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A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_jts-os\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article]

# The Journal of Theological Studies

APRIL, 1902

## THE MANIFOLD UNITY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

IN what follows immediately I express—as preface to a definitely held opinion about *religion*—only the conjectures and impressions of a listener with regard to existing tendencies in the *general* movement of thought; impressions which are perhaps little better than sanguine hopes, such as the real student, punctual in the observation of contemporary learning, will reject as baseless or recognise as more fitly expressed elsewhere. Such impressions are only confessed in order to give shape to my own thought in the latter part of this article.

Perhaps it might be said that the most important, if not the most evident, movement of modern thought is one which at least aims at some reconciliation of idealism and realism. We need a tolerant idealism; and within idealism, a tolerant monism: an idealism which shall make full use of the impressions of experience; a monism which shall find large room for the practical dualities of goodness and happiness, of sin and misery<sup>1</sup>; further a monism which, in its confident and just assertion of the unity

<sup>1</sup> I do not say 'of good and evil.' That would be to raise the question whether monism is possible at all. Any attitude towards *this* duality requires a more careful statement than can be given by way of illustration in the course of another discussion. The unity which resolves that discord is one which overcomes evil by a substantial victory, and not one which makes evil irrelevant by passing beyond the distinction of morals. The moral sense is precisely that element of consciousness which survives within our discord as witness to the final harmony.

of being, shall do more than find room for, shall exalt, that responsibility of the particular consciousness which is one half of both worship and conduct. The monism which is thus tolerant is not a 'moderate' monism; it is rather one which takes care to make evident the high level at which it is pitched. Such special care is needed in order to allow for the interpretation made by minds to which the Eternal is not sensibly near. It is perhaps a natural tendency of clear-eyed spirituality to announce what sounds like too near-hand a unity. The clearness which in the seer is due to long sight makes to the short-sighted a suggestion of proximity. And thus the confidence of the teacher becomes a source either of deception or of 'offence' to minds of another temperament or of a lower accomplishment. Monism apparently secured at too low a level either discourages or discredits the cause it has at heart. The practical man knows that his progress depends upon gripping certain distinctions which are proximately of an invaluable truth; the distinction between justice and mercy, between sin and spiritual want, between a transgression of law and a mere *ὑστέρησις* of perfection; the distinction between God and man which leaves the worshipper rather *solus cum Solo* than *in Solo*. The work of our best teachers is to find the unity in which these contrasts are resolved, but to find it far enough aloft; so as to raise us to the high plane of completeness, and not to challenge our sense of limitations in a region which we seem to know. It may be fair rhetoric to speak of parallel straight lines as radii of a circle; but the circle is one of which the centre is infinitely distant. An ultimate and effective monism will have its roots, or perhaps its grappling-hooks, in a full recognition of near-hand distinctions.

A liberal idealism, a liberal monism—it is by these alone that the sure progress, not by any means of spirituality only but of science also, can be secured. I am on less safe ground when I say that some real progress has been made towards these good things. It may be impossible to point to great works which are an advance in this respect upon old books which still have influence among us. It may be that among the thoughts of others we catch only those which are most sympathetic with our own, and overlook more powerful movements which make for estrangement and conflict. But I am under the impression that

this is not the case ; that while there is indeed a lamentable facility of personal segregation, and to dissociate himself from some one else is the frequently accepted duty of every eminent man, yet there is under the surface a real drawing together of supposed opposites, a real effort of inclusion, a raising—perhaps very gradual—of some antithetical terms into that light in which they are seen to be complementary. I believe for example that the peace which has fallen upon the debate between naturalists and theologians is due not solely to a fatigued indifference which has its share in the effect, but partly also, and in its more valuable part, to a real recognition by science of its own departmental character, to a real respect yielded by spirituality to those limitations which constitute the very charter and strength of science. In the deep places there is a change which makes for conciliation, which ought to be prelude to a new period of activity.

Such changes are no doubt recurrent, and it may be possible to recognise features which belong to each fresh revival of movement. There is first a time when idealism must be almost purely critical. In face of a confident and exclusive materialism—or what is in effect materialism for those who accept its teaching—the first task of idealism must be to show once more the inadequacy of any theory of knowledge which begins at the acquisition of particulars in the world of sense. The present writer was lately within hearing of an able physiologist who claimed to be ‘conscious’ of possessing a brain, grey matter, pyramidal cells, and so forth ; and proposed this richly furnished consciousness as the basis and starting-point of psychological inquiry. This was a survival of the speculation before which idealism is bound to be critical. Criticism has indeed in this case to be pushed, like the sword which St. Louis recommended for the layman’s controversy with Jews, ‘as far as it will go<sup>1</sup>.’ But the worst once over, the critical attitude may be exchanged for one more genial and more hopeful. The idealist aspires to the possibility of allowing for the point of view even of the physical realists, not hoping of course to prove the existence of ‘external’ things, but seeking to account for our impression of their reality, to give a rational meaning to the conviction and

<sup>1</sup> Le Sire de Joinville. ‘The layman, said the king, ought to defend the Christian creed with the sword only,’ *de quoy il doit donner parmi le ventre dedens, tant comme elle y peut entrer.*

a rational interpretation of the world. To shut up as far as possible the senses as inevitable deceivers, to turn away from the scene of daily experience as unable to contribute to the knowledge of solid truth—this, after three centuries of successful science, is no longer any one's desire. Instead, the idealist accepts Green's account of philosophy as 'a progressive effort towards a fully articulated conception of the world as rational.' It is a *rational* conception we require, a description in terms of mind ; but it is a *fully articulated*, therefore proximately and practically pluralist, conception that we seek ; and it is *the world* we are to account for.

Modern scientific thought is on the whole favourable to such an interdependence as we covet of 'outward' and 'inward' knowledge. For ideas of Evolution have increased the impression both of the actuality and of the rational character of the world. I am not referring to the more extended view of physical nature opened up, and the clearer perception that man is a part of that nature. These tend no doubt to weaken a man-centred conception. It is the notion of ordered change, of history in the universe, which seems to me most markedly to increase the impression of external reality. As a fixed spectacle, the scene in which we live might be thought, or at least spoken of, as a vision, a spectre, a non-significant concomitant in consciousness of what was alone important, namely, the spirit with its value and its history, its distinct process and real events. But the world is for us no longer in any sense a fixed spectacle, a *décor* for our actions set up either lately or once long ago. It is conceived of, if not known, as the result *up to now* of continuous changes ; changes of which science knows no beginning, but of which we know, within a certain range, that they are still in progress. We have come upon a scene in which the workmen are at work, and the present position is only the last of many preceding it without break and upon the same plane of change. Rightly or wrongly the notion of a continuous movement in time possesses our minds. And although logically this may make no difference to the position of realism, it is practically much less possible to make light of a process than of a picture, a process which extends to the broadest features of external existence, and which is, to some extent observably, maintained before our eyes. The moving, growing world is inevitably made more real

to reflexion by the knowledge of its movement, somewhat as the growing tree of the Indian conjurer is a more impressive manifestation than the stiff nosegay flourished for an instant by his English rival. The world as 'Evolution' shows it is more real ; it is also more rational, or lends itself more easily to rationalising. For the mechanical explanations of the inter-adapted whole, instead of making that whole, as was threatened, seem better able to dispense with mind, constitute precisely the best defence of a reasonable teleology. If 'reason' is given a reasonable meaning, the extension of the reign of law must be an extension of the range of reason and purpose ; and the very process itself (typified in the struggle for existence), which was to exclude purpose, is a kind of logical inversion in the nature of things by which final causes become effective ones. The old equivocation on the word 'cause' is justified by the disclosure that purpose penetrates all the details of process with which it was formerly contrasted<sup>1</sup>. We get the result, therefore, that modern knowledge of natural sequences renders nature more stubbornly resistant to an intolerant or independent spiritualism ; but at the same time more inviting to a spiritualism which is content to live on terms with 'fact.' The very process which makes general scepticism *less* possible makes rationalism (the search for an intelligible meaning of the world) *more* possible : the world being seen as at once more actual and more ideal. In this way it may be that science promotes the conciliatory attitude we desire. In the noblest science, the science of human history, certainly a unifying tendency is plain. The reassertion of the primacy of consciousness, the primary importance of the history of thought, has for its object not to disparage but to co-ordinate the record of events, to show facts as making one whole with the convictions of men.

II. The analogy by which I wish to pass to certain points of interest in religious thought is by no means a strict one ; but it may serve for suggestion. Can we not recognise a parallel necessity in theology to that which I have conjectured in philosophy ; a parallel necessity, and something of a similar effort ?

<sup>1</sup> The *alria* of Plato can really at last be translated 'cause,' for nature discloses *our* 'principles' as *its* operative machinery.

