movements in the service of the Church, movements prompted

by no State influence, supported by no State grants¹ in any period, least of all in our own. The experience of the present century bears ample testimony to their mighty power for good, to the unceasing zeal and activity they have called forth, to the practical faith in God and in truth which it awakens, teaching men to set about the accomplishment of the greatest purposes with the smallest means. I am far from saying that the secession of 1662 did not give an *impulse* to such movements which they wanted at that time, and which we could not have afforded to lose, though English history proves abundantly that it was in no sense the *origin* of them. But when the *Voluntary Principle* is accepted and deified as the source of these movements, I believe wrong is done to the character and to the deepest beliefs of the men whom the modern Dissenters love to claim as their spiritual ancestors.

The very name, Voluntary Principle, is the avowed and formal declaration of the supremacy of the will, the assertion of the principle of self-will as the guide and director of each man, as the ultimate court of appeal. The history of dissent—that inner history which has left its indelible trace on the hearts of many, especially of its ministers, which has brought disquiet, discord, and sorrow, to many a home—is too true a comment upon this fact. Until very recently, in our large towns the number of Independent and Baptist chapels—and these denominations may fairly be taken

¹ Unless we except the Regium Donum, which has been recently given up at the demand of the 'advanced' Dissenters.

as the truest representatives of English dissent, both in its strength and weakness—was the almost infallible index of the number and intensity of the ‘splits’ and ‘secessions’ which had taken place. This habit of separation is undoubtedly fostered by all the habits of commercial activity, and by the absorbing claims of competition in the struggle for life. The self-confidence, the prompt decision, and assertion of the will, which is requisite for success in mercantile pursuits, finds a congenial soil in the Church; and the competitive maxim of the world is readily translated into the religious formula of ‘the right of private judgment’—that is, the right, and, by marked inference, the *duty*, of each man to stand apart from his fellows, to be complete in and by himself. The individual is everything, society nothing. Agreement in certain doctrines, or in the preference for a certain preacher, a unity which has its ground in the *will*, is the only original bond of fellowship, which may be, and often is, in the lapse of years, strengthened by deeper feelings and associations. There is nothing in theory, and the innumerable ‘splits’ among dissenting congregations show there is nothing in fact, to keep in check the ten thousand influences that are ever threatening to dissolve this unity: every man brings an additional centrifugal power into the Church, an additional tendency to fly *from* the centre. And this is too often the meaning which lies but ill concealed under the popular euphemism of ‘Religious Liberty’—liberty to dissent, liberty to make a separate sect, liberty to consecrate every new conviction and

opinion under the sanctions of a new 'Church,' to exalt self-will under the sacred name of conscience.

Unquestionably, the current theology of the Dissenter justifies this tendency to isolation. It starts from the individual. It begins with the fact and experiences of sin. It regards Christ primarily as the Deliverer from sin, or the punishment of sin; secondarily, as the Son of God, because He could not be an adequate Saviour from sin or punishment if He were not Divine. It sets individual salvation before each man as the object and prize of his high calling. This kind of teaching the Dissenters have good excuse for saying that they have inherited from their Puritan ancestors. This view of the Gospel was undoubtedly the main reason of their dislike to our formularies. But much as it possessed their minds, it clashed with their deeper theology; it clashed also with their political convictions. When they spoke out their strongest beliefs, they were obliged to start from another ground than human evil. When they addressed their admonitions to statesmen, they were obliged to vindicate social and national, as well as individual life, as sacred and divine. Thus, Dr. Owen said, when preaching before the Long Parliament, 'If it comes to this, that you shall say you have nothing to do with religion *as rulers of the nation*, God will quickly manifest that He hath nothing to do with you as rulers of the nation.' Richard Baxter said, when addressing civil rulers in his Christian directory, 'Let none persuade you you are such terrestrial animals, you have nothing to do with the heavenly concern-

‘ments of your subjects.’ These opinions were naturally weakened by their ejection. The dry protest which the Presbyterian form of Church government bore against a mere individual religion inevitably gave way; the compulsory voluntarism of the seventeenth century was transformed into the earnest, but one-sided and destructive, dissent of the nineteenth. It now finds its truest exponent in the avowed aims of the ‘Liberation Society.’

With such a theology, the idea of *common* prayer, of a united worship, cannot easily co-exist. The notion of a liturgy is opposed to its deepest convictions. Prayer, to be acceptable to God and profitable to man, must be the outpouring of individual hearts. The possibility of others joining heartily in it must depend not only on the state of their minds, but on their agreement in doctrine and feeling with the officiating minister. Hence, the absence of the sense of worship from extempore prayer—the richest and fullest it may be in itself—of which a previous Tract has spoken,¹ is, I believe, no mere accident in dissenting congregations; and as the idea of worship has thus been weakened—destroyed, it never can

¹ Tract No. IX. p. 21. ‘Dissent from and Dissent in the Church.’ The particular instance there cited refers, I am aware, to an Established Church—the Barony Kirk in Glasgow—but that does not really affect my present argument. To the same cause may also be referred the dislike of special Christian seasons, which so generally characterizes dissenting congregations; though I believe not a few of their ministers feel the want of the succession of these Christian seasons, as presenting the different aspects of Christian truth in a form independent of their own individual experiences, and superior to them.

be, in hearts that have ever felt the deep pulsations of Christian faith and love; among Dissenters it has asserted its power in the prayer-meeting or the revival—the idea of preaching as the great purpose of ministerial functions has naturally assumed a much higher importance. The minister's primary work, that on which his 'acceptance,' his popularity, his salary depend, is preaching. The mouthpiece of the people's devotion he cannot be, except so far as sympathy of purpose and feeling—a sympathy constantly liable to a thousand disturbing causes—will permit; the administration of the sacraments is rather an accident than the necessity of his position, and is ceded rather as a matter that is 'common and seemly' than as a right.¹ It is a strong and a mournful corroboration of these statements, that that vast party in the English Church which boasts of its alliance with Dissenters on all questions of theology shares to no small degree this tendency to exalt preaching above worship—that from it is proceeding the attempt to modify our Prayer-Book, in order, it is to be feared, among other results, that the sermon may be brought into more marked prominence. In its right place, as the proclamation of God's infinite love to sinful man, as the call to all men to 'worship the Lord with holy worship,' the sermon is and often has been a great instrument for good in God's hands, but when thus made practically the sole test of a minister's usefulness or

¹ See 'The True Theory of a Church,' by Rev. T. G. Horton, p. 55.

power, its real meaning is misunderstood, its true value is impaired.

