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511TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE INSTITUTE ON MONDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 1911, AT 4.30 P.M.

GENERAL HALLIDAY (VICE-PRESIDENT), IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and signed and the following elections of Associates were announced :—

E. A. Dubois, Esq. ; Mrs. Percy Smith ; The Rev. T. P. Stevens.

The CHAIRMAN introduced Dr. Whately, who then read the following Paper :—

THE DEMAND FOR A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

By the Rev. A. R. WHATELY, D.D.

AT the Church Congress last autumn, Professor Sorley called our attention to a remarkable fact, and—let it be added —crying need. "There does not exist," he said, "at the present time any living systematized body of Christian philosophy." And he went so far as to say that whereas in the realm of activity the present tone of the Christian world is "positive, aggressive, flushed with the confidence of victory, in the realm of thought it is timid, compromising, apologetic, and apologetic in the modern and popular, as well as in the literal, sense."* The reference is not, of course, to popular polemic or exposition, but to those Christian writers who really represent modern thought, and are really sensitive to its spirit. And who shall say that he is not right ? The Christian theologian of to-day, when he preaches and when he directs his efforts and his life on the lines of his creed, treats that creed as a datum, an ultimate, a point of reference and centre of authority that, ideally at least, controls the whole machinery of his mind. But face to face with rival systems and alien currents of thought, his attitude is too often different. It is not that he hesitates; and if he is open-minded and sympathetic, surely that is all to

* *The Official Report of the Church Congress*, 1910.

the good. What is lacking may be easier to feel than to define. As a thinker he holds truth; as a worshipper and worker he is held by it. The Christian faith has not for him that same commanding and determinative position on the plane of reflection as it holds on the plane of emotion and activity. In this latter sphere the Ego has found its cosmocentric point; in the sphere of the higher thought, the shadow of his own subjectivity haunts him on the clearest uplands where all other shadows are left behind.

Surely there is something wanting here. Though we have been thinking only of a small part of the Christian world, and of only a certain section of the life of each individual that belongs to it, yet we must remember that neither is the individual divided into "water-tight compartments," nor yet the Church. The Christian philosophy of any given age must be related by action and reaction with the whole of life, and with the life of the Whole.

I have said "Christian philosophy." But Professor Sorley speaks, in this connection, not merely of Christian philosophy in that general sense in which it must always exist while Christianity itself exists, but of a philosophy specifically Christian, a system of thought embodying as such the central specific affirmations of the Christian creed. I think he would admit such an interpretation of his words; but it cannot be taken for granted that he would go the whole length with Dr. Garvie in his pronouncement that "Theology need not adopt any metaphysics, for it can beget its own." And again, "Christ has made such a difference, that Christianity cannot borrow, but must create its own metaphysics. None of the philosophical systems which, within the Christian era, have come into being with more or less conscious dependence on Christianity, seems to him (the writer) to be so thoroughly Christian as to justify the dependence of Christian theology upon it."*

These remarks, I think, are absolutely sound; and they may be accepted as such without in the least underrating the value of the work which the great philosophers have done, or the large amount of truth in their systems. Indeed, a Christian philosophy, if such there is to be, must occupy not an isolated, but a central, place among other systems, and thus be better able to do justice to them than they to each other.

The subject before us is of course an immense one, and

* *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 69 and 393.

certainly I shall make no attempt even to outline such a philosophy as I have indicated. It will be enough to put before you a few considerations, first as to its necessity, and secondly as to the direction in which it will have to look for its material. These questions are so intimately connected that we will not attempt to discuss them apart. They may be combined in one formula: the relation of philosophy to the Christian Gospel.

Let us glance at the phenomena which normal and naïve Christianity, not yet worked over by speculation or accommodating theories, presents. We have two starting-points before us, the individual and the historic or social; and at both we find what claims to be a definite experience of Divine action or intervention. Speaking from the point of view of those who accept this experience as real—as I shall throughout—we have to ask whether or no such are to be called upon to translate, if they can, the doctrines which for them most directly express their faith into general abstract principles, and base them upon, or prop them against, speculative explanations of the universe. And if not, may we claim that faith, brought face to face with intellectual problems, will itself develop its own intellectual resources?

Christianity certainly came into the world as a message, a Gospel, a proclamation; and it is most significant that the Church should have so long held the pagan philosophy at arm's length, and have used abstract reasoning under protest and for the purpose merely of defining itself against the heresies. So far as this was so—and I think this is the essential truth of the matter—Christian philosophy may be said to have come into being just as the background of a geometrical pattern forms itself into a correlative pattern without the artist specially observing it, through its being defined against the design he draws upon it. The unauthorized teachers together defined and systematized the ecclesiastical doctrine in defining their own positions and pressing them upon the notice of the orthodox theologians.

Now the experience of the reality of the saving grace of God in those who recognise the reality of that experience, gives the key to the interpretation of the history. As a simple matter of fact, it is not the human greatness of Christ that lastingly stamped itself on the mind of the Church, but the divine; not His witness to the Divine sonship of all men, but the sense of the uniqueness of His own. When the individual Christian finds an objective experience the very centre and foundation of

the historic formulas of his religion, it should be impossible for him even to conceive that that religion, so formulated, had its origin otherwise than in the experience of fact; and this fact must be, in the nature of the case, at once historical and supernatural. If the experience be real, it cannot be merely incidental. It must have created on the plane of history those doctrinal propositions that create it in the individual.

The clear recognition of a corporate experience in the Church as the foundation and essence of her creed, is the outstanding feature of Loisy's much controverted *L'Évangile et l'Église.* Certainly that treatise is open to radical objections. But I think this ought not to lead us to forget the importance of the foundation which he lays. He regards, like the Modernists in general, Christian doctrine as the creation of the experience of the Church, symbols whereby faith makes real to itself its own spiritual objects. But still the question remains: what is the relation of the Church's experience to that of the individual Christian? Can the individual, troubled—like the Modernist—with modern criticism and thought, find a centre, or core, in that system of doctrine, whereby he can separate the essential and the unessential, and be true alike to reason and to faith? Or is this system delivered to him to put his own meaning into it, according to a standard furnished by his own instincts and needs? Of course there is always the visible institution, its life, and its sacraments, to anchor him to historical, social, concrete religion. But is that sufficient? Has religious truth no absolute centre? Is our own life, as the authors of the Programme of Modernism affirm, "the only absolute of our direct experience?" (p. 134).

Had Loisy started with the consciousness of Redemption as the foundation both of personal belief and of the Church's existence, he would have held a key to the interpretation of the whole system of doctrine: he would have found a principle upon which form and substance could be distinguished, not arbitrarily and subjectively, but by bringing to expression the immanent rationality of the creed itself.

I think this is a fair interpretation of the real drift of the Modernist thought in the Church of Rome. And indeed it is rather to emphasise what seems true and valuable in it, than the reverse, that I have brought it into the discussion. For it stands in sharp contrast—even though sharing some of its faults—with an immensely influential trend