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THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE question of the precise sense in which the books of the Bible are inspired has, for the British Churches, lost much of its interest, though in parts of the American continent it is still a burning question. One wonders if those who attach primary importance to the acceptance of some theory of inspiration realize that the first Christians had not a single book of our New Testament, and that for at least four or five generations after the Crucifixion the New Testament, in the sense in which we understand the phrase, did not exist. A storehouse of information on the whole subject has been opened for English readers by the publication by Messrs. Williams & Norgate of a translation, by the Rev. J. R. WILKINSON, M.A., of Harnack's *The Origin of the New Testament* ('Crown Theological Library'; 6s. net).

The evidence seems to show that it was only in the last twenty years of the second Christian century that the collection of 'The Books of the New Covenant' acquired a relatively fixed and definite form, though as a collection the books existed between 160 and 180, and there are authors even of the third century to whom the books of the Old Testament alone are 'Scripture.'

It is well, then, at times to remind ourselves that, in the nature of the case, to begin with at least, Christianity was not a religion of a book; or if, in any sense, primitive Christianity was a religion of a book, that book was not the New Testament, but the Old. The very idea of a collection of books of the New Covenant, to take their place alongside the books of the Old Covenant, and even to take precedence of them, was comparatively late in its origin.

Why was it that the New Testament never wholly superseded the Old; and why is it, that in spite of all the misunderstanding and worse to which it leads, the Old Testament is still regarded as an essential part of the Scriptures of the Church? That it should be so is by no means to be taken for granted. The Gnostics rejected the Old Testament, as did most of the 'heretical' sects of the second century, and it is easy to see how difficult it must have been for Gentile Christians to sympathize with much of its contents. Even when it made good its claim to be in the Christian canon, a certain degree of inferiority attached to it. To Irenæus the Old Testament was 'the law-giving for bondage' as the New Testament was 'the law-giving for freedom.' Why, then, did it survive?

Harnack gives several reasons. In the first place, it was felt that the God of salvation was also the God of creation. Further, the Church, following Paul's guidance, regarded the Old Testament as

the book of the Old Covenant, the Covenant of the childhood of the race, while the New Testament was the book of the Covenant which God made with the race in its maturity. But, in Harnack's view, the chief factor in preserving the Old Testament for the Church was its apologetic use in controversy. When religions were valued according to their age, Christians needed the book which showed that their religion went back to the creation of mankind. To this most of us would add that the Old Testament as a whole has been preserved, because of those large sections of it, in which the voice of God speaks to all ages with an appeal so irresistible that the Church simply could not allow it to perish.

The New Testament, as we have it, is not the only conceivable New Testament. There is nothing in the Old Testament exactly corresponding to the Gospels, nothing at all corresponding to the Epistles. The literary activities of the early Church took various directions, any one of which might conceivably have given us quite a different New Testament. We know that very early in the history of the Church at least one collection was made of the sayings of Jesus. Probably at least one Gospel was in existence at the end of the first Christian generation. The Christians soon became fond of collecting proof-texts from the Old Testament, and at least one collection of such proof-texts seems to have been early in existence. Any one of these might have been added to the Old Testament to form the Christian Scriptures.

Again, the Apocalypse of St. John is the only survivor (in the New Testament) of a type of literature to which at one time great importance was attached, and which might have formed the norm of the New Testament Canon. Or again, the Didachē, 'The Teaching of the Lord by the Twelve Apostles,' which is actually older than our (collected) New Testament, suggests that the Church might have been satisfied with a work that traced the ethics, the life, the worship, and the ordinances of the Church to the Lord through the Apostles. None of these things actually happened. What form, then, did our New Testament actually take?

In the first place, we have the four Gospels. The prominent place occupied by the Gospels in the life of the early Church is shown, among other things, by the enormous number of MSS of the Gospels as compared with the rest of the New Testament. Protestantism has tended to give the Gospels something less than the paramount place which is their due, but in our generation the Gospels are again coming into their own. We are realizing afresh that to be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus, and that we cannot follow Him unless we know what manner of Man He was.