There has been a revival of attention to the inward substance, as distinguished from what were known as the 'evidences,' of religion; a revival also of what some would call subjective pietism in exclusive distinction (a distinction, as I wish to submit, falsely exclusive) from 'Institutional Christianity.' The necessity for greater 'inwardness' has been felt, even apart from the needs of devotion, both by orthodox and revolutionary believers in face of modern difficulties. The latter have proposed to save faith by withdrawing it from the domains of history and criticism; and the former, in revolt against the crude criticism offered by science, have asserted, or ought to assert, that in matters of the spirit the 'inward' must rule our debate; that an unbelieving theology is no theology at all, but an attempt to bar the very beginnings of a science which can be nothing unless it is, to start with, the description of what is contained in Christian consciousness and experience. There is a revival of mysticism.

This revival, perhaps it might be said, stands at an earlier stage than the parallel movement in general thought. It is still critical, self-defensive. A new attention to the 'inward' tends, at least in some quarters, to a disparagement of external history, of dogma, and of ecclesiastical organisation.

Nor is it only among those who are at all likely to be called mystics that there appears a tendency to set the significant or spiritually valuable in contrast with the actual.

To the unlearned fancy it seems arguable at times that some of the scholars who announce to us the results of critical research are led by something other than the cold light of textual evidence or literary inference. How else are we to understand the marked difference between the advanced teaching of to-day and that which passed current for liberal a few years ago? There has been in the interval no change in the materials, at least no change adverse to the historical authority, for example, of the Gospels. In their totality we have as good reason as ever to believe them authentic records of the earliest Christian conceptions within the main current of Christian life<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The notion that the change lies in something other than the evidence is expressed with less hesitation since Dr. Gore has written from the point of view of real study a statement to the same effect. In the *Pilot*, August 3, 1901, he pointed out that in the last ten years 'the advantage to the conservative cause involved in the bringing to light of Tatian's Diatessaron, and in the confirmations won from

Yet now we are asked to give up very much more of that which was lately allowed to be authentic if not true. Is it not possible that some scholars are led to view the evidence in a special way because of the prepossessions with which they are unconsciously furnished; that other scholars with other prepossessions would see the high lights of importance upon a different set of evidential points; or would view the same points in such a way as to reach an opposite conclusion? And among such prepossessions has there never been a quasi-mystical objection to facts as such; a maidenly distaste for that heavy food; a dim feeling that actuality and significance were mutually exclusive alternatives? Can there have been an unconscious objection to particular existence, a preference for spiritual import which counted history its enemy and therefore desired to limit the bulk of historical *credenda*? I am aware that the question will seem to involve a strange inversion. The revolutionary critic stands out rather as one who because of the undeniable difficulties of the history seeks another basis for what may still be faith. But it may yet be that he magnifies the difficulties of evidence because in his intense and one-sided spirituality he desires to see religion rising superior to records. That spirit would indeed command respect which rated so highly the inward value of ideas that it supposed an historical foundation for them gratuitous, and shown to be gratuitous by the very force of the inward thought. 'It is so plainly good,' we seem to be told, 'that men should think Christ rose from the dead, that we have no need to suppose He really did. The principle of economy forbids one to admit a foundation in external events for a belief which is sufficiently justified by its moral value.' Of course no one pleads that the heart's welcome of a fact is good ground for declaring its occurrence impossible. The severest critic asks for nothing but sufficient evidence. But the judgement of evidence may be insensibly altered by a dim conviction that what truly matters does not happen, and that what truly happens is of such things as, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, can 'neither impregnate the imagination nor enlarge the understanding.'

But whatever drawbacks may attend it, a revived attention to

various sources for the historical character of the Acts—to mention only two points—have had nothing to counterbalance them in the way of positive discovery, so far as concerns the Gospels.'



the inward foundations of religion is the beginning of all good. In order to define one's hope of progress it may be permissible to describe three possible stages of the relation of the 'inwardness,' by whatever name it might best be indicated, with the more historical and objective parts of religion. These stages might be conceived of as possibly successive in time, and the short and inexact words 'outward' and 'inward' may be taken to denote familiar ideas.

The earliest stage may be one of mutual distrust between the 'outward' and 'inward' schools of believing thought. At various points in the history of the Church the ecclesiastical mind has shown a jealousy of the claims of 'inwardness,' a jealousy which would be justified if those exclusions which have been already mentioned really belonged to the essence of the mystical or Quietist or Evangelical position. Whether justified or not, the distrust has often been revived, and has been felt equally by Catholic believers and by scientific observers; the distrust, I mean, of the claims of individual experience or intuition, claims of which the offence really lies in some pretension to exclusiveness or singularity, and not in the stress laid upon an inward foundation.

Answering to this is the equally well-known distrust, felt by those Christians who may be roughly called Pietists, of what they feel to be an externalising account of Christian truth—an account which in their apprehension attributes a totally false value to the organisation of a body of men on the stage of human history, to documents certified by outward authority, and a discipline which continually tends to be maintained by political force. The line of division between the two schools is not that between Catholics and Protestants. 'Institutionalism' appeared in full vigour within Protestantism at an astonishingly early stage of its existence; and Quietism<sup>1</sup> has not failed to

<sup>1</sup> The word is used here not in its historical sense, but because that for which it historically stands typifies for me the most permanent and strictly characteristic element of a large and very varied stream of Christian life. I know that if we are to understand that form of life and thought there is need of a great work of distinction. But I am speaking here of its *external* relations; and accordingly use the word which to me seems least coloured, in order to indicate, without description or analysis, that which is in some way or another known to everybody. So long as a technical historical meaning is not given, the word used may for the present purpose stand for just that which the reader knows best in the *region* to which it belongs.

maintain its place in the Church. But the idea that spirituality and corporate life must vary inversely is slow to die. An able writer<sup>1</sup> quotes with apparent sympathy Stanley's conjecture that 'complete individual isolation from all ecclesiastical organisations whatever is the ultimate issue to which the world is tending,' a conjecture which, if we insist on verbal accuracy, is undeniably sound, but not so if by 'world' is meant the Christian people. There is no need to illustrate this first stage, the stage of mutual distrust, in which the one side accuses the other of 'individualism,' 'vague subjectivism,' and so forth, and is accused in turn of what is called 'formalism,' 'institutionalism,' or 'idolatry,' according to the tone of controversy which happens to prevail.

The second stage is a clear advance upon this. It is marked, at least on one side of the old division, by the reassertion of both parts or aspects of Christian life. Both are shown to have equal right to exist. The writers who seek to do the work of conciliation are not properly called mediatising writers, nor are they found conspicuously in a middle school of Church action. They seek to allow for both sides of the contrast rather than to find a middle line which shall avoid extremes. It is Augustine, if any ecclesiastic, who is at home among mystics. It is Teresa and John of the Cross, if any mystics, who are cordially Catholics. Nevertheless, at the stage we are trying to define, the conciliatory and comprehensive school does not contemplate a full union of the two kinds of thought. It pleads for the lawful right of two modes of Christian life, to exist side by side in different individuals within the Church. There is much which is of permanent value in such a plea, urged (as it is urged) with moderation. For most Christians will show a more or less marked tendency to one side or the other, and perhaps from the earliest days of the Church there has been a recognition of the inevitable difference.

Yet theoretically this mode of comprehension cannot be a final

<sup>1</sup> *Church Quarterly Review*, July, 1901, 'Modern Church Going'—'Christianity is properly incompatible with local worships' [local worship seems to be meant]. 'The Divine founder of Christianity seems to authorize a large measure of concession. He created a society and He instituted sacraments. In these was latent the necessity of local and appointed worship. . . . The pure spirituality of the religion was neutralized by the practical needs of the society.'

It is as if one should say, 'the pure spirituality of the person is neutralised by the possession of a body.'

one, because it seems to require the existence of two sorts of Christians charged with the duty of accepting and expressing the two sorts of Christianity<sup>1</sup>; while Christianity is in fact a whole, the whole-hearted adherence of each to Christ in the body of believers; and the truly normal Christian accepts it as a whole. That conciliation, therefore, however valuable, is not satisfactory, which suggests that there are no Christians, or few, who enjoy at any rate equally both sides of the contrast we have so faintly indicated. It shows a tendency which might be called Distributive. It is genial, hopeful, charitable, enlightened. Content with variety as the very condition of unity, it comprises within its view of the Church every real exhibition of truth and life. Nevertheless it will defeat its own object if its geniality makes it echo the secular proverb that 'it takes all sorts to make a world.' The diversity of gifts under the one Spirit is not a diversity which should make faith and love seem ever so little characteristic of one class within the Church, or corporate fidelity and active service a characteristic of another class. This might be called the 'picnic' as contrasted with the 'joint-stock' view of Christian treasures. It shows the sum total contributed and held in separate parcels by the partners, and not possessed by a joint tenancy, *a singulis in solidum*<sup>2</sup>. Sometimes a contrast meant to guide

<sup>1</sup> *Two kinds of Christians.* There seems reason to think that great caution should be used in ascribing a doctrine of two kinds of Christians even to those Alexandrian Church-writers who sometimes use expressions which, when quoted in isolation, suggest a deeply divided notion of Christian life. Origen of course, far less than St. Clement, really (I speak under correction) supports such a division; and, with regard to St. Clement's 'true Gnostic,' the special polemical occasion of his teaching has to be borne in mind. Sometimes what appears like the definition of diverging developments of Christian life may be in truth intended to describe what is simply more and less fully Christian.