It is, indeed, a strange paradox, but no less true than strange, that the very system which thus tends to exalt preaching also tends to depress and enslave the preacher. Appointed by the will of the Church, that is, by a majority, he retains his position only so long as a majority of wills are in his favour. The power which appointed can dismiss, and from that power, the most uncertain, the most easily swayed by ten thousand subtle influences, the most impatient of control, there is no appeal. I have read many glowing descriptions of the beautiful unity and confidence existing between a dissenting pastor and his people; I have often heard the blessings and glories of such a union earnestly and eloquently dilated upon, and I freely admit I have seen instances of it worthy of all commendation and praise; but these instances, so far from illustrating the freedom and blessedness of the voluntary principle, have, in reality, been departures from it—instances of the incoming of a nobler and mightier power which has awed and controlled the domineering will, and compelled it to bend before a presence higher than itself. It were hard, indeed, to exaggerate the secret fears the harrowing uncertainties, the anxious watchings of every breeze of popular feeling, which disquiet and torture the earlier years of many a dissenting minister. If, by tact, and ability, and a faithful discharge of duty, he can only maintain his ground for the first

few years, another principle, deeper, higher, one comprehending and awakening far nobler elements of our nature than the voluntary principle ever can do, comes into play; those who first brought him to his Church leave or die, another generation gradually arise who have known no other spiritual guide and father; the original relation between minister and people is daily becoming reversed by the silent but sure operation of time—the minister no longer belonging to the people, but the people to the minister—and then, *when* this position is once attained, the true theory of ministerial work and power is nobly realized. Just in proportion as the exercise of the will is controlled by higher claims, just as the people learn to feel that they must not avail themselves of the ‘right of private judgment’ against the man under whose ministry they have been brought to the foot of the Cross, just as the voluntary principle in its negative sense has ceased to be a reality, then, and never until then, is seen the fulfilment of those bright pictures and day-dreams of a united, loving, zealous Church, which so often grace the arguments of dissenting writers and lecturers. As a rule, I think, it may safely be said—and most dissenting ministers know it full well—that if to such a Church disturbance and disunion should come, they will proceed from some entirely foreign element, from the unhappy introduction of some restless, self-willed spirit from another neighbourhood, of some ‘advanced’ Dissenter who has a profound belief in the

importance of 'bringing in new blood,' who is determined to maintain with undiminished energy the great Protestant principle of the 'right of private judgment,' and who feels not the power of those deeper associations and affections which bind the members of the flock to their pastor. If, as is very seldom the case, I believe, the minister is in advance of his congregation in the advocacy of dissenting principles, more active in his hostility to the Established Church, he will generally soon create, especially among his younger members, a sufficient following to insure his safety: the conservative instincts of the older members will prompt them simply to shake their heads and offer unheeded warnings, and then quietly submit to what is called 'the advancing spirit of the times.' But if, as I firmly believe is far oftener the case, the minister, with his deeper culture, his wider reading and experience, his more catholic spirit, should be inclined to advance *in the other direction*, should see a meaning and a truth underlying and sustaining the National Church, should be guarded in the expression of his dissenting principles, he would generally be made to feel the bitterness and mockery of a religious liberty that had no surer foundation than the ever-shifting wills of his congregation, most likely he would have to repeat in his own person the tragedy of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662.

The ejected ministers, it is said, bore witness for the priceless blessing of freedom of will in the service of

God. I think they did, though they might not have liked that language. But it deserves the most serious consideration whether the modern Dissenter is not unconsciously bearing witness for the most cruel slavery. Is not this self-will, this assertion that every man is made a law unto himself, the enemy of liberty and law, as well as of unity? Are not their ministers groaning under this slavery, even while they console themselves with imputing it to the ministers of the Church from which they have separated?

In another respect, too, the testimony of 1662 has been strangely affected by the advancing light and experience of these 200 years. That testimony was a solemn warning alike to Church and nation that property and wealth must be sacrificed to principle and conscience: now, in effect, property has become a great power to fetter the dissenting ministers and teachers, binding them down too often to a formal and traditional service. The natural influence of wealth, the consciousness of power, and the energy of self-will, which it tends to produce in its possessors, generally make the wealthy man a fearful burden upon ministerial thought and freedom—a burden, of course, unfelt—nay, rather welcomed—so long as that ministerial thought and energy are willing to abide *within* the circle of the sympathies and opinions of the wealthy disciple; but if they venture to pass beyond that charmed circle, if they dare to adopt a different phraseology, to appeal to broader and deeper sympathies, to rebuke in too pointed terms cherished sins, or

approved opinions and fashions, then the minister must be made to feel that the disciple *is* 'above his master.'

I need do no more than refer, in passing, to the relation in which the voluntary principle places the Church towards those who cannot afford to pay. I am not going to enter into any statistics to prove its efficiency or inefficiency; but this much is clear, that, on this principle, the vast number of our poor, the ragged, the sick, would be thrown on the *charity* of the Church; they would have to crave as a favour, what now they can claim as a right. I do not say the Church would not, or could not, rise equal to this demand, but this I do say, that vast numbers would never seek religious services at all on such terms. Deprived of their parochial rights, and, not among the least important of these rights, deprived of any claim upon the time or services of the clergyman, usually, at least, a man of culture, they would not be willing to be delegated to *missionary* supervision, to be looked upon as mere outsiders, as dependents upon the casual attentions and services of religious charity, as illustrations for reports, or subjects of discussion at annual meetings.

In thus speaking, I am not to be supposed to be drawing a complete picture of the actual state of dissent. I know full well there are far other and nobler elements in it than those to which I have referred. But as we are again to be earnestly invited during the year to trust the fortunes and destinies of the Church entirely to the much-vaunted voluntary principle, I feel

bound to show, so far as my own experience will permit me, some of the evils—the gigantic evils—which mingle with, and, it seems to me, mightily overbalance, its good.