But why *four* Gospels? Irenæus tells us that there must be four: since the geographical directions are four, and there are four principal winds, the cherubims were four-faced, and the living creatures of the Apocalypse were fourfold. The chief inference we draw is that the Anglo-Israelites and Apocalyptists of our day cannot claim to be pioneers in their peculiar methods of Scripture interpretation. It is very inconvenient to have four Gospels, as every one is aware who has tried to teach children the story of Jesus.

We can ignore the differences in the genealogies of Jesus, in the story of the Birth at the one end of the life and the Resurrection at the other end, and in many of the incidents and sayings that are recorded in between. In some cases we can attempt a more or less convincing 'harmony.' The inconvenience remains, at least for teaching purposes. In opposition to Jülicher, Harnack brings forward evidence to prove that the existence of different, and even to some extent inconsistent, versions of the same incident in the Gospels was, in very early times, felt as a difficulty.

It seems clear, too, that the Gospel writers had no idea that they were contributing to a symposium. The formal style of Mark's introduction

shows that 'the author meant this to be *the* story, not one among many stories! Luke hints in his preface that he is dissatisfied with the Gospels he has read (including Mark's), and so he writes a Gospel that is to replace the earlier attempts. Matthew, again, is clearly intended for public reading, which neither Mark nor Luke professes to be; while in the case of the Fourth Gospel, all who accept it, *ipso facto*, accept its superiority.'

There is other evidence, too, for the existence of the feeling that there should be *one* account of Jesus. The first Gospel and the third are really 'harmonies' of the second Gospel and other documents. Tatian's Harmony of our four Gospels was intended to supersede the separate Gospels, was meant to serve the Church as a whole, and did in fact obtain very wide recognition in the East as 'The Gospel'; while there was apparently at least one other Harmony composed in the second century.

Why, in spite of all this, did the four Gospels survive? Partly, perhaps, because each Gospel was the favourite of one of the great Churches. The heretical Churches may have unconsciously contributed to the result, because in the early ages every separated Church of which we have any knowledge had only one Gospel. Again, doubtless, the Church had penetration enough to see that each Gospel was worthy of preservation; though this consideration alone might not have insured survival, since the 'Sayings' has perished as a separate document.

The factor, however, which Harnack chiefly stresses is the need the Church had of 'testimony.' Each Gospel bore the name of one who was either an apostle or had been in the closest conjunction with an apostle. In conflict with the false tradition of the Gnostics, this fact gave the Church an immeasurable advantage. The fourfold Gospel could bear witness with a power that no Harmony could wield.

The very differences between the Gospels, like the discrepancies, real or apparent, between Acts and the Pauline Epistles, proved to be a blessing in disguise, since it compelled men to a critical study of the records. Had there been only one Gospel and one story of the Apostles, the New Testament might have become as the Koran. But statements difficult to reconcile challenged investigation, and refused to let the human mind lie benumbed under a theory of inspiration.

The Gospels are, however, only one section of the New Testament. The four books of the story of Jesus have the place of pre-eminence in the New Testament, but for reasons, partly historical, partly doctrinal, they were felt not to be enough. Two questions arose and had to be answered. How was the work of Jesus carried on after His bodily presence was taken from the Church? The answer given was that it was carried on by the Apostles inspired by the Spirit. Further, what guarantee was there that the traditions about Jesus and His work were authentic? Again the answer came that it was the Apostles who guaranteed the truth of the tradition.

Thus the Apostles came to occupy a position of supreme importance in the thought of Christians. (We must not assume that it was the Church which first gave them that position. Harnack has no sympathy with the type of criticism which says: 'There were twelve tribes of Israel, and so the number twelve crept into the tradition of the apostles.') In Rome, at the end of the second century, the New Testament was called 'The Apostles,' as the Old Testament was called 'The Prophets'; and a glance at the titles of the New Testament books satisfies us that the ultimate test for inclusion in the Canon was that a book should bear the name of an apostle or of one connected in the closest way with an apostle.