Such doctrines (of specific distinctions between believers) when taught among the many heresies which appear from the time of the Valentinians to the time of the Cathari, Albigenses, and especially the Pastoureaux, are not in point at all; and this for two reasons. Because (1) all these heresies are avowedly dualistic even in anthropology, ascribing and consequently abandoning a part of man's nature to the evil Principle, and (2) because by regarding the visible Church as simply evil rather than as an imperfect and striving manifestation of good, they lie outside of Christian thought. We have been well taught by Harnack (unless I am mistaken) that these dualistic heresies have no share whatever in the origination of sound Protestantism or of any really Christian Pietism however apparently one-sided. See Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Eng. Ed. vi 92 note, and vi 136.

<sup>2</sup> In Dutch Roman law, each one of four men holding forty acres in partnership might hold a particular parcel of ten acres. In English joint-tenancy (I under-

the distribution is found and pressed too far, within the original Christian circle, among the sacred writers and first leaders of the Church. We are encouraged with an excess of emphasis—for it is only an excess of emphasis which is complained of—to believe in a Joannine and a Petrine Christianity, as if one of these lacked altogether, or conspicuously, what is characteristic of the other. To the present writer it seems that what might be called the co-inherence of thought among the sacred writers grows clearer with every year's study. But it is little more than an accent which one regrets. There is the life of Martha, and the life of Mary. But it should be remembered that Mary had the one thing necessary, and what is necessary is, in some sense, to be represented in all.

The more profound studies of unity in diversity which the best teachers of our own time are giving to us, are those which will introduce the third stage of our progress. This stage, towards which in every recurring cycle of thought it is the Christian's duty to press on, is one in which men see that diversity is not a relaxation allowed for safety's sake within unity—a concession to passing needs, but is the necessary foundation for all vital oneness. This deeper conciliation will seek, moreover, the representation of the whole in the part. The members vary that they may cohere. But they vary quite as much as they cohere, precisely because they contain within themselves a representation of all the contrasted elements of the body. Specialisation of function implies not only community but penetration of life, and it grows precisely in proportion as the individuality of parts is supported by corporate dependence, and corporate strength is constituted in the health of the members<sup>1</sup>. The suggested analogy will not carry

stand) each of the four would have an equal hold upon every one of the forty acres. This last holding is a *singulis in solidum*.

<sup>1</sup> The idea of unity by diversity of members in a body is not what I have supposed it necessary to mention. What is not quite so familiar (nor indeed *practically* so true and plain) is that each member contains *in posse* the characteristics of all. If the part selected is really natural (e. g. a polype or a cell, and not some large conventional division, such as the head or the foot), then it may (very roughly) be said to represent the whole potentially. Specialisation of form and function depends not only (as every one knows) upon co-operation in a body, but also (when the body is a whole and not an aggregate) upon identity of type. The digestive cell has something of the contractility of the muscle and something (often a good deal) of the irritability of the nerve. It is only, so to speak, *per accidens*, only really through special nutrition, that the cells of certain tissues are more effectively and obviously repre-

us all the way to what is undoubtedly necessary in a *spiritual* organism, namely, that each member, the body's life being a life of reason, a conscious life, should grow in consciousness, as well as in possession, of the most contrasted elements of the life of the whole. Such a conciliation as we desire claims for every Christian not indeed the equal exhibition of every phase of Christian life, but the perpetual advance towards a possession, and even a *conscious* possession, of a full representation of that life in its two main aspects—the outward fidelity of brotherly communion and the inward peace of a unified life; the apprehension of external verities, if they may be so called, and the inward conformity to the law of truth. There must be during this life different degrees in conscious knowledge of the twofold unity for different believers, but the most 'inward' will more and more plainly recognise that he owes the continued exercise, as well as the origin, of his faith to facts beyond himself, and holds it only in communion with the rest of believers; while, on the other hand, every one who relies upon the historic victory of God in the sphere of human experience, or upon the outwardly organised Society possessed of heaven-sent gifts, will more and more clearly know that he has his access to the fruits of victory and his share in the society of grace only through a vitally real inward and spiritual conformity to the unseen Source of both. On the one hand it will be more generally recognised that religion, rightness, progress consist not in the acquisition of a number of wonderful gifts, but in the constitution and maintenance of a single bond, the bond between man and God. On the other hand, it will be seen that this bond or union, this root of truth and virtue, is developed in all the manifold activities of Church life, activities which are holy and necessary not merely as representations of that 'one thing needful' which is behind them, but as the substantial growth of a principle of Divine life, which is itself love, and therefore both active and social.

There will indeed be an inward and an outward life of the individual, but the outward will not be regarded as a drawback

sentative of the whole. In a body of which the life is *intelligent*, though the analogy of organisms, as observed, will not carry us far, and in any case will not carry us all the way, it appears that every member must, in proportion as the intelligence is developed *at all*, have also an *intelligence* of what belongs to the whole. The difference between one kind of Christian and another is really a difference (so far as essentials go) of less and more.

or 'concession,' still less as hostile, to the inward. The outward also must be spiritual. It will be an activity or frame of life which is the proper clothing of the inward, fit to protect, to drape, and to shroud it; to secure its continuance, to reveal it, and to hide. A man will as soon wish to get rid of this, as in bodily life to get rid of his skin in the interests of the interior organs. There is indeed a skinless life in the spiritual sphere, a life which instead of being really 'interior' (as the saying is) is more properly a life *inside-out*. There will be in the Christian a due shelter of outward conduct, and the sources of his conviction and obedience will not be less secure because they cannot be produced. That life is 'inward' or spiritual which is ruled from within; not necessarily that which is even relatively inactive in the sphere of sense; and accordingly we find even in practice that it is Mary nowadays who accomplishes the Martha tasks—Gordon who rides to Khartoum, and Westcott who mediates in industrial war.

III. The intimate and inextricable coexistence of the inward and the outward in the economy of grace is seen in fullness in the New Testament. It is so close there that the facts of what may be called external revelation are expressed in terms of consciousness, and the facts revealed in consciousness are confirmed in terms of history. This is no mere use of double names for one mental change; but an indication of the real unity of the Christian and That in which and by which he lives. It seems to follow that the Scriptural basis (or the earliest record) of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is to be looked for as it is expressed in terms of Christian consciousness. As the Bible and indeed all the simplest and most energetic Christian writings within one's reach are familiarly studied, the correlation between the Christian spiritual condition and the 'external' revelation of the Trinity becomes increasingly clear. This means not that the conception of God existing as Three in One is a mental externalisation of a fact of consciousness, but that the fact of consciousness, namely faith, is nothing else than the existence of God in Trinity subjectively considered. To describe faith is to give the subjective version of the Being of God: for faith is nothing else but the effect in men of God's being 'what He is.

Faith is the operation of the Holy Spirit. Thus it is described and accounted for in Christian language. The presence of the Holy Spirit is referred to the being of the Son and His relation to us. It is because God is the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost, that we know the Son by the Holy Spirit bestowed on us in and by Him; and knowing the Son, know Him as the Son of the Father. The self-communicating nature of God, as described in the doctrine of the Trinity, is apprehended as active in the experience of faith. Such a statement, if it were proposed as a proof of the Being of God, would be open to the charge of being an argument in a circle. I set it down only in the attempt to show how in the Scriptures and Christian language the Doctrine of the Trinity, conceived as external, must be sought in terms of the Christian consciousness. Faith is the Trinity affecting and acting in man. The knowledge of God is His Presence. This consideration, moreover, affords a balancing support to that mode of describing our access to the truth of the Trinity which speaks of it as effected by an inference from the Incarnation.

Our Lord, we have learnt, was seen to be God and man: to be God, and yet to speak of God as One over against Him. Thus we are told the passage was made to the conception of the One God as existing in twofold Personality, self-regarding, self-obeying, self-dependent, self-derived.

