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## ARTICLE IX.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

**THE FULL DIVINITY OF CHRIST.**

I WISH to be understood as holding to a theistic element in Christ which has never elsewhere been manifested or expressed. In brief outline, I will try to set forth how and why I have and hold this conviction. I am convinced of the existence of God. This conviction comes to me from two sources — religion and science. I believe God presides over and in and through matter and its forces, and in mind in its potencies. I am certain of his presence and action in physics and psychics. Science gives testimony to that fact in the mathematics of matter and force; religion, in the phenomena of ethics. God, then, presides over both realms — the physical and the psychical.

If God would make revelation of himself in and to humanity, to me it would be a strange conclusion that he would appear in one of these realms to the exclusion of the other. Such half revelation is, to me, irrational. If he has made a being that can somewhat understand him in each of these realms and one who has to make adjustment in both, it seems to me he would wish to set forth the unity of both which exists in himself.

Wordsworth says:—

“Strange then not less than monstrous might be deemed  
The failure if the Almighty . . . .  
Liberal and undistinguishing”

in one realm

“Should hide excellencies”

in the other.

It makes no difference in which realm you start, you would expect expression of one mastery over the whole. That has

been the common expectation of mankind. It was an expectation which met Jesus at every turn. He respected it. Over and over again he asserted his mastery in both departments. "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Questioned as to his authority in the field of psychics, he said: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, . . . I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." This command the sick of the palsy executed, and the multitudes "were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion" (Mark ii. 3-12). That multitude did not seem to doubt that they had seen theistic control from Jesus in the domain of physics.

Over and over Jesus appealed to what he did in physics as confirming what he said in psychics. "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John xv. 24). Here is the assertion that he had exerted theistic dynamics as well as proclaimed theistic truth. As to history, there is no history of Jesus that does not show him a master in physics as well as in psychics. All the early record and all the early traditions carry along this dynamic element. It is sufficient to put in evidence the writings of the New Testament and of the Fathers.

I have done myself the justice to read the Book of Mark while I am writing this note. There are critics who hold that Mark's Book was the one first written, and that it was given out about the year 60. I am not averse to that position. But what of it? I think we may assume that Mark as a young man saw and heard Jesus. As an old man he wanted to write some things that had impressed him when young. I give this as my conclusion after reading Mark—there are ten words in his writings that relate to Christ's acts in physics to one in psychics. This seems to me natural. Mark was evidently a photographer of acts and events. This is evident on the face of his writing. He plunges at once into the action of Christ rather than into his teaching. The gospel as ethical and spiritual truth had been in proclamation during all the active

years of his own life. Dynamic control in nature in his old age had largely dropped from view.

But how much had been done in psychics it is only necessary to remember that when Mark wrote Paul was near the end of his career. Mark seems to have assumed that everybody would know or could know Christ's teaching. He evidently wanted to call attention to a certain kind of fact that accompanied its "beginning." His first chapter has but one ethical word from Christ in it, and that is, the word "repent" — a demand of religion as old as man and sin. But the chapter is crowded with Christ's dynamic control in nature. People were "amazed" at these acts, and they crowded about him to receive the benefit of his physical power or to see its exertion. In one of Mark's longest chapters — the fifth — there is not a single reference to anything that can be called a religious principle: it is all taken up with acts of theistic dynamism. There may be adumbrations of ethics connected with many of the physical facts; but those facts mainly possessed the mind of the author.

Mark assumes the gospel: he is not a preacher or expounder of it. There is more of ethics in the testimony of the two female slaves that comes to us from Pliny's letter to Trajan than in the whole Gospel of Mark. Mark holds attention to the "beginning" of the gospel, and with him all is "beginning" from the first public appearance of Christ to his ascension. Christ's last command was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature"; but Mark does not tell what that gospel was. With him it was an atmosphere in which men lived, and moved, and had their being. That was then preached. But Mark wanted the setting from which it sprang — its "beginning" — to be preserved in history.

There is a tendency now to cast away some of the theistic acts of Christ or some of the facts pertaining to him recorded in the Gospels. The doctrine of the Virgin Birth seems to be at focus now for denial. But will the clergymen who join the forces of denial here go forward and deny the resurrec-

tion? If not, why not? The one event is no more irrational than the other. The doctrine of the resurrection is something "the world will not willingly let die." If the end bears witness to theistic control, why may not the inception? I have read whatever of infidelity, skepticism, agnosticism, and criticism I could find this side of Celsus. Whatever I have found that was antagonistic to the theistic function of Jesus in both realms—physics or psychics—I have been forced to conclude was the result of narrowness of view, a neglect to take account of some fact or principle that lay open to apprehension, which should have been considered, and to which rational value should have been given. There is a mode of practice in business whereby a man can limit his responsibility to perhaps a certain specified sum. The man does not put himself and all his resources into the business. It seems to me that the adverse criticism which refuses to Jesus theistic potency in both physics and psychics is akin to this limitation in business. Paul may be considered an apostle of the gospel, mainly, in psychics: Mark of the gospel, mainly, in physics.

I see that the new Kansas City Declaration of Faith gives us a psychic document. Its doctrine of God has not an intimation of him as Creator and Ruler of the universe. As to that domain it is non-theistic—has nothing to say. While science is everywhere coming upon evidences of mind in the institution and management of the physical universe—evidences of intent, design, purpose—it might have been well, if, in such forthsetting of religion, "mercy and truth had met together," salvation and chemistry, religion and science, "had kissed each other." A comprehensive doctrine of God ought not to be silent on the connection of God with physics. If Mark be good for anything, Jesus Christ as representative of God was not silent. Mark may come to his own yet under the conclusions of theistic science.

Wherever I see a man rejecting the New Testament assertion of the manifestation in and about Jesus of theistic potency, from the virgin birth through the resurrection to the

ascension, I see one who seems to me to be doing business under the sign "John Smith, Ltd."

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AN APT ILLUSTRATION.

THE following extract from a letter recently received from an esteemed correspondent in England is worthy of reproduction:—

"One curious thing has lately occurred to me. No book written in the 'spirit of the age' ever quotes as an authority any book that was written more than forty years ago. There is a book called 'Foundations, by Seven Oxford Men,' which is making some noise over here. (I forgot. You have reviewed it.) It never quotes even Westcott and Lightfoot, who were the deities of the last generation. An old Huntingdonshire farmer once took me over the ruins of Sawtry Abbey, founded by the sister of William the Conqueror. Pointing to a double row of holes in the earth, he said that they once contained the foundations of the pillars in the nave, but that he had dug them up to mend the roads with. The only difference between him and the 'seven Oxford men' is that at least he *did* mend the roads, and they have only succeeded in making the roads impassable."