It was then fully in accordance with the development of thought in the Church that the Epistles of Apostles should take their place in the Canon.

But why among the Apostles was such prominence given to Paul? He was not one of the Twelve. He does not claim to have seen Jesus in the flesh, so that his 'testimony' to that extent was second-hand. The heretics, especially the Gnostics and the Marcionites, found in his writings, or thought they found, abundant support for the positions they occupied. To the Orthodox, Paul proved a very troublesome champion. He had spoken of 'the God of this world'; he had taught that the Law multiplied transgressions; and his doctrines of predestination and of the Divine hardening of the heart were hard to reconcile with the Father God of Jesus.

The fact seems to be that Paul had established himself so strongly as the apostle of the Gentiles that the Church simply had to accept him. No Church, inspired in any degree by the spirit of Christ, could fail to recognize in Paul a great gift of God. If the natural definition of an apostle would exclude Paul, then the definition had to be enlarged.

How was it done? There is one book of the New Testament that bears no author's name. The Acts of the Apostles gives us detailed information of only one or two of the Apostles; yet it gives the witness of all the Apostles, and that witness authenticates the position of Paul. Thus Acts fitly stands at the head of the second section of the New Testament.

The hall-mark of apostolic authorship, the criterion for admission to the Canon, also fixed the temporal limit of the Canon. When the number of books written by apostles or 'apostolic men' was complete, then the material to be ultimately included in the Canon was complete. The canonizing of the New Testament books has done much to obscure their interpretation. 'Within a sacred fundamental document everything must be regarded as equal in value, character, and significance. Canonising works like whitewash; it hides the original colours and obliterates the contours.'

The existence of a Canon leads men to transfer to the record the reverence which is due only to those of whom the record tells. The closing of the Canon has tended to blind men to the continued working of the living God. It has given rise to the idea that life reached a splendour in New Testament times which it has never since attained; that God revealed Himself then, and moved men then, as He does not now. All this is the price, perhaps the inevitable price, we have to pay, for having enshrined in an imperishable volume the books which, all down through the ages, and more in our own day than ever before, God has used in leading men to Himself.

The history of the little Quaker body repeats, on a smaller scale, many aspects of the history of the Church at large, and throws light on some of its problems. If proof is required of the truth of this, it will be found in a volume of essays on *Quaker Thought and History*, by Mr. Edward GRUBB, M.A. (Swarthmore Press; 5s. net). Like all that Mr. GRUBB has written, these essays are scholarly and illuminating. There is a particularly fine discussion on the Use of the Mind in Religion, viewed in relation to the Quaker doctrine of the Inward Light, but having a much wider interest.

George Fox and his friends were forerunners of Schleiermacher and Ritschl in their revolt against the dogmatic conception of religion. They insisted that Christianity was not in essence a doctrine to be believed, but an experience to be entered into and a life to be lived. Our dogmatic orthodoxies on the one hand, as well as our rationalisms and pantheisms on the other, result from giving the human intellect an undue place in religion. Against this, Quakerism was a fervent protest. The early Quakers, however, did not consciously depreciate the use of the mind in spiritual concerns, or hold that it had no place at all. But they inherited certain orthodox views of their time which ultimately led them in this direction. One was the

doctrine of total depravity, which tended to represent the human mind as incapable of dealing with Divine truth; the other was a tenet of philosophy which divided up the world of experience into two compartments, separated by a rigid wall—the natural and the spiritual, the purely human and the Divine. This led to the Inward Light, which was recognizably Divine, coming to be regarded as something altogether non-rational and non-human, while any mental activity in regard to spiritual things was suspected as 'creaturely activity' and definitely renounced. 'The Quietism that marked the Society of Friends during the eighteenth century was the result, in part, of the low condition of religious life at the time, but still more of the intense fear of "creaturely activity," which itself resulted from the unfortunate inability of men like Penington and Barclay to conceive of a Light that was at once human and Divine.'