It is the passage to the truth of the Third Person which is sometimes less clearly expressed in this method of exposition, so that it sinks almost to the rank of a corollary, following by no very clearly necessary transition from the acquired truth of Duality<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> To St. Paul, for example, the threefold distinction was (I submit) not a conclusion drawn from Scriptural authority, but the necessary form for a knowledge of God which had become aware of itself. I might here add that those frequent passages in the Epistles which are twofold in form are not incomplete references to the Holy Trinity stopping short at the Second Person. They refer to the distinction or connexion between God in Himself and God Incarnate in Christ; a relation which is necessarily one of duality, because it lies across the line which separates two terms which can never be more than two, namely, God and all that is not God. But these references to God and God-in-Man involve the complete doctrine of the Trinity for all who, with the Apostle, are accustomed to think of the Holy Spirit as the agent of Incarnation and of the Lord's sacrificial life, and the cause of our union with the Incarnate. For them the Holy Spirit is not a conclusion of the creed on the far outskirts of reasoned inference, but the near life of God, the earnest in hand, the experienced reality in virtue of which the creature knows that which is beyond experience, a ground and not a result only of inference. In the

To this method, then, of explanation of the doctrine as arising from the contemplation of the Incarnate as external, a figure in Divine and human history, it is well to add such considerations as we can which show the doctrine as arising from the experience in faith of God within.

Further, as faith is thus the result in man of the self-communicating nature of God, we see that the existence of faith is only accounted for by its content; we only know why there is such a thing as faith, by hearing what it is that faith reports. Its being, that is to say, must be explained by its message; and the message itself is conveyed in terms of that inward condition which is faith itself.

It is useless therefore to search for statements of the doctrine in a distinctly historical or externalised form within the documents which spring from faith itself; useless precisely because such statements are implicit in the account of the state of believers. You cannot describe a Christian except by naming or indicating Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Here is a case—the case of Christian illumination—in which knowledge is not the result of a partial compilation of particulars, nor even only an attitude or opening of the spiritual *sensorium* towards the reality which is to be known; but rather *is* that reality subjectively considered. Faith is the result in us of God being that which He is. The fact that God is known to be is accounted for only by the self-communicating form in which His Being is.

Once again let me say I am proposing no proof of the Being of God<sup>1</sup>, but showing in what direction the Doctrine of God must be sought in the most spontaneous Christian utterances. But there may be a hint by the way of the reason why our faith, since it is known to itself as the Presence of God inwardly operative, is not strong or weak in proportion as it can or cannot

Acts the power and presence of the Holy Spirit are facts available for evidence, not to be inferred but to be alleged.

<sup>1</sup> Yet the vice of a circular argument does not attach to the contention which might be based upon the historical fact that faith exists on the earth in consequence of Christ having been on the earth. To His life of thirty-three years must be traced this psychological fact of all the subsequent ages. Men have been caused by Christ not to accept the statement that God is, but to *believe* in God; to be sure that they truly know Him. And this He did by inviting them to contemplate and trust Himself; and yet the effect is that they believe not at all in a human personality of their teacher, but believe with an inexpugnable confidence in God and God Incarnate.



describe itself to the world. The fact that its content is its explanation shows why it is equally impossible to prove it and to give it up.

Such considerations, wearisome I am afraid in form, may be illustrated by many passages in St. John. For example, John xiv 20, taken in connexion with John xiv 11 and the whole section, is at the same time a description of Christian consciousness and an announcement of the Holy Trinity. 'In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.' 'Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, v. 11<sup>1</sup>.'

The 'day' is the day in which the Comforter shall have come, that One who, by all the analogies of our Lord's speech, must be one and coequal with the Life which He reveals.

'Ye shall know'; it is, if one may say so, a statement in psychology. And what is by the Spirit known shall be, on the one hand, the coinherence of the Father and the Son (by comparison of v. 11), and, on the other hand, the indwelling of the Incarnate God in the believer. The whole 'external' doctrine of the Trinity and of the Presence of Christ is thus set out in terms which are nothing but the explicit description of the condition known as faith<sup>2</sup>.

This fact suggests to us a twofold conclusion; first, that God is not only knowable, but the One only knowable. The knowledge of any thing is inexplicable. Of God alone can it be said that we not only know Him, but know how we know. Faith is the example *κατ' ἐξοχήν* and the key of all knowledge;

<sup>1</sup> The significance of these words, as teaching the eternal and necessary coinherence of the Divine Persons, will not be obscured by the teaching of Dr. Moberly with regard to other words like them (John x 30)—teaching which is not less directly applicable to the passage we are now considering. He emphasises the fact that such words were spoken by Christ God-man, and so as to be true of Him in every regard. 'Those great words,' he writes, "I and the Father are one," are spoken by the Incarnate, the Christ, the Son of Man, in time and in place and through human brains and lips, not simply across infinities by the eternal Logos.' Moberly, *Atonement*, p. 99. By reason of the singleness of our Lord's identity that which is true of the Word eternally becomes true of Him existing in the reality of created being. It is this very fact, of course, which constitutes the salvation of creation and the true life of man, who is *nothing* or dead just so far as he is not in God.

<sup>2</sup> John v 20, Jude 20, 21, are passages which immediately occur as of the same kind, the object of description being the believer, while the doctrine of God is disclosed.

for faith explicitly discloses that unity and difference between the knower and the known, in which all knowledge consists. And secondly, knowledge is a community of life. 'Because I live ye shall live also.' 'In that day' (the day of a common life, a life in us of which Christ's life is the cause) 'ye shall know.' We learn therefore the same proposition with another accent. Since knowledge comes by life, it is to be remembered that life will issue in, or become, knowledge. Community with Him who is the Knowable involves an exaltation of the consciousness. The old questions of benefits received 'ex opere operato' die down. They were dangerous only so far as they were pleas for a mechanical, physically secured, state of supposed salvation. They lapse when it is seen that the work of God is to know Him, that the Life is of men the light.

IV. I have pursued too far what I intended to be a merely preparatory paragraph, leading to this opening, viz. that since the law of correlation lies at the root of revelation, belongs essentially to God's disclosure of Himself to man, any account of matters connected with revelation will be safer and wholesomer the more clearly it indicates that well-known correlation. And from this I wish to go on to certain special inter-relations of various aspects of revealed truth, the remembrance of which tends to reduce the mutual mistrust which is so astonishing and so destructive an element of Christian debate. I have already more than sufficiently shown the main line of division as I imagine it. But there are further divisions which are not less important. And, besides, in order to manage any reconciliation upon any special point of misunderstanding, it is necessary to have made a large and habitual and varied preparation of the ground. A direct and isolated effort, for example, to recommend inward and personal apprehensions as balancing an ultra-ecclesiastical mode of thought leads a friend to start in alarm as from an untrustworthy Quietism—and there may even be good grounds for alarm. The opposite case is well enough known. The consequence is that there are minds for which any account of divine promises as fulfilled in personal experience is open to suspicion, and others for which the recognition of their fulfilment in Sacraments and in the real growth of Holy Church seems the mark of a

gross and carnal misapprehension. It is only by large and slow movements that we can reach the point where men of both tempers will wait for God's loving-kindness in the midst of His Temple.

The Holy Scriptures themselves have not always been used in a way suited to check the tendency to separation and to mutual distrust. And yet in them are to be found both the terms which cover the extreme varieties of real Christian thought, and the nexus which should bind them together.

There seems indeed to be no well defined variety of Christian thought outside Scripture which is not to be found also within it ; and this is not due to a deliberate adherence in all ages and quarters to the words and reasoning forms of the sacred writers, but seems to spring from the nature of the case and to constitute something like a minor support for the unique authority of the Canon. It appears to me that, together with endless variations of degree and of combination, and no doubt also many forms of thought which my own does not allow me to apprehend, there are scattered up and down the Bible statements which belong to every possible order of description. For example, leaving aside those which are historical in the ordinary sense, some are in terms purely external ;—' heaven opened ' ; the Son of Man ' coming ' to the earth ; ' a great white throne ' ; and ' the nations gathered small and great . ' Some are in terms of spiritual mystery ;—' abide in Me ' ; ' the way ye know ' ; ' we with open face reflecting as a mirror doth the glory of the Lord are changed into the same likeness . ' Many are in the ordinary language of moral direction ;—' be ye kindly affectioned one to another ' ; ' rejoice evermore ' ; ' so far as the event rests with you, live at peace with all men ' ; ' pray without ceasing . ' So various are the modes (to use a musical term) in which the Divine melodies are set, that each in turn absorbs our taste and attention and puts the others out of memory, out of contact as it were with our minds, just as a different key, and still more a different mode, seems to lie in a separate world of music from the one to which our senses are for the moment yielded.

But we have also cases in which the many various modes of description are employed with regard to one substantial fact of spiritual life, so that we possess a kind of type-combination or

normal platform<sup>1</sup>, by reference to which the other scattered informations may be grouped in relation to one another. Such a case is that of Baptism. Baptism is described within the New Testament under at least five or six aspects, in terms belonging to as many different modes of description.