If, by saying so, I intimated that men are not to bring their sacrifices and offerings of their own free will to the door of the Tabernacle, I should contradict the teaching alike of the old covenant and of the new; I should, above all, set at nought the doctrine of the English Church. That Church understands by the will, not the voting power only, but the whole man. It entwines all his strongest affections, his tenderest associations, his deepest sympathies, as a member of a human family, as a citizen, as a Christian, round Him who is the object of his highest worship. Admitted into the Christian Church by baptism, as Isaac was admitted into the Family-Church, as the Israelite was admitted into the Nation-Church, by circumcision, before the dawn of consciousness or reason, independently of the consent of our wills, receiving as our spiritual birth-right the gift of God's Holy Spirit, the source of all love and obedience in childhood, of all purity and manliness in youth, of all righteousness and true holiness through life, receiving this blessed gift as the bond of family union and domestic joy, we grow up to the elevating and gladdening consciousness that the Church's atmosphere and blessing are surrounding and permeating our whole life, ever pointing us beyond herself to the Great Threefold Name as the centre and foundation of our being. Every act, every service of the

Church calls upon us to worship and rejoice in the love and presence of our common Father, to see His glory, and read His name in the accomplished redemption of His Son. We are thus called upon to rejoice and worship, because we *are* already His redeemed children, we are already Christians; and it is our own fault, our own sin, if we have ever known ourselves to be otherwise.¹ We have already received our birthright, and, if we have chosen to follow Esau's example, we, too, may share Esau's fate, and 'find no place of repentance, though we seek it carefully with tears.' We may exalt our self-will to the throne which God's Spirit alone ought to occupy, we may exercise the 'right of private judgment,' and separate ourselves from the Church; like the prodigal son, we may go out from our father's home; all this we may do—alas! we shall do, if left to our own imaginations, to 'the devices and desires of our own hearts;' but this we shall invariably find, that the *separating*, individualizing power is represented by the world, the uniting, harmonizing power by the Church. The world

¹ It is a significant fact, one indicative of the presence of a deeper faith than is expressed in the recognised formulas of his denomination, that Horace Bushnell, an American Congregationalist divine of no mean power and celebrity, lays it down as the fundamental principle of the 'Christian nurture' of children—'*that the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise.*' I willingly plead guilty of having appropriated in this sentence some of the words of this excellent and thoughtful writer.—*Christian Nurture*, by Horace Bushnell, D.D. I have a somewhat hazy remembrance of a similar sentiment, more cautiously expressed, in an address delivered, I think, to the pupils of Mill-hill School, by the Rev. T. Binney, of London, and afterwards printed.

separates from the Church, not the Church from the world. We are members of God's Church, not by reason of our wills, or our private judgments, but because of God's infinite mercy, revealed through His Son in the gift of His Holy Spirit.

The Church of England, as she expresses herself through every page of her Liturgy, does *not* appeal to this much-talked-of 'private judgment,' but she does appeal to something infinitely higher and holier. In this respect, she differs as widely from the adherents of the voluntary principle as from the Church of Rome. She does not ignore this much-prized 'right,' she does not pretend to deny that men have the power of exercising it, and that in ten thousand cases its exercise is most necessary and beneficial; but she does strive to raise us above our private judgment, above our own notions and opinions and prejudices, into the higher regions of God's truth and love. The effort to crush this private judgment is a sad and injurious one, but it would, indeed, be a mercy if we could teach those men who talk about it most loudly at public meetings to see how, if it is made the *foundation* of Church life, it must ever turn all our earnest hopes and prayers for unity and peace and liberty into a mockery, it must make 'the communion of saints' an unreal, artificial, uncertain union. Cut off alike from all association with the past, all confidence for the future, it must turn the glorious Gospel of God's love into dry doctrines and formulas of human opinion; it must give to men, who are anxiously craving for the Bread of

Life, the stones of theological disputation and argument. I know full well that in the secret places of their own hearts, in the devotion of their closets, even in the sanctuary of their public worship, these men do *not* make this principle the foundation of their spiritual life and hope; but, would to God! they would at once avow their need of something far better, far holier than this—that they would bring their vaunted principles nearer to the standard of their inner faith.

Thus, by her very constitution, by her earliest act of recognition of her members, the Church imposes a salutary check upon the supremacy of the will; while, at the same time, she appeals to our strongest affections, and demands the hearty consecration of will and power, of heart and soul, to her Master's service. She invites, she commands, the poorest and humblest of her children to join in her every act of worship; she makes the people as essential an element of her service as the priest. I confess I look without one envious feeling upon the privilege of my dissenting brother, of making his minister feel his dependence upon *his* vote, while the Church assures to me the far higher privilege of joining in the utterances of a 'Common Prayer,' and thus secures to an untold extent my independence of the attractiveness or unattractiveness of any particular preacher.

But, in reference to the special lessons suggested by the bicentenary commemoration of 1662, I think the Church of England has a far higher mission before her than any I have yet referred to. If she is faithful to

the principles and maxims of her own Liturgy, she will assert more broadly, more boldly, the very truths for the sake of which these two thousand of her ministers departed from her communion; she will by that faithfulness be most entirely prevented from ever adopting a negative and sectarian position; she will strive to turn her political triumphs and defeats, her wealth and power, into instruments of blessing for all classes and parties; she will most fully vindicate her meaning, and discharge her responsibility as the National Church.

I. The Calvinistic training of the Puritans had naturally taught them to base all their theological teaching upon the will of God, to make this the central fact of all religious life and strength. Surely, on *this* ground, no man can charge the Liturgy with speaking with an uncertain sound. The will of a loving God and Father is confessed in every prayer, in every song, in collect and in creed, as the source of all our hope and strength. To that will are attributed the blessings of Christ's atoning death and resurrection: we see in the person and work of the Son, 'God manifest in the flesh,' the only Deliverer from sin and death and hell; to that will revealed through Christ are ascribed the blessings of our pardon, our justification, our sanctification; to that will alone, and to no merits or claims of our own, to no priestly power or intercession, are we taught to give our most hearty thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit. All that Calvin or his great master, St. Augustine, taught about referring everything to the will of God, the English

Church believes and adopts into all her utterances of prayer and praise ; she only shrinks from following the great Genevan reformer or his professed disciples when they change, or seem to change, the will of an all-loving and all-righteous Father into that of an arbitrary and capricious Sovereign.

II. The 'Headship of Christ' was another precious truth held by the Puritan divines of 1662, and one still earnestly maintained by their modern representatives. It can only be by turning every word of the Liturgy into a lie that the priests and people who belong to the English Church can refuse their heartiest assent to this all-important fact. The Church teaches her children that Christ claims each one as His own, that He is the source of all the light and truth that is in each one. But more than this ;—not only does Christ claim to be the Head and King of each individual man, but the ground and centre of all family, social, political, and national life. The Church proclaims most vehemently, most livingly, the Puritanic doctrine of the Headship of Christ ; but she most earnestly opposes every notion in the Puritanic theology which narrows or contradicts this doctrine, which makes Christ to be the Head, not of our redeemed humanity, but only of a special body of men, who have separated themselves more or less widely from the ordinary relations of life, and have formed an exclusive and artificial society of their own : she teaches us that our *whole life*, in all its relations and duties, is surrounded and permeated with the blessings of His redemption.