This Quietism was gradually broken up by the impact of the Evangelical Revival, which, with its insistence on the supreme authority of Scripture, led to a disastrous conflict in the Society of Friends. 'The transformation which the "orthodox" body underwent in the years between 1830 and 1860 repeats on a small scale some of the features of the Reformation. Both movements were Evangelical, and both were very largely a revolt against authority—in the larger one the authority of the Roman Church; in the smaller, the authority of Quaker tradition. In both cases the outcome was the substitution of one form of authority for another—in neither was the mind of man set really free. Again in the Society of Friends, as in most of the Churches after the Reformation, the Bible was set up as the final and absolute authority in religion, the source of all our knowledge of God and of Divine truth. The teaching of the Inward Light came to be stigmatized as "the delusive notion that impressions on our own minds might be superior to Scripture." Thus the fear of undermining the authority of Scripture replaced the fear of "creaturely activity," and, as after the Reformation, the human mind remained in fetters.'

Where lies the safe path to Christian liberty of thought? Modern psychology teaches that the mind or personality is one, and not a bundle of separable faculties. It works in various ways which we call faculties. It is at work in sensation, in perception, in intellect, in emotion, in will. It also works in valuation—that is, the perception of difference in *worth* as between true and false, beautiful and ugly, right and wrong, and our inevitable assent to that which presents itself to us as the higher and rejection of the lower. Reason in its largest sense is identical with self-consciousness or mind; it is that which assents to truth of whatever kind—truth of fact, of beauty, of goodness. Intellect is the power we use when we seek to prove or demonstrate relations between the objects of thought. 'Now where, in this psychological analysis, does the Inward Light come in? Its foundations appear to lie in that aspect of Reason which deals with the fundamental postulates of science and philosophy, and also with the æsthetic and moral values of life—with the truths that cannot be proved, but must be personally apprehended. We can rightly say that it is by an inward light that we know a flower or a poem to be beautiful, or an action noble.' But it is in our knowledge of God and Divine things that the Inward Light finds its main sphere. God can never be proved by an intellectual process, but the religious experience of mankind points to an impact upon man of an unseen power which he calls Divine. And this is pre-eminently true of the impress which the character of Jesus, as a revelation of the inmost nature of God, made on His first disciples and can make on us.

This inward light, by which we are impelled to accept the truth when we see it, is not merely a human faculty, but is the Spirit of God Himself, thinking His own thoughts in us. In that case there is no harm in the fact that the records of Christ's life are fragmentary, that they contain uncertainties, that they may be intermingled with legendary elements. For the Spirit knows and recognizes what is of the Spirit. 'The greatest

need of our time and of all times, is that men and women should be growing in this power of faith or insight into the nature and character of God as revealed in Christ, so that it may be to them no truth learned from books, no argument painfully mastered and perhaps forgotten, but an actual experience of their own which comes to them with first-hand certitude. . . . If we have this aim constantly before us—of leading men and women into this Faith which is the harmonious development of all their highest powers—then we need not fear to encourage the freest use of their intellectual capacities in the study of God's ways with men.'

The Rev. W. J. FARLEY, M.A., B.D., is certainly well within the truth when he says in his recently published *The Progress of Prophecy* (R.T.S.; 6s. net) that 'to a large number of Christian people the prophetic part of the Old Testament is a sealed book.' Indeed, it is unhappily true that to a large number of Christian people the whole of the Old Testament is practically a sealed book. But a peculiar pathos attaches to the popular ignorance of prophecy, inasmuch as it is now all but universally conceded among those whose opinion matters that the prophetic section of the Old Testament is, beyond all comparison, the greatest. Cornill hardly exaggerates when he maintains that 'the whole history of humanity has produced nothing which can be compared in the remotest degree to the prophecy of Israel.'