1. It is a *heavenly mystery*, 'heavenly things,' beyond the belief of Nicodemus, John iii.

2. It is a *gift of Christ*, the Son of Man, or a result of His ministry on earth; and in some sense also an element, or derived from some element, in the Incarnate Life. The Baptism in Jordan is typical of it, but the Lord's Death is in some true sense specially connected with Christian baptism, as its source and its reality.

3. It is described also sacramentally, as *an ordinance for obedience*. It is 'baptism by water,' it is the appointed way to be saved, and associated as such with repentance. 'Repent and be baptized.' 'Born again of water.'

4. Once more it is a *spiritual experience*, or at least a spiritual event. 'Born again of the Spirit.' 'Baptized into His death.' 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption<sup>2</sup>.'

5. In correspondence with all this, it is a *moral renewal*, and leads to a certain moral temper. He who said 'Except ye be baptized' said also 'Except ye be converted and become as little children.' Further, this change both as mystical and moral contains certain social implications. Baptized into Christ we become 'members of one another.'

6. And lastly, and as part of that which precedes, it gives *a rule of life*; it requires certain suitable actions as result and

<sup>1</sup> 'Platform' is used here in its older sense of 'ground-plan,'—a diagram in flat as contrasted with an elevation or a drawing in perspective; the sufficient indication of the form and especially the foundation of a future structure, e.g. of political action. This sense is found not only in Shakespeare and Hooķer and Bacon, but as late as Pope and even Burke, who says that ministers should be 'capable of drawing out something like a platform of the ground which might be laid for future and permanent tranquillity.' (*Conciliation with the Colonies*.)

<sup>2</sup> The spiritual and moral experiences referred to are not put forward as being the only ones derived from baptism which is at the root of the *whole* life of grace. They are thought only to be specially *interpretative* of baptism; somewhat in the same way as miracles seem to be specially *expressive* of God's presence in a world the whole of which is equally with miracles the creation of His power. Both in creation and in grace we recognise within the one great effect special parts which are fitted for the more articulate and luminous *exhibition* of that power and love which support the *whole* effect to which the expressive parts belong.

security of the moral temper and of the mystical incorporation. 'Lie not one to another,' 'seeing ye are members one of another,' 'seeing ye have put on the new man,'—a 'putting on' of Christ which is elsewhere referred to baptism.

Such, very scantily represented, are some of the modes in which this one fact of baptism finds description in the New Testament.

V. In these modes—it is the very proposition to submit which so tedious a preparation has been made—we do not find rival descriptions of the matter among which a man must choose his own. To start with a limited plan of what Christian writings ought to say and must have said, and then to reject, as unauthentic or secondary or interpolated, modes of expression which do not fail to fit but fail to coincide with the critic's chosen mode, is to abandon any use of an ancient document for the *essential* improvement of one's own mind. By this method of use it can only amplify the contents of one's thought in its present shape; it can do nothing to make the mind capable of a fresh manner of acquisition. It cannot add perspective to our platform, or solidity to our picture, or movement to our apprehension of solidity. Here again I am a little careless about excluding the charge of circular argument. It is enough for my present purpose that the opposite way of thinking, which measures the extent of real Scripture by the conformity of passages to a preconceived model of thought, equally involves an argument in a circle, and includes in the circle a much smaller range of interest. It is every way wiser, when we find various modes of thought in a document which has for us the authority of ages, to seek to gain sight of an object upon which all these thoughts might properly converge; and not, till we have shown this to involve an impossibility, to exclude from the record all that does not echo the *kind* of statement we regard as normal.

We are not, then, forced to a selection among mutually exclusive alternatives: to say, e.g., the new birth is not a sacramental event but a personal experience; it is not a gift of God in Christ but a moral conversion of the will; it is not a recognisable Church ordinance but an unspeakable and wholly incalculable operation of the Spirit. We have rather to consider the different expressions as various instances of the emergence in thought of

a range of reality which has its continuity in the personal life of God made man, and its unity of application to us in the expressed will of God in Christ.

VI. Among these various forms of statement a certain series is found forming an organic whole, in the third chapter of St. John; a chapter which contains not only the relation of a particular incident in our Lord's life, but the form given in the Fourth Gospel to the whole teaching about Baptism and regeneration with respect to one part<sup>1</sup> of its meaning for man.

The movement and growth of the series of statements is such as to yield a kind of law by which to consider others which appear elsewhere.

They do not appear in the ideal order of origin; and there is reason for believing that the actual order of their development is as much needed for the removal of our difficulties as is the recognition of inter-relation and dependence among the various modes. In a problem of kinematics (in which the law of movements is studied without reference to the conception of force or the nature of the moving body) it is theoretically indifferent at which of several points in a given system an investigation is begun. But the practical success of the investigation often depends very largely upon a happy selection of the point of origin. Something of the same kind may be true in the more difficult inquiries of morals or of spiritual life. Not to recognise transition at all is to be condemned to ignorance. But recognition of transition and even a knowledge of its law may not bring so much advantage as is possible, unless the study of the facts begin at a suitable point. It is precisely in the Holy Scriptures, and above all in the words of our Lord, that a correct discernment of this point is to be recovered in face of a systematic theology which necessarily tends to proceed from the point which is ideally fundamental in the judgement of a school or an age. There are few changes more revolutionary in personal mental experience than the change from Protestant theology to the theology of St. Athanasius, and this in spite of a coincidence of teaching upon points of substantial

<sup>1</sup> There is for example no teaching of the mystic *death* of baptism, nor of the community of life with other believers which it effects, and the fact that the new life is that of a member of Christ is not *explicitly* indicated.

debate among Christians. The difference is largely a difference of the point of origin. Something of the same revolution which takes place in the student's mind when the Greek theology is opened seems to have been effected or vigorously attempted by de Berulle in the religious thought of France, and that in the same way, namely, by restoring the origin for theological investigation to the Athanasian point, the Person of the Incarnate Word.

As the point of origin for us is the Person of the Saviour, so the point of origin for our Lord is the need of the man who comes to Him by night, the need of light, the condition of vision. A detailed comment on the incident of Nicodemus (so far as it lies within my capacity) is not desirable for this paper. The significance of the Pharisee's character, the practical and moral import of birth as a change fundamental, indispensable, and beyond the recipient's power, the *direction* in which we should look for the meaning of the figure of birth, the reference of the change to the action of the Spirit moving in sovereign independence and bringing the subject into the same law of freedom—all these we pass over, or rather we accept all this taken together as the starting-point, for it is the point of origin chosen by our Lord. He begins with the necessities of the human, alienated person. He passes from the change which must take place in him to the Divine action which causes the change—to the movement of the Spirit. He declares the characteristic of the new life which is added to the nature derived from fallen humanity.

But from all this, so high and eventful a mystery, He speaks of a transition which is needed to 'heavenly things' (τὰ ἐπουράνια). All that has been said is in the region of rudiments. How shall the man who finds these too high for belief, these earthly things (τὰ ἐπίγεια), pass to the revelation which awaits him? 'How will ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?'

What are these ἐπίγεια and ἐπουράνια? It is plain that the earthly things are not the physical movements which our Lord accepted as the image of the Spirit's free action, nor the water, taken by itself, which is the instrument of baptism. For Nicodemus lacked faith concerning the 'earthly things,' and these facts of physical experience make no demand upon faith. The 'earthly things' must comprise the whole mystery of baptism so far as our Lord had disclosed it. They comprise the new birth,

the birth from above, by water, and by the Spirit, which gives entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven, and spiritual being to that which was flesh, born of the flesh, i. e. the natural man with all those natural powers which remain in him in a fallen state. But if the whole mystery of regeneration, even the action of the Holy Spirit as it works manward and in man, if the unspeakable inward change of baptism, quite as much as the sign of it, is in some sense among τὰ ἐπίγεια, what are the heavenly things? The reality of the new birth in the individual, too high for selfish or worldly conception, too hard for an ungenerous or unexercised faith, is still but the earthward, 'lower' side of a Divine mystery. What is its higher side, the heavenly things of which our Lord had not yet spoken? πῶς ἐὰν εἴπω ὑμῖν τὰ ἐπουράνια πιστεύσετε ;

The heavenly things are those transactions in God Himself which are first the timeless original, and then the historical gift, and to the end the primitively new fountain, of the whole life of Grace. We are taught by our Lord to discern in them two parts which He teaches in the order of our discovery, the reverse of the order of their origin. Starting from man as he is by nature, and man as he is dealt with by God, the Lord passes to the life of the Son. From Grace which is the life of Christ in us<sup>1</sup> we are led to that which is nearest, the life which was in Christ Himself before He took us severally to Himself, the life of the Son Incarnate. This is the near border of the heavenly things, the reality whereby God entered in sovereignty into human nature, sanctifying it in perfect obedience within His own personal life. That this, the Incarnation and humbling of the Word, is that to which our faith is first to pass is indicated when our Lord, immediately after the words 'How shall ye believe?' adds 'And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man,' who is also to be lifted up and to draw men from below to receive eternal life. This, then, is the first-seen heavenly counterpart and cause of man's new birth. His new life, his entrance to the Kingdom, is connected with a mysterious coming down of One who is from heaven. And as He who descended alone ascends, we learn not obscurely that they who

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that in this place it is not stated that the new birth is a birth into or in Christ—a truth so clearly taught afterwards. It is indicated in the words, 'no man hath ascended.'



ascend (*εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν*) ascend in Him, whose descent and suffering death are cause of their life and exaltation.