Infancy and childhood, marriage and home, trade and politics, all, all are His. 'We are not our own; we are bought with a price.' We may strive to degrade each duty and relation by our sin and selfishness; we may defile the temple of God, 'but the temple of God *is* holy, which temple we are.' Human life and society, with all its hopes and cares, its toil and rest, are declared to be intrinsically holy by virtue of Christ's redemption. The holiest saint can add no new virtue, no new grace, to any duty or relationship; he can only make manifest the holiness and grace which already belong to each one, as parts of Christ's kingdom: the vilest sinner cannot make unholy what God has thus claimed as His own, through His Son; he can only degrade *himself*, and show how utterly unworthy he is of God's mercy and love.

And it is because she teaches all her members to acknowledge the Headship of Christ over our whole life that the Church of England claims to be an integral part of our national life, that she claims alliance with the State. She cannot in one breath proclaim this Divine Headship, and with the next proclaim that Christ has nothing to do with the exercise of earthly government and authority. It is because as Churchmen we believe that all power and authority are derived from the Son of God and Son of Man, because we believe that our national life and strength have their ground and centre in Him, because we believe that He is our covenanted Head and King, because we would be jealous of 'the crown-rights of the

Redeemer,' because we dare not limit the power or dim the glory of His cross, that we shrink from the dark negations and contradictions of modern anti-State-Church teaching, we decline to accept a 'liberation' from a bondage we do not feel, we refuse to keep back a truth and a principle which was never more needed for Englishmen than now.

Our opponents may drag forth hidden abuses to light, they may point the finger of scorn at any anomalies or inconsistencies they may detect—if by all this they make us more sensible of our short-comings, more faithful to our principles, more earnest in God's service, more self-denying, more humble, surely we have great cause for thankfulness—but the question at issue between us is not one of inexpediency or abuses. Until they can convince us that earthly governments occupy a province *outside* the circle of Christ's redeeming power and love, until they can show us that He is not the King of kings and Lord of lords, that He has not claimed all principalities and powers as His own, until they have taught us to deny the doctrine of the Headship of Christ—a doctrine believed alike by Puritan and Episcopalian—we must maintain inviolate the principle, we must admit the claims of our National Church.

We are often told, in tones of mingled pity and contempt, that the Church of England is a *political* Church. Would that the accusation were more true, more faithfully representative of the Church's life and acts, than it really is! I, for one, most heartily rejoice in every symptom that betokens the Church's increased activity

in this direction. I would fain hope that the evidences of a decreasing party-spirit, of a growing determination to judge men and measures by something higher than a party-standard, are among the results of this increased activity. If, by the teaching of her priests and the example and influence of her people, by their renewed faithfulness to those *special* truths, which, as a National Church she is bound to proclaim, the Church awakens every Englishman to see that our polity stands on the immutable ground of the Divine name and righteousness, and not on the ever-shifting sands of 'public opinion,' if she teaches us to acknowledge what witnesses for truth underlie all parties, how these may be turned into lies and contradictions by our party-spirit, if she teaches us to connect passing events with permanent principles, I cannot think her political influence will be a source of weakness to her or to the nation, or an argument for alienation from her communion. That there are grave and subtle dangers and temptations arising out of this position we cannot, must not, doubt. It is too easy, as we all know from sad experience, to accommodate our Christian convictions to the demands of party-interest, to serve self under the guise of religion, to bring the spirit of intrigue and corruption into the Church; but great as is the danger, we shall not avoid it by shirking our duty. For the sake of those who differ from us most widely, who declare most incessantly that their liberties are threatened, their consciences outraged, by the very existence of a National Church, we are bound, as Churchmen, to take our

stand amid the busiest din of political strife, in the very hotbed of political intrigue and corruption, and remind ourselves, for we need it daily, and our fellows, that we are the subjects of an invisible King; that our will, the united will of every man, woman, and child, in the country, is not the foundation of our law or government; that God's name and God's law and God's covenant are our only, our eternal foundation. I do not believe that at the sound of these words all party-strife would cease, that corruption and lying would be banished from our land, but I do believe that many a man would be taught to feel a far deeper responsibility in the exercise of his political functions; he would, while holding his own convictions with increased earnestness, learn to be more tolerant of the conscientious convictions of those from whom he differed; he would, above all things, be anxious to see righteousness and justice prevail; he would hasten to tear away every wicked excuse which he or other men might have put forward to palliate or conceal any form of political iniquity; he would seek more humbly, more prayerfully, for Divine guidance amidst the maze of conflicting interests; and the burden of his hope and prayer would be, 'THY kingdom come, THY will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.'

III. The doctrine of the Spirit's influence, as the only awakener and sustainer of spiritual life, is another great truth held by the Puritans and the modern Dissenters. However strongly and intensely they believe this doctrine, I am sure they cannot believe it

more fully, they cannot entwine it more closely with every act of worship, every utterance of faith, every sacrament, than does the Church of England in her Liturgy. This truth is the burden of the Baptismal Service; prayer for the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit constitutes the special distinction of the Confirmation Service; every collect repeats the same great petition. The Church bids us claim this Holy Spirit as the source of all wisdom, and purity, and love, in every man; she will not allow us to limit His influence by any notions of our own about conversion or creed; of that influence her sacraments, to which *all* are invited, are at once the channel and the witness; without that Divine Spirit neither priest nor sacrament can avail aught. It is only by the *wilful* disregard of the appointed means, only by the perverse rejection of Divine teachings, that we can deprive ourselves of that blessed influence which the Church assures us is our birthright. Her prayer is not that God would give unto us His Holy Spirit, as though we had it not, but that He would not '*take away* His Holy Spirit from us.' On this point all sections in the Church are, I believe, entirely at one. The High Churchman may seem to exalt the Church and the Sacraments, the Low Churchman may love to dwell upon the necessity of saving faith. One may insist, perhaps, too exclusively on correctness of doctrine, another may appeal to the testimony of a holy life, but all are agreed in maintaining that all true faith, all holy life, is the gift of the Spirit; that from that Living Presence alone the Church's services and sacraments

derive their life-giving power. Many bitter words and cruel taunts might have been spared, had the disputants in each party remembered this fact in their angry denunciations of the other.