It is to dispel this lamentable ignorance that Mr. FARLEY has written his book, which he describes as 'an attempt to set forth in outline the connexion of the Hebrew prophets with a divinely-guided national history; the special messages of the prophets to their own age, and the elements of permanent value in their utterances; the unity amid variety of prophetic teaching, and the progress of Hebrew prophecy until its culmination in Jesus Christ.'

All this has been done before, but it cannot be done too often. Every generation needs to be confronted afresh with those mighty figures of the Hebrew past, and to have its conscience quickened by a re-interpretation of their message. The great interpreter should be, like Sir George Adam Smith, competent alike as scholar and expositor; and Mr. FARLEY'S book, solid if not brilliant, attests his thorough competence for the task he has undertaken. It comes, too, with special commendation from scholars of note: Professor Stevenson of Glasgow; Professor Findlay of Manchester; Professor Elmslie of Cambridge; and Principal Kiek of Adelaide, Australia. We therefore approach such a book with a bias in its favour.

While Mr. FARLEY is obviously familiar with the recent English literature on Prophecy, and has made good use of G. A. Smith, Kirkpatrick, Farrar, Harper, W. B. Stevenson, Skinner, T. H. Robinson, etc., he makes no allusion to important recent contributions by German scholars, such as Duhm and Sellin, and only once have we noticed a reference to Hölscher. Considering the general aim of his book, which is to give 'a plain account of Old Testament prophecy in the light of modern scholarship which may be helpful to the ordinary Bible reader,' this does not, perhaps, greatly matter, though no one can ever read the lively pages of Duhm without stimulus and enrichment. It is therefore occasion neither for surprise nor regret that he does not consider the view which has been championed by Duhm, Sellin, and Nowack, that Habakkuk comes from the time of Alexander the Great—a view which has been definitely rejected in favour of the traditional view in an able article by W. W. Cannon in the current number of the 'Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.'

It would be impossible, even in a popular work, to traverse so much ground without raising points which might be the subject of legitimate controversy. Apart from larger questions, there are odd phrases which strike one as not being quite in harmony with the definitely historical approach which

characterizes most of the discussion. For example, to describe Moses as a 'philosopher,' or the prophets of Elisha's time as 'collected into schools or *theological colleges*,' is, we fear, to create a rather misleading impression; and equally misleading—in spite of the care with which Mr. FARLEY has guarded his statement—is the assertion that the coming Messiah was the 'essential theme' of prophecy.

Again, it is disappointing to read that 'Jehu's *act*,' which was nothing less than the sanguinary extermination of Ahab's family, 'was approved by God, but his *motives* were probably wrong.' The proof which Mr. FARLEY offers for this extraordinary statement is, of course, 2 K 10^{30}, where doubtless we are told that 'the LORD said unto Jehu, Thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart.' But surely it is obvious that this is nothing but the opinion of some 'man of God' who shared the rather savage ideas of his time, and the real mind of God on such a transaction is expressed by Hosea (1^4), who, with the maturer judgment of a hundred years later, denounces it as a crime.

On other points, too, one might venture to differ. In spite of Ezekiel's 'beautiful comparison of Tyre to a stately ship' in the fine poem of ch. 28, there is surely a touch of exaggeration in describing him as 'perhaps the greatest literary artist of the ancient world,' especially if one is to include Greece in the comparison. Again, in his discussion of Mal 3, Mr. FARLEY does not appear to adopt the now commonly accepted opinion, which greatly enhances the interest of the passage, that there it is the godly, not the ungodly, who challenge the ways of God; and a true picture of Malachi should hardly slur over the fierce traits in his vision of the future, when the wicked are to be trodden under foot of the righteous (4^3).