The incarnate life, existing in earth and heaven, raises men from earth to heaven by the return to heaven in their nature of Him who came down, and in whom the believer has life eternal. The mystery of individual regeneration, then, so wonderful in itself, finds its heavenly foundation in that which is the regeneration of humanity, the 'descent,' suffering and triumph of God in Man. From this is transition to deeper altitudes of the same mystery. Beyond and above and older than the Incarnation is the purpose of God concerning it. That is to say, there is a Divine counsel which caused the Incarnation, even as the Incarnate Life is the operative counterpart, the *ἰδέα* and *αἰτία* of all our life of grace. This Divine cause or principle our Lord indicates, when immediately after the words last quoted He says 'For in such wise God loved the world that He gave His Son, His only begotten Son, in order that every one that believeth on Him may not perish but have everlasting life.' He who descended, who is lifted up, who ascends, the Incarnate, is seen further to be the Son, and to be given (*v.* 16) and sent into the world (*v.* 17).

Here then the third point of light is plain: and the three appear moments in one sequence of mercy. The 'earthly' salvation depends on the Incarnate substance of life, and this proceeds from the Divine purpose of love; and all three moments are preserved in the power of that life and love, so that the Father's gift of the Son is perpetually new and remains as primitively original as was the freshness of the virgin birth in fulfilment of the Eternal purpose; and the life of the regenerate continually receives that unspeakable gift, not as by some ancient title of registered privilege, but by ever-new dependence upon unailing mercy—the sure mercies of David.

In these three luminous points we have (as in star-pointers) a line of direction for further search. This enables us to add at once a fourth, which follows regeneration in time as that in time follows the life of Christ. This is the 'experimental' conscious apprehension of the privilege of new birth: the development of that gift, the 'entrance to the Kingdom.'

So far perhaps (on the special thread of our present thought) we are led by the incident of Nicodemus. But in order to

complete the briefest survey we attend further to certain other statements of the same mystery. For within our Lord's words we have (as has perhaps been already said) one further point which becomes in practice two. It is the reproduction in temper of the birth-gift, its substance shown in a voluntarily and resolutely chosen 'tone'; it is the becoming as little children. We have the truth of *character*. And further, this is secured by acts of obedience and service of which it is itself the root, and like all roots nourished by the leaves to which it gives birth. We have the truth of *habit* forming character and affording proof of it.

The divisions, then, into which men's thoughts naturally fall are all represented in the Divine teaching. They are represented in their order of discovery, a discovery which starting at the making of a Christian proceeds upwards and downwards in time. They may also be resumed in the order of their origin. In this ideal or formal order we have:—

1. The mysterious origin of the heavenly things. It is an event or an element in the Divine life, a determination of the Divine mind. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,' offering Him to faith as the substance of salvation.

2. There is an event in the life of the Word, in His mission; involving, including His Incarnation. 'He that came down from heaven,' the Son of Man through whose uplifting on the Cross comes salvation and eternal life, shows in the transactions of time the law of an unchanging counsel.

3. There is a sacramental bestowal of this life: the result of the coming down. A man is born of water, born of spirit even as he was born of flesh; born from above.

4. There is an inward spiritual experience. By the Spirit, viewless and free as the wind, he also who is born of the Spirit is raised to a law above that of physical determination. His life follows the movement of God. He sees, he enters the kingdom of God.

He that is baptized and so saved, born again, born from above, brought into the law of the Spirit and the kingdom of God, is also to become conscious of the heavenly condition, and the process of development may take time or be accomplished in some marked event. The spirit of regeneration becomes known as the spirit of adoption.

5. But further there is to be a conformity of will and temper and character. 'Except ye be baptized' is answered by 'except ye be converted and become as little children.'

6. Lastly, the necessary security in action of the above, the habitual and specially accepted duties which cultivate and fulfil the moral temper of children, also find their representation in the Divine teaching. The new-born must serve one another, in honour preferring one another.

Briefly along this special line there are these things:—(1) the heavenly gift of the Son, (2) the Incarnate Life within which the Baptism in Jordan itself is a typical representation of the down-coming to fulfil righteousness, (3) the Sacrament of Baptism, (4) the spirit of regeneration and adoption, (5) the temper of humility, (6) the practice of obedience.

Now it is precisely upon these points, taken severally, that the actual 'schools' of religious thought are supposed to lay stress, and sometimes almost exclusive stress; are supposed, that is, by those who (in each case) stand outside them. The result for confusion is almost the same practically as if the outside judgement were in each case just. Each point is seen as exalted not by showing its causal and necessary relation with the whole, but by obliterating or disparaging the rest which go to make up the whole.

(i) Emphasis upon the first alone is attributed to no definite school; but it is represented, nobly and well, by a certain temper amongst us which stands sufficiently apart, and is indeed perhaps the salt of our mental life. It is the temper which broods voicelessly upon the deep unnameable, or reports to us its acquisitions of light only in reverberating salutations to the Immensities and Infinities, the Silences and Powers which lie aloft, below, beyond our knowledge. In devotion, this, which is indeed the one thing needful, has sometimes almost reached an utterance for some souls—almost at any rate afforded a guidance—in the call to the Divine Cloud, to the treading down of all thought under the 'veil of forgetting'; or in the more warmly breathed invitation of St. John of the Cross to come forth into the Dark Night, to essay the Ascent of Mount Carmel under the stars or in the starless gloom. This holy temper is at home with the prophet in the deadness which was vision; it watches as did Abraham when the horror of darkness settled upon the accepted sacrifice

of covenant. In worship it offers its voice of music for a clue to secrets unexpressed ; in agnosticism it has its reverence and awful yearning. In positive theology of a less tentative tone and of a less inward and formless meditation it is apt to pass into a teaching which affects us as being reversed in position, as resting upon the clouds, starting with an immense series of masterful definitions of the infinite and indefinable for which we are shown no authority, and which are proposed rather as the base of new structures of creed and commandment than as the apex of a building.

That is the temper which longs for the 'heavenly things,' which would in a certain inexpressible love and dependence become aware of the unending and always unspeakable gift by which the Son becomes ours from the Bosom of the Eternal Father. It is amiss only if its love for the One is nourished by contempt for His manifestations ; if, as in the agnostic, reverence for the Silences is allowed to disparage the words which have reached us thence ; if, in the mystic, the rapture of the Dark Night is disturbed by thought of an Incarnate Son of Man<sup>1</sup> ; if, in the dogmatic, a train of self-multiplying definitions is allowed to grow without check received from the historical life of Jesus, or the discoverable needs of men. Briefly it is the *beginning* at this point, which is only formally and in idea a starting-point, which sets us wrong. Our safe course begins with Jesus, His words and Himself ; and from Him revealed passes upward to the Father whom no man hath seen, and down to the august institutions Christ has created and the hearts and lives He claims to inhabit and to command.

(ii) The second stage is that of the Incarnate life. Of this it may be possible to create a study which refuses to follow the actual developments of the Life it regards. Pausing in the naturalistic study of the actions of the Son of Man and of His character, judged as the character of a man among men, it becomes fruitless for human society just because of its refusal to know that which our Lord has Himself told us of His pre-incarnate life. The study of Jesus, artificially freed from all that

<sup>1</sup> This is not the case, I need scarcely say, with St. John of the Cross. He, like St. Bernard, is one who sings with the Bride in the Canticle, and in the darkness of natural solitude expects the discovery of Christ the Divine Lover.

He Himself claimed of oneness with the Father, artificially separated from all that He Himself created of social effort, may enable us to set up a standard of conduct under the shelter of His name, but it will not guide us to the knowledge of Him as He breaks the power of sin. Such an isolated study perhaps belongs to no one. If it did, it would probably claim different names according to the accomplishments and tastes which nourished it. It would be 'Bible Christianity' in some circles; in others it would be 'a thorough-going historical reconstruction' of the Saviour freed from all additions made by the Empirical Church. Its characteristic word might be: 'Theological dogma, mystical reverie, are alike unnecessary, and sacramental organisation mischievous. The true Christian is he who asks what Jesus did.'