Thus, on the three cardinal principles of Christian theology connecting our human life and hope with the will of the Father:—the atoning death and resurrection,—the ever-living intercession and mediatorship of the Son, as the Head of all things in heaven and earth,—the presence and influence of the Spirit,—I believe the Church meets the demands of the most earnest of the nonconformists far more fully than any Church can possibly do based entirely on the voluntary principle, and which, unfaithful to a very important part of its mission, disowns all connexion with the State. She calls upon them to give up nothing, to renounce no cherished belief, but to realize them in higher relations, to confess them in a broader sense, than they have ever dared to do; to recognise a deeper foundation for individual faith and strength; and, amid all our differences of opinion and clashings of will, to rejoice in one common centre of unity and strength, in the person of the Son of God and Son of Man, its ever-living and only head.

The inquiry about the connexion of what is human and earthly with what is divine, an inquiry which has been intensely increased by the anti-State Church controversy, and which often disquiets the minds of thoughtful men among the nonconformists, and for which, I believe, at least but a very unsatisfactory answer can be found in the teaching or practice of

dissent, will find its truest solution here. The Church is, as we have seen, distinctly a *human* constitution, claiming all the relationships and duties of our common daily life, our homes, our trade, our politics, as the subjects of her special ministrations, as included within her fold, as integral parts of Christ's kingdom. She is distinctly a *Divine* constitution, revealing to us the Divine name, and surrounding us with the pledges of the Divine love and presence, amid the cares, temptations, sorrows, joys of life. The human and divine are thus blended together, yet neither merged into the other; the divine 'manifesting forth its glory' through the human; the human showing forth its strength and beauty only as the image of the divine, renouncing all claims and pretensions of its own, and rejoicing as the shadow and reflection of a higher power, and holiness, and love. When it claims to be itself the highest, to be a law unto itself, it becomes inhuman, devilish.

These considerations may enable us the better to appreciate the justice of a demand which has already been preferred somewhat modestly and timidly, but which we must expect to be more boldly uttered amid the excitement of this bicentenary commemoration: that the property of the Church shall again become *national* property. Into the question involved in the word 'again' I do not pretend to enter. But it is obvious that this demand presumes that the Church is not now a National Church. It is frequently asserted that, if the phrase 'National Church' means anything at all, it must mean a Church which faithfully repre-

sents all the varied thoughts and opinions of the nation. Of course this is reasonable enough, if there is no deeper foundation for a Church than each man's individual opinion, no Eternal Truth as the ground of each man's 'trowing,' if 'private judgment' is the sole basis of individual faith, and if 'public opinion' is the only ground of all law and authority, from whose verdict there is no appeal, save to itself—an appeal from present public opinion to that of the future—from Philip drunk to Philip sober. But if this is really so, then is the Bible a mockery and a delusion, the history of the Church an unmeaning puzzle, and all human hope and experience a miserable game of chances. Churchmen and Dissenters alike have always revered the Bible as the revelation of the Divine name. On that revealed Name the Church stands; it is a National Church, because it proclaims the one Eternal Name on which the nation stands, the one Eternal King from whom all power and authority come, the one Eternal Judge who stands even now at the door, judging the hearts and reins of ruler and ruled alike, the one Eternal Truth before which all hearts must bend, all judgments yield. It is the Church of the nation, and not a sect, because it claims in baptism every man, woman, and child, as its members, and as the members of Christ. We *become* members of a sect or party by our own choice, by the adoption of its tenets; we *are* members of the Church independently of our own choice, not because we hold certain tenets, but because God in His mercy has claimed us for His own through the death of His

Son, and has given unto us His Spirit. Thus, the Church's property *is* national property in a far higher and truer sense than if every individual man held the fee-simple thereof. Our opinions may be reflected in the Church's teachings or not; the majority of the nation may abide within her communion or not; the Houses of Parliament may, under the guidance of the 'advanced' friends of liberty and progress—of a liberty which is the destruction of all law and order, the consecration of the tyranny of self-will, of a progress which is leading us further from God—diminish or confiscate its revenues, but she still remains the NATIONAL CHURCH so long as she is faithful to the great facts of the Christian faith, faithful to the principles of her *Common Prayer*; so long as she bears her witness to every member of our nation of his Christian citizenship; so long as she points each and all to God as the centre and ground of our national, social, and individual life.

Thus have I read the story of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, in the chequered light thrown upon it by the experience of these eventful two hundred years. The retrospect will surely impress us all with one solemn and glorious truth, that the Church stands not on the will or holiness of man. The unchristian zeal which was oftentimes not ashamed to use the unholy means in God's service, the profligacy of court and people, the confusion and rending of bonds of fellowship consequent upon the preceding anarchy and strife, all these were not sufficient to destroy the Church of the seventeenth century; she still remains to bear the

mightiest testimony for God's truth alike to all classes, to be the most successful messenger of His Gospel, especially among the poor and outcast of the nineteenth; she still sanctions with her presence, and consecrates with her blessing, every event and duty of our life. The memory of 1662, the reflection on her subsequent history, compel us with humility to acknowledge our sins and iniquities, and thankfully to confess that our Church is founded upon the rock of God's unchanging righteousness and love. I find in the very constitution and services of the Church itself the strongest condemnation of the sectarian spirit of the Churchmen of the seventeenth century, or of the present day; and there, too, I find the fullest exposition of those very truths which the Puritans and their modern representatives have seceded from her for not declaring. The experience of these years has taught me most seriously to doubt the efficacy of the voluntary principle as the basis of the Church's existence, and at the same time to rejoice most heartily that a voluntary principle has been awakened in the members of the Church, prompting them to devote the best of their earthly possessions to the service of God, and proving, by the best of methods, that there is no necessary antagonism between a Church united with the State, and thus showing forth in daily practice an essential aspect of God's truth, and a Church appealing to her members to bring their free-will offerings to the altar. I see in the existence of a national Church the witness for God as our Covenanted King. I believe that the more

closely and faithfully we abide by the teachings of the Liturgy, the more faithfully we shall discharge our duties as citizens and Christians, the more earnestly we shall strive to win back to our communion those who have left us, by the catholicity of our hearts and the nobleness of our lives, the more humbly we shall confess our own sins, and strive to exalt the cross of Christ as our only ground of hope—the true meeting-place between earth and heaven, between man and God.

II.

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE IN AMERICA.

BY AN ENGLISH CLERGYMAN.