The book thoroughly justifies its title in that it presents a really living picture of the 'Progress of Prophecy.' The distinctive messages of successive prophets are not allowed to evaporate in generalities, but are shown in their intimate relation to the historical circumstances of the time, so that the reader, besides being initiated into the development of the prophetic movement and thought, is introduced to most of the salient episodes of the history, of which he thus acquires a connected view. In this connexion the only surprise is that Mr. FARLEY should discuss the latter part of Isaiah (40–66) immediately after Is 1–39 and before Micah—an arrangement which tends to obscure the progressive revelation which the book is in part written to illustrate. One could also desiderate a sharper distinction between Is 40–55 and 56–66. On p. 225, chs. 40–66 are grouped together as uttered 'almost certainly by one of the exiles,' though it is usual now to date chs. 56–66 about the middle of the fifth century B.C., roughly about the time of Malachi.

One interesting and commendable feature of the book is the attention given to the less well-known prophets, such as Haggai and Obadiah. One star differeth from another in glory, but each has its own peculiar glory, and the brilliance of an Amos or Hosea should not be allowed to obscure the light which a Haggai has to shed upon the duties and problems of his own generation. Many of Mr. FARLEY'S characterizations are trenchant and happy. Take this, for example. '"Return to God," Amos thunders, "for in front of you is destruction." "If you only knew what God is, how long and kindly He has loved you, you would return," is the tender appeal of Hosea.' Again, in their respective attitudes to Judah, Zephaniah is described as the realist, Nahum as the idealist. And so on.

Mr. FARLEY'S general method is to sketch the prophet's times, then to give a brief account of his book, and then to suggest its significance for us. Habakkuk's teaching, *e.g.*, he summarizes thus: (1) The Self-Destructive Power of Evil, (2) The Moral Security of the Righteous, (3) The Vast Sympathy of God. And Ezekiel's thus: (1) His

Doctrine of God, (2) His Doctrine of Divine Grace, (3) His Doctrine of the Moral Responsibility of Individual Souls. Each of these points is briefly but appropriately developed in a way that will be welcome to preachers.

Each chapter is followed by a brief note on some important critical point. But the writer wisely concentrates upon matters of definite religious interest, and he successfully shows the significance of the prophets for ourselves. In dealing with Isaiah, for example, he alludes to certain social phenomena, 'every one of which has its parallel in our own day—recourse to soothsayers, reliance on outward defences and foreign alliances, drunkenness and extravagance, pride, hypocrisy, and soulless worship.' The prophetic diagnosis of ancient Hebrew society is one which modern society needs no less.

Obviously, the writer is warmly interested in evangelical religion. He takes occasion to remind us that Mic $7^{8\text{-}20}$ most nearly anticipates the evangelical teaching of the gospel, and that Ezekiel is an evangelical forerunner of Jesus Christ. In view of Ezekiel's undeniable legalism, this latter statement is a hard saying, but Mr. FARLEY makes good his case by pointing to that prophet's insistence on the value of the individual soul, the nature of sin as ingratitude, the need of a new heart, the efficacy of repentance, and, above all, the mercy of God and His eagerness to forgive.

Altogether Mr. FARLEY is to be congratulated on having achieved his aim to write a book on Old Testament prophecy, which would be not only helpful to the ordinary Bible reader, but 'perhaps in some ways useful even to teachers of Holy Scripture, theological students, and preachers.' A useful course of instruction upon the Prophets could be built upon this book.

One of the most encouraging signs in the theological world is the fact that the best Christian minds are turning with fresh interest to the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and labouring to express the core of the gospel in the thought-forms of to-day. One of the most recent, and it is one of the ablest, of such attempts is *The Creative Work of Jesus*, by the Rev. Daniel LAMONT, B.D. (James Clarke; 6s. net). Preachers who, knowing well that the Cross of Christ is central to the gospel, yet feel the difficulty of justifying that centrality at the bar of modern thought, will do well to read and ponder this most weighty and suggestive book.