(iii) In the third place we have the Sacramental doctrine, the mind turned to events in the Church which extend to us the life of Christ. Along this line comes all that Institutional Christianity which has already been referred to. This, with its avenues on either hand, is for many the most practical basis for Christian apprehension. In the mystery of her station as the bride of Christ; in the social achievement which she continually wins; in the great structure of worship, dogma, law, of rite and sacrament and guarded Scripture and common prayer; in her unbroken sequence of hierarchical succession; the Church as seen on earth with her treasure of history and her opportunity for the future is moreover, as we saw, full of avenues to that which is high and to that which is inward, and personal, and obscure, and of daily need. The life of God is the known substance of the Church's actions; and these in their turn secure not merely the fixed and finished foundation, but the constitutive and perpetually energising law of personal faith and personal obedience. But even the ecclesiastical temper may be confined and made mechanical. There might be—those who stand aside say there is—a 'High Churchmanship' which should dwell exclusively on the sacramental glories and privileges, while forgetting both the Divine origin and the personal development of the gifts bestowed; which should guard the succession of a hierarchy without remembrance of the mission of Christ, and should adorn with symbolic reverence the mysteries of His Presence without seeking Him either in heaven

or as He is in men 'the hope of glory.' Of such a churchmanship the word might be: 'History is unprofitable and prophecy departed. Beware of a merely subjective pietism or an exaltation of secular enterprise: preserve the due sequence of rite and the integrity of authority; and you shall be a real Christian because bonded into the real Church.'

It is difficult, at least for the present writer, even to imagine such a mechanical churchmanship, or to express its imagined cry without using the very words which save it from isolation. It passes soon into the right institutionalism which says 'Dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed'; 'we wait for Thy loving kindness, O God: in the midst of Thy Temple.' And this because the 'institution' we deal with is itself living, not an organisation but an organism, not a corporation but a body. We have perpetually to guard against the substitution for it of an earthly association defined either by the natural powers of political force and expediency, or by theories drawn from nobler sources and relying upon nobler motives, but still not of Christ. But we shall ill serve the spirituality of the Church by distinguishing, so as to distribute, its organisation and its inspiration; by proposing, for example, to add to the ministry of office a ministry of *χαρισματα*. This is to condemn the office to deadness. Whereas in the old covenant the Priest and the Prophet stood over against one another, in the new their functions are united and are shared by the whole Christian body; so that the authority is inspired, and inspiration is subject to authority: the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets in the order of the Church, because the order is informed by the Life-giving Spirit.

The third head, then, taken exclusively, would be the province of a mechanical ecclesiasticism, recommending us to avoid on the one hand the labour of criticism, and on the other the mazes of 'morbid introspection,' so as to rely simply upon a so-called 'obedient' reception of the appointed ordinances. It tends to a reduction of individual liberty. 'Put yourself in my hands and I will see you safe' often represents its aspiration, which thus runs the risk of robbing God of live souls and making His kingdom poorer by precisely the number of automata manufactured.

(iv) The fourth head is that of spiritual experience. It is mystical in a different sense from that indicated above. Here

is the mysticism of St. Teresa or St. Catherine of Siena, as contrasted (and it is a real contrast) both with the mysticism of Pseudo-Dionysius or Ruysbroeck and with the theological rapture of St. Gertrude.

It is of this that those who cannot claim to know Protestantism have accused the Protestant temper in one of its great varieties. If there are teachers who regard it exclusively, their representative word might be 'It avails not to say that you believe the revelation of God's purpose; it avails not to worship the Christ of history in the past; least of all does it avail to have received the sacraments of the Church. The real Christian is he who is aware of Christ within himself, who *feels* the spirit of adoption. Such an one needs no other test: he depends upon no companionship or authority. He has the witness in himself.'

Something of such a temper is said to be in the Spiritual Christian of the great Alexandrians; something which may be supposed to look like it in certain parts of the varied teaching of St. Augustine<sup>1</sup>. It has its great attractions, its great temptations. We have only to urge that its true life and safety lie not

<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine makes the study of Scripture 'the path towards love.' He may be *represented* as stating a corollary which is by no means required by the conception of this end of Scripture, viz. that the man who has laid hold of the end may dispense with the means. So in *de Doctrina Christiana* i 39, 'Homo fide spe et caritate subnixus eaque inconcusse retinens, non indiget scripturis nisi ad alios instruendos': quoted by A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, iii 204 note. But in a general view of the treatise *de Doctrina Christiana*, this appears as a practical proximate statement of experience rather than as a definition of an abiding relation between Scripture and Grace. A man may observe, as the Saint does, that in point of fact some believers for their present spiritual requirements grow to be independent for a time of the letter of Scripture—'Multi per haec tria [fidem spem et caritatem] etiam in solitudine sine codicibus uiuunt; perfectum aliquid tenentes' they need not turn to texts. But this does not imply that Scripture as a whole is not entirely required for spiritual life as a whole and for its continued advance. Note on that point St. Augustine's tone in *contra Faustum*, e.g. in lib. xiii cap. 18, 'Abiciant ergo qui crediderunt omnes libros per quos factum est ut crederent.' Such, he represents, is the inevitable conclusion of the opponent's argument. But in this case what becomes of the Gospel, 'Nam si hoc uerum est, cur uel ipsum Euangelium Christi a fidelibus legatur non uideo. ante fidem quippe inutile est . . . post fidem superuacuum.' The conclusion of an unread Gospel is for Augustine a *reductio ad absurdum*. Harnack adds that in *de Doctrina Christiana*, book i, cap. 34, Augustine 'borders on the belief of Origen that the Christ of history belongs to the past for him who lives in love,'—a statement which ill reflects the noble words of that chapter where the Lord's words in John xiv 6 are paraphrased thus:—'per me uenitur, ad me peruenitur, in me permanetur.' The Christ of history was not known to Augustine as a person apart from the Christ of love.

in isolation, but precisely in dependence upon those things which in our thought precede it. It is the realised acquisition in consciousness of that which is substantially bestowed in Sacraments; of that which stands fast in Christ, the Christ of history and the Christ of prayer; of that which has its ever new fountains in the deep love of God. And it leads on to that which follows, the Christian temper, the Christian activities. Unless it draws its streams from revealed truth and spreads them out in social service, the inward devotion is insecure and may become only the involved admiration of self.

But it is difficult indeed to conceive an inwardness which should be both sincere and mistaken. It is with this as it is with 'Churchmanship.' The nature of that which is believed saves the belief from straying. The Church approached as a structure turns out to be a Heart; the prayer which is cultivated as an individual treasure turns out to be a Community. All (and it is our very plea which can scarcely be suppressed even in the attempt to sketch an imagined exclusiveness), all is in the inward fidelity, all is in the honest churchmanship, all either by way of seed or by way of flower or fruit. But, we may be asked, if the whole process has to take place in consciousness and in moral discipline, is not the sacramental system gratuitous? To those who make this objection from the point of view of Protestantism it might be enough to say that the same objection lies against the memory of our Lord's life. Of those who take what is called a broader ground it may be asked in turn whether the cause is superfluous because of the indispensable character of the effect? And if there is a work for consciousness, will it not be precisely the work of knowing the causes since the effect itself is an intelligence?

And again from another quarter and in a different interest what sounds like the same question may be put. For some who find the inward joy are inclined to ask whether it is worth while to question the outward facts, since the fruit of them is held. The answer is, of course, that faith is only faith if it regards its object as true; not true for it but true itself, having the antiquity or rather the eternity of self-sufficient being, while it awakens in the believer the security of a personal reproduction.

It is not unnatural if some who dwell exclusively on the



secret experience of the new-born life are drawn to disparage the sacrament, the mystery of accomplished regeneration, which links the experience of the soul to Christ. In that experience Christ so shines out that there can be no conscious remembrance of baptism. In healthy sight a man is not aware of his eyes. Yet there is no seeing without the eyes, and, without seeing, the object does not enter into apprehension. The Divine Object of faith is the cause also and giver and operator of organ and apprehension alike. We see Him, we see by Him, He sees in us. And the three realities are one. To exalt the seeing we do not disparage the eye. To care only for the Incarnate life while neglecting all effort to secure its connexion with ourselves, might be the fault of a merely antiquarian school. To exalt the sacrament to the disparagement of personal experience of its power is an attitude sometimes ascribed to Churchmen. To combine the most earnest regard for the affectionate realisation of sonship with neglect of the truth of His recorded life, with some contempt of the definitions of faith concerning Him, with some approach to disregard of the sacraments He bestows, this is something like the position ascribed to Evangelical believers by those who in turn fall under their perhaps unjust condemnation. There is no need, in gratitude to a present Saviour, to think meanly of those laborious debates by which the Church wrought out her treasured definitions, or to look grudgingly upon the tasks of to-day—the reduction of obstacles to faith in philosophy and science, the hard labour of historical research, the critical investigation of the literary sources of our knowledge of Christ and of His work as external to ourselves<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> It is precisely the notion of development which ought to prevent us from discarding as unessential this or that element of Christian life—as dogma, rule, or necessary rite of fellowship—in favour, for example, of feeling. Strictly speaking, the 'essence' of Christianity is Christ and is in God—not even in feelings which are judged to be exhibited in common by the Reformation and the New Testament. (Pfleiderer, *The Essence of Christianity*, 'The New World,' Sept. 1892.)