BUT was not the real work of the Puritans in the seventeenth century, on the other side of the Atlantic? If the secession of 2000 men from the ministry of the English Church is worthy of all respect, is not the departure of the Pilgrim Fathers from England itself to found a new England, worthy of more admiration still? And shall we not find on that soil the real trial of the voluntary principle? 'Here,' say the Dissenters, 'it has worked under great discouragements. The competition of sects has not been unrestrained. They have been surrounded by the baleful influences of an Establishment. There, they have had no external impediments. The different religious bodies have not been disturbed by the domination of one. They have not been persecuted or patronised by the State. The State has been exempt from their interference.'

I am quite aware that an Englishman can do only most imperfect justice to this subject. It wants all the illustration which it can derive from the local

experience of those who have grown up in the States ; from men thoroughly acquainted with their theological, as well as their political, feelings. The few remarks I wish to make will only be of the slightest value, if they suggest reflections to serious Englishmen, still more to the native American, whose familiarity with facts which strike a foreigner may make him indifferent to them. Most of what I say would have been applicable to American society before the late Secession. If I refer to that, before I conclude, I shall draw lessons of hope from it, not of despair ; I wish to show that the good which the Puritans did may be claimed by their descendants ; and that a tremendous crisis may be the means of expanding this good and of making it profitable to other nations.

1. My first remark will be the sequel to one of Mr. Langley's. He has observed that the Puritans, as such, were not assertors of the freedom of the Human Will, but of the absolute authority of the Divine Will. What is true of the English Nonconformists, is more strikingly true of the Pilgrim Fathers. Their *special* characteristic was the belief that everything they *were* as saved and redeemed men—that everything they *did*, in traversing the sea, or in subduing the earth—was to be traced to God's appointment and decree. The thought of acting in any affair whatever, spiritual or secular, according to their own will, was horrible to them. 'Free Will! Voluntary Principle! Cursed 'Arminianism! Doctrine of Devils! Far be it from 'us. We come to establish God's Law ; to abolish

‘ the licence which men have permitted in their
‘ earthly carnal legislation ; to introduce restraints
‘ upon human inclination which the ungodly Prelatists
‘ never dreamed of.’

What errors the New England legislators fell into in their pursuit of these objects, by their adherence to these maxims ; how they confounded sins with crimes ; how they weakened the conscience by bringing outward penalties to bear upon it ; how frightful was their treatment of those who were suspected of witchcraft, &c. ; all have heard. I do not dwell upon these offences, though I think them worthy of all reflection. What I am anxious to point out now, is that their strength as well as their weakness lay in their intense opposition to anything like a voluntary system or a voluntary principle, in whatever form, personal or social, they encountered it. They regarded it—not as a divine doctrine which they had left the old land to assert ; but as one of those accursed opinions derived from the Babylonian harlot, which they had shaken off the dust of the old land from their feet to protest against. There, men were bowing down to mortal wills—they might be the wills of prelates, they might be the wills of kings. They would assert in opposition to these only the will of the Everlasting Jehovah ; who brought the Israelites out of bondage and reigned over them, bidding them count their swords as His swords, their judges and magistrates, as His judges and magistrates ; who would establish a like commonwealth among them, the pilgrims of the seventeenth century,

if they were faithful to His covenant and kept His commandments.

Those who speak with reverence of these colonists and of what they effected, as I would always wish to do, must keep this characteristic in their recollection, and must assume it as the ground of their admiration, and must exercise their voluntary rights in changing all the figures which it presents to us. This distortion must also make the most important passages in the after records of American theology and philosophy unintelligible. English Dissenters will hardly be disposed to undervalue the influence of President Edwards. *The Minister's Wooing* of Mrs. Stowe shows how mighty and abiding has been the influence of his teaching upon the life of his country. But the power of that teaching consists in the reassertion of the Old Puritan belief, that the will of God is the sole foundation upon which the existence of men in this world or any other can rest; in its indignant denunciation of every attempt, to make the will of man anything but the creature and servant of that will. The circumstances in which Edwards lived unquestionably hindered him from applying his maxims to politics as his Puritan ancestors wished to do. So far as he did not—so far as he was obliged to draw a line between what was true in philosophy and theology and true of human life altogether,—he became the mere head of a school of dogmatists, whose talk was worth just as much, and just as little, as the talk that was opposed to them. But,

as Mrs. Stowe has shown, the belief of Edwards and of those who really thought as he thought, had nothing of this outside, superficial character. It penetrated their whole being. It interpreted all they spoke, and did. It made them consistent and sublime. It made them awfully dark. The absolute will was that by which they strove to regulate their acts; the perfection of it gave them all their repose, and all their hope; the contrast of it with what they saw in others and felt in themselves drove them nearly to despair. Mrs. Stowe trembles while she records their own experiences and the effect which they produced on the minds of those about them. But she evidently feels that a weaker doctrine than this—even if in her own heart she may sometimes sigh for it, even if she may think it more congenial to the temperament of the race for which she is chiefly interested, more promising on the whole for their emancipation—would have deprived Americans of their sterner virtues, of all that has availed them most in their struggle with nature. She evidently hopes that something better and more gracious than the confession of an absolute crushing will may be in reserve for the next generation. She doubts whether if that is the divinity of her country, Atheism may not be sought as a refuge from it. Yet, she does not see how the doctrine of Edwards can be modified without being lost, or how New England could bear the loss of it.

2. But if the voluntary principle was thus trampled upon and denied by the Puritan politicians of the

seventeenth, by the Puritan metaphysicians of the eighteenth, century, how has it found its way into American society? Clearly it *has* found its way into the very heart of that society. Heresies have started up, on the soil of the Pilgrims, on which they would have wasted no idle anathemas—which they would simply have chased out of their borders. The choice of forms of worship, which they would have prohibited, is freely offered to their descendants. New Englanders can, if they please, become adherents of the old prelacy or of the papacy, which their fathers cursed. They can adopt the abominations of Quakerism, or of Universalism. They may become Emersonians; they may become Mormonites; they may try one of those beliefs and then, if they like, abandon it for the other. In one sense we have here a grand development of the voluntary principle. In another sense we have a proof how little the will of men can effect. For, clearly, this state of things is exactly that which the will of those, who founded the different colonies, would have striven to prevent. Each would have preferred the exclusive domination of his own opinion. If this freedom most directly contradicts the Puritan scheme of the Divine government, may we not say that it most directly illustrates the truth, from which that scheme of government was deduced? Has not the Will of God—a Will deeper in its purposes, wiser in its means, than we can fathom—ordained that struggle of different elements in the religious life of America, in which *they* would have seen nothing but the destruc-

tion of all godliness; in which, if it were to be permanent, if it were to be adjusted by any poor compromise, *we* might see the approaching fulfilment of their worst prophecies?