Mr. LAMONT is passionately convinced of the centrality and sufficiency of the Cross. 'The best thing that any man can do for his fellows is to have a testimony to give them concerning the saving power of Christ, and to tell it out to them in a plain and loving way.' Never has the world catered so successfully for the souls of men as it does in our day, and many seem to think that religion has no chance amid all this delirium. Others, oppressed by the spiritual dulness of the times, maintain that no headway can be expected by means of the Cross of Christ until the sense of sin and of God is quickened by some other means. 'If that were so, we should have to confess that the Cross is not the supreme revelation of God. But we cannot confess that, for we do not believe it. Surely the best way to rouse men to a sense of God is by passing on to them His most urgent challenge, and such a challenge is the Cross of Jesus Christ. If it does not stir men to earnestness about the things which matter, nothing else can stir them.'

But the preacher who would declare the message of the Cross must find in it intellectual satisfaction as well as rest of heart. 'The core of the Gospel can be apprehended by people of simple understanding, but this is no argument against the obligation laid on those of vigorous understanding to exercise all their mental powers upon it.' From time to time in the history of the Church thinkers have discovered a formula which enshrined the essential truth of the Cross without doing violence to the thought-forms of their own age. Ours, how-

ever, is an age of transition. The old formulæ appear unsatisfying, and many are ready to think that no intellectual synthesis of the New Testament faith is possible. But this is, in reality, a failure of faith, for faith implies courage in the region of the mind as well as in every other region. 'It is the plain duty of the Church to believe that an appropriate intellectual formula is at hand, and to search for it with all diligence. This is the King's business, and it requires haste.'

To this duty Mr. LAMONT sets himself in the hope that his attempt may not be without some gleam of light. The argument is too closely knit to be summarized, but it will be found fresh and arresting in the highest degree. The apostolic testimony to Jesus is unanimous in the stress which it lays upon the events leading up to His death. 'That stress means, first, that in the conviction of those who had the best means of knowing, the most significant thing in the life of Jesus was its culmination in death; and, second, that they regarded His death as something which must be "placarded" among men. . . . Whatever else can be said about it, it was a veritable event, a tragedy which social, religious, and political forces combined to produce. This race of ours, to which we all belong, was adequately represented in the forces which brought Him to the Cross. The human heart which is not humbled by that fact is proof against being softened by anything.' But to the mind of Jesus the Cross was not a mere tragedy. He knew Himself to be One in whom the redemptive power of God was personalized. His mind as He bore the Cross was an exact reflection of the mind of God. 'While He yielded His body to the fury of men, His spirit reacted with the very reaction of God against what they were doing. . . . The recognition of the attitude of Jesus to sin gives meaning to the affirmation of faith that His love was the very love of God.'

No attempt should be made to explain away the cry of desertion from the Cross. Here is that phase of the Divine reaction in which the Christian consciousness instinctively feels itself brought to the centre of Christ's redemptive work—the loss of the sense of fellowship with God. In that tragic sense of the word, Jesus tasted death. 'He accepted the death which men imposed upon Him, and in doing so He accepted more. While all the common supports of life were falling from Him, amid the cowardice and the treachery of friends, amid the malice and fury of those to whom He would fain have been a Friend, amid the rending storm of His rejection by a world He came to save, a still more bitter ingredient was added to His cup. Knowing that He was enfolded by His Father's love, He yet felt Himself left to bear the full weight of His agony alone. . . . We cannot conceive of God being angry with Jesus on the Cross, but we must believe that He left Jesus to taste death in all its grim reality.'

The Cross was a veritable fact of history, the very essence of history. The guilty conduct of men enters vitally into its interpretation, for it was part of the material out of which Jesus wove the love and sorrow and reaction of God into human history. 'It is impossible for us to see how God could have brought His redemptive power into history in any other way. God cannot deny Himself, and men could not crucify Him even if they desired to do so. But they crucified Jesus. They compelled Him, the free Victim, to bear all the pain and shame of the Cross, while at the same time He shared with His Father all the revulsion from men's sins and all the sorrow of thwarted love. Jesus could and did endure something which God Himself could not endure, but which had to be endured if divine redemption was to find a new starting-point among men.'