But if by essential is meant 'necessary to the integrity of development,' we should remember that leaves belong to the necessary form of a plant as well as roots or fruit; that if the root makes the leaves sprout, the leaves make the root to swell. The seed by which new individuals are to be originated contains within itself the primitive leaves in actual form, and their function of nourishment is exercised at the very beginning of growth.

Nevertheless, adventitious and unwholesome growths apart, there are times when to prune the growth is to increase the crop, as well as times when to shear the leaves is to starve the root.

(v) The fifth topic (if that word will serve) is the topic of moral character. It may be conceived as the special care of a certain liberal teaching of which the characteristic word may be something like this: 'Not what a man believes concerning the unseen constitutes him a Christian, nor is his religious state defined by the company in which he worships or by the Sacraments which he receives. Not even certain affectionate or reverent feelings determine his position, and the supposed "real events of inward life" are shared by all kinds of enthusiasts, good and bad. A man's position is defined by what he *is*. It is the character of Jesus, judged by the best standards of natural ethics,—His meekness, His truth, His right manliness, His unselfishness—these constitute the true claim of the Master, and it is the reproduction of these which constitutes the true disciple.'

Nothing could be truer as the matter stands in fact, precisely because in fact right conduct is only reached in this discipleship. But the idea is false if it is intended to discard as unimportant both right belief and true incorporation. It is as if a man should say: The fruit alone makes the vine. That is true enough in fact, but precisely because you cannot gather grapes from thorns—and for the same reason it is capable of a false meaning. In morals we sometimes infer the unimportance of the root from the very solidity of the results which show it to be indispensable.

It is impossible indeed to express with sufficient strength the sanctity of 'works,' the actual reproduction of the divine life and the divine presence which belongs to virtue alone. William Law has gone far to teach us the substantially divine character of all goodness. But in course of use the strictest words of identification are dissolved into metaphor, with the result that instead of ethics being lifted up into divinity—goodness being ascribed to God only and its exhibition in man identified with God's presence—the divine original mysteries are lowered to be poetic ways of representing what is supposed to be an independent goodness.

The application of notions of development to society and the Church has been to some serious extent confused by a want of clearness, in a given application, as to whether it was the development of the individual from the embryo, or the descent of a race with modification, which was being studied by way of analogy. Phylogeny and ontogeny have been mixed. They are to be connected and their common laws sought for; but in applying them by analogy to religion we have too often passed from one to the other without notice and even without discernment.

It is difficult anywhere to find unspoiled words for this work, words for the sense of real unity between the constitutive events of the new life and the repeated acts of obedience of which I am to speak presently. 'If we live in the Spirit, let us also *walk* in the Spirit' becomes for us not a profoundly important transition in unity, but almost a tautology. The highest words are readily accepted as merely figurative or as *substituting* the accomplishments of 'natural virtue' for the vital consequences of new birth.

Origen speaks of the blessedness of the man who is ever being new begotten of God. μακάριος ὁ ἀεὶ γεννώμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. οὐ γὰρ ἀπαξ ἐρῶ τὸν δίκαιον γεγενῆσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ' ἀεὶ γεννᾶσθαι καθ' ἐκάστην πράξιν ἀγαθὴν, ἐν ἣ γεννᾷ τὸν δίκαιον ὁ θεός, in *Jerem. Hom.* ix ad fin. (ed. Klostermann, p. 70). But is this the language of one who identifies in substance the accomplished new birth of baptism with that life of obedience in which regeneration is perpetually fresh, or is it that eloquence of metaphor which lies at the opposite pole of thought from all such 'mysticism'?

These identifications in any case are not characteristic of the thought which disregards the 'supernatural' in acclaiming as the true Christian him who, faith apart, is one by his character.

(vi) Lastly, even the sixth or subsidiary fifth topic has its special exponents. There are voices which seem to say: Character means little more than Creed. Show me what you do and I will not ask what you are. The man is Christian enough who gets the works of mercy done. It is as little in point to inquire about the inward temper which produces them as about the belief and Church position and habit of devotion which, in some cases, support them.

This mode of thinking, unimportant controversially, fills up practically nine-tenths of the visible field of Christian life. We are beset with exploits of benevolence which not only leave out of sight the cultivation of character, but actually carry on war against the light and quiet, the self-distrust and self-forgetfulness and self-discipline, which are among its necessary conditions. It is fatal indeed to possess water and not to carry it to those who thirst. But is it much better to hurry so fast to the thirsty that we bring an empty cup to their lips? To how many of our hard workers does 'Charity' read the sentence: No time for patience, no time for prayer, for knowledge, for contemplation; no time even for the more spiritual ministrations to others. The increase

of Christianity is the increase of money spent, of numbers 'got together,' for no particular end.

And yet, if only not isolated, it might all be true. 'Pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction.' Good works are more than a result, much more than a concomitant, of holiness. They are holiness, God's presence, in action.

In all these directions our task is to resist by every means the separating tendency; to watch against this more jealously than against any other evil, and at every fresh emergence of it to show the new substitute (as it may be) for historical Christianity, or for sacramental grace, or for prayer or character or service, its true place as a constitutive element (for so if it has any solidity it must be) in the one reality of life. It is the Bible, and especially the New Testament, and herein above all the words of the Lord, which must show us this unity.

I have laboured at too great a length a connexion or series which is obvious enough and obtains full recognition in a thousand mission sermons outside of controversy. A word of St. Paul may seem to form a clasp for our chain of thoughts so as to make of them a continuous circle. The great passage on humility in Philippians ii, is only one of many in which the apostle asserts (1) the Divinely mysterious root, and (2) the consequences in duty, of a true ecclesiastical position. It is especially important for our present purpose as connecting our last link, the link of action, directly with our first. We are to cherish a humble temper and a life of service free from faction and vainglory because thus we share the Mind of Christ; we think and feel with Him. Here in goodness is the mind which was His before His Incarnation, and which within the life of glory was the motive of His mysterious self-emptying by the addition of our poverty to His unchanging fullness, the motive of His humility and His obedience unto death. Our community with Christ is shown to be precisely in the self-emptying, and this was also His mind in full community with the Father.

The last, and as it seemed the lowest link, the prosaic version of spiritual position in true character, and true character in faithful conduct, proves to be the link not of approach but of arrival. Here at last, in character and in conduct, is actual coincidence or

unity with that Divine secret which was the first source of all the series. Our links form a circle; or perhaps a pentagon<sup>1</sup>. For there are real angles, real distinction and transition between each two stages: and yet by virtue of the angles of distinction, the unity of a necessary figure is preserved; each part is found indispensable, and the last to be produced brings us to that which was the starting-point. If belief is the sight of God, and sacraments the bond to God, and prayer the sense of God, then character is conformity to God and conduct is union with Him, for this is love in action and God who is pure Act is pure Love.

Such considerations may not be useless for an object which is theologically and scientifically desirable, even though they may serve another purpose. The purpose I mean is that of persuading good churchmen not to be wholly offended when they hear sacramental terms roughly applied—as, for example, when conversion is wrongly but by a natural mistake called ‘regeneration.’ We who are born again yet have not constantly walked in the Spirit, and ruled by the flesh we fail to see the kingdom. When by a reassertion of the Spirit’s power the old gift becomes operative in a man, and an abundant entrance is ministered for him into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, it is little wonder if in the fresh outburst of the joy of sonship he describes himself (like Origen) as one new-born that day of God. Let those who rightly hold fast to the secure and unique beginning of each man’s salvation consider that the unknown and unexamined gift of a new life, substantially bestowed in Baptism, is developed into explicit consciousness by an inward reproduction of its essential foundations in personal experience of weakness and strength, in knowing that emptiness of the creature which is filled, as it can only be filled, by an infinite Gift.

P. N. WAGGETT.

<sup>1</sup> Pentagon, not hexagon; because our sixth head, which comprises actions, though it takes in practically the whole exhibition of life, remains for the purposes of system and idea a subsidiary part of the fifth head, the head of morals. Yet this subsidiary section must be followed in history through all the varied enterprises by which the Church has endeavoured—with varying directness of aim—to find expression for her inward brooding acceptance of spiritual truth; the successive enterprises of martyrdom, and church-planting, and creed-formation and monastic rule; of mission and crusade and symbolic ceremony and canon law; of school-theology and plastic art. It must be followed, in practical endeavour, to the real attempting of our modern duties—the Christianising of social activity at home, and the maintenance abroad of wide territorial movements of evangelisation.