I believe, assuredly, that the counsel of God has been accomplishing itself—is accomplishing itself—through this conflict of sects; that those who wish to escape from it into any past condition, which the history of the Old or the New World shadows out to us, are faithless to God's promises, and are not worthy of the future which He is preparing for the sons of men. But while I use this language deliberately, and without qualification, I am bound, at the same time, to ask what this competition of sects—of Churches, if you like to call them so—has done, or is doing, for the removal of any of the great curses by which mankind is affected? It is always better to be definite than vague in such questions. The English Dissenters agree with me, that there is one curse by which American society is afflicted. What have the sects done to protest against *this*, or to remove it?

Mrs. Stowe's *Dred* might be appealed to as confidently upon this point as the *Minister's Wooing* on the one to which I have just alluded. Considering all her antecedents, all her prepossessions, her testimony should be of paramount weight. Still, she may have been misled by her ardour in the cause to which she has devoted herself; she may have expected an impracticable virtue from religious bodies; she may have accused them wrongly of truckling to the public

opinion of their neighbourhoods, and to the tyranny of wealth. It may be fairer to invoke the judgment of the English Dissenters themselves. They have, in a number of cases, deliberately abjured their connexions with congregations in America, professing their own religious opinions, because they were tolerant of slavery, if not open defenders of it upon Scriptural grounds.

But there have been enemies—active enemies—of slavery in the Northern, some even in the Southern, States. What has called them forth? So far as I can make out, the opposition may be traced to several different and inconsistent influences. 1. To the old Quaker feeling which was from the first protestant against all distinctions of sects, of tribes, of colour, as interfering with the purposes of the Divine *Spirit*. 2. To the Roman Catholic body, which, by its very constitution and forms, sets at nought all distinctions of sects, colour, nations, as interfering with the unity of the *Church*. 3. To the modern class, of which Dr. Channing may be taken as the best known and most popular specimen—though men of the most various opinions may have followed in his wake—their common characteristic being a dislike to all distinctions, of sects, as well of colour, and perhaps of race, as interfering with a broad and general *humanity*. 4. To those who, like Mrs. Stowe, combine something of this *humanizing tendency*, with something of the older Edwards' divinity, and who in each of these characters find it difficult to sympathize with any of the sects.

Supposing this to be the case, we have some curious evidence bearing upon the voluntary principle. The main objection—repeated in all form by Dissenters—felt to be very strong by Churchmen—against an Established Church, is that it secularizes the minds of religious men, and exposes them to the demoralizing influences of the outward world. The main blessing of a voluntary principle—asserted in every form by Dissenters—felt by many Churchmen—is, that it would leave Christian bodies unshackled to bear their testimony against what they know to be the most prevalent and dangerous anti-Christian tendencies in the society where they were placed. The Dissenters of England, crushed and depressed by the atmosphere of an Established Church, yet find themselves obliged to declare that their own moral standard is much higher than that of those who are free from that calamity; obliged to tell them that *they* are crouching to the world, that they are apologizing for its worst evils. On the other hand, the opposers of slavery are persons who, unlike in all things else, are alike in this, that, next to slavery, they most dislike the competition of sects; that they hardly believe the blacks will be emancipated from the one plague till the whites are emancipated from the other.

3. Thus far I have spoken only of one side of the subject. But English Dissenters say that the union of State and Church is at least as injurious to the first as to the second. The separation between them should be as much coveted by the politician as the

divine. 'Of that separation America has furnished
' the one complete example. Elsewhere there is always
' some notion that the State grew up under religious
' sanctions and must be upheld by them; and that it
' must therefore foster religion. In America we see a
' federation of States, bound together only by ties of
' mutual interest: each one of them having a govern-
' ment entirely independent of the different churches
' or sects within it.'

I am far from objecting to the whole of this statement. The doctrine that a State is supported by religious sanctions, and that, as payment for these, it is to uphold one religion or many religions, is, I conceive, a godless and mischievous doctrine; the child of falsehood and the parent of falsehood. It was the maxim of the Roman empire when it ceased to believe that anything was true, when it knew that its own acts were not true. It was the maxim of Louis XIV. and the support of his tyranny. It was, to a great extent, the maxim of our Stuart princes. So far as the Puritans hated it at home, so far as they bore witness against it in New England, they deserve our deepest gratitude. *How* they bore witness against it I have tried to explain. They fell back upon the old Testament doctrine that God calls nations into existence; that He is the King over the nations. They did not ask help from men's notions or modes of worship; they rather asked help of Him to put down all notions or modes of worship that were contrary, as they deemed, to the Divine pattern.

But New England theocracy owed a reserved homage

to Old England's earthly king. It was a servitude; yet, not greatly felt for a long time—not interfering seriously with internal legislation. When it became galling, much of the old faith had disappeared. It was no longer a trial for New England Puritans to consort with Quakers of Pennsylvania, Episcopalians of Virginia, even Romanists of Maryland. When the time came that the yoke of Great Britain could be thrown off, that effort must be made by a union of men of the same language and blood, of different creeds. It was a federation of colonies or states; it could be nothing else. One difficult to maintain, as experience has shown; always suggesting questions whether the interests of the separate states or the interests of the Union are to be paramount; one liable to dissolution, if any number of the states felt that they had a common interest against the rest. But it has lasted on till our day. A wonderful sense of unity has existed under all tendencies to disruption—a sense of the duty of preserving that unity whatever private motives might tend to disturb it.

Whence has this come? I leave the English Dissenters to explain it as they can. I trace it to that deep conviction in the minds of their ancestors, that the state had another ground than mere convention; that a nation is *not* a mere voluntary federation which can at pleasure dissolve itself. That conviction could express itself in no distinct words. The eighteenth century was the century which tried to shake off all dreams of theocracy, which thought that it *had* shaken

them off. The language of Puritanism would *then* have been an insincere language; it would have been a mask to hide thoughts utterly unlike itself. Nevertheless, the seed which has fallen into the ground and died, may bear fruit. As the old Puritan self-denial came forth in the thrift of Franklin; as he taught his country lessons, which he had learnt from his ancestors and translated into the forms of his own time; as the lightning which he drew from heaven, illuminated some of the gold dust which he bid the readers of 'Poor Richard' stoop and scrape together upon earth, so it is also true that the ideas of government and freedom, which appeared with much pomp and in the newest fashion at the time of the Revolution, were impregnated with an older belief, and gained their substance from that. And always, in the subsequent struggles of Federalists with Democrats—in the adherence of the latter to France, of the former to the country of their fathers—one may perceive an unconscious recurrence to that conception of a nation which the Puritans had derived from their study of the Old Testament.

Can there be any revival of this theocracy in the nineteenth century? Of *this*, I think none. I do not say so merely because the phrases—still more the principles—of the Puritans have been so directly and literally *reversed* by those who profess to be their modern representatives. But the demand which the slavery controversy in America has aroused—were there no other—for some ground of a *human*, not of a mere *national* existence—the increasing conviction that a

nation must either find this human ground or must *rest* on the distinction between the citizen and the slave—passes so far beyond the limits of Puritanism, that a relapse into it is, I conceive, scarcely possible anywhere, absolutely impossible in the country where its achievements were the greatest and most striking. What I desire religious men to consider is, whether this human ground is to be a worldly ground. According to the old Puritan doctrine of a mere elect nation, of which the Jewish nation is the model, it must be. According to the new Puritan doctrine of a religious society which is merely composed of individuals voluntarily uniting, it must be. The modern impulse towards secularism is one result of these doctrines; the modern impulse to Romanism is another. The first affirms that if we are to be human we must cast off the bondage of divinity; that that *must* be sectarian. The second says that divinity must be sectarian—sectarian even if, as in England, it tries to be national—unless we admit a universal Church, with the Pope as its centre. French doctrinaires, who have grown up in dread of Jesuits and Ultramontanes—even French Protestants—see only this alternative; and for the sake of order, morals, even freedom, prefer Romanism to Secularism. They dare not part with a pope—they would prop his falling throne by all possible means and appliances—for he bears witness that there is a spiritual principle which binds human society together; he is, they say, a protection against that headless world of atoms which is sure at last to fall under the dominion of some imperial tyrant. I can understand their feeling; if I

did not believe in God I should share in it. Because I believe in Him, I cannot think that a fiction is the one plank between His universe and an abyss of nothingness. I cannot think that the worst government in Europe, which those who are nearest to it feel to be most intolerable, is the the one image upon earth of the kingdom of righteousness and peace, the kingdom of Christ. I cannot think that a Power which would crush all diversities of thought, speech, life, is the power of that Spirit who quickens, renovates, unites all. If the old creeds, which the Pope says that he believes, and commands the nations to believe, are *false*, he may be a great necessity, the substitute for the Eternal Lord who has left the world to perish in its own self-will and confusion. If these old creeds are *true*, as I hold them to be, there can be no necessity for such a substitute, because the Eternal God has not left the world to perish in its confusion and self-will, has not left humanity without a centre. Protestantism, Anglicanism, Liberalism, may not destroy the Popedom. If God is, and He reigns, He may declare that a counterfeit of His government shall exist no longer, that He can deliver the world from sects and from atheism without the aid of the Bishop of Rome.

Such words will make very little impression upon countries tolerably at ease; countries which have leisure to bestow on the arguments of *Liberation Societies* and *Church Defence Associations*; which fancy that *they* can determine how a Church and State are to be separated, or how they are to be kept in union.

If Church and State can be separated—can be united—by their disputations or by divisions in the House of Commons, both must perish, for there can be no substance in either. The Church, according to the Conservative theory, is that religious body in a country which receives pay for preaching good order and respectability to the inhabitants of the land; the State is that body which tries to keep up good order by the aid of the policemen and the soldiers, and finding that it cannot, hires these preachers. The Church, according to the Liberation theory, consists of those good people who have chosen Christ to be their Master, and who, not finding Him a sufficient Master, have chosen a number of names and notions by which to describe themselves, and to divide themselves from other men. The State is that government over men which has nothing to do with Christ, and of which He takes no cognizance. Certainly a Secularism which pronounces Christianity to be utterly obsolete—a Romanism, which suggests that there was a Divine government on the earth once, and that it still casts a shadow—if a dark shadow—over the earth, must be more potent than such theories as these.

But a country thrown into a condition like that into which the States of America are now thrown will find the utter helplessness of these doctrines, and of all that spring from them. The sword must devour for ever—it must become the one judge of controversies, the one ruler of nations—if there is not a Will as real, as almighty, as the Will in which the Puritans

and Edwards believed. It must devour for ever if that Will is, as they half believed in their hours of darkness, a Will to destroy the greatest portion of the universe, only to save a small part. To such a Will men cannot turn from the impotence of their own wills, from the despair of all that they see around them. It is no refuge from the agony of brothers perishing by the hands of brothers, it holds out no hope that men who have been treated as outcasts may be admitted to the rights of brotherhood. A Will wholly to good, a Will entirely to redeem, a Will which has entered into conflict with the evil that men's selfwill has brought upon the universe, with all actual misery, with all the misery that a spiritual being anticipates, with Death, the Grave, Hell—a Will which has triumphed over all these, a Will which has restored and glorified humanity, a Will which has proved that it can bring human wills to renounce their chains, to acknowledge their divine liberty; this, this only, can be any comfort to men struggling as those children of our race and speech are struggling; in this only can there be a hope that they will come out of that conflict humbler and truer; cured of the dream that the world can be set right by boasting; convinced that there is an order, which they did not create; able to teach new nations and old nations, that that order is one which recognises all men as voluntary spiritual creatures; which bids them abjure the self-will that has deprived them of their dignity, and has made them by turns oppressors

and slaves. America will tell Europe that the confession of a Universal Church—a Church for all human beings—is not a lie, that it has only become a lie when we have supposed that a Church could exist without a living God. America will tell Europe that the more universal and divine the Church is, the more it will sustain the separate fellowship of nations, the less one will clash with the other. America will tell Europe that it is not a question whether the Old World shall have the same institutions as the Old, or the Old as the New; but, whether the institutions of the Old, and of the New,—which may be various as the races and tempers of men are various—shall be the institutions of God, or of the devil; whether the loyalty and chivalry, which European Christendom has vaunted, shall be turned into servility and baseness; whether the liberty, of which the New World has boasted, shall be the liberty to oppress. A question, indeed; but one which no men, in the New or Old World, can resolve. Those Christians, who meditate upon it with any seriousness, must change their thoughts upon it into a prayer; the only prayer which Christ can offer with His sacrifice; the prayer that God's Will may be done in earth as it is in Heaven; that our wills may work as the ministers of His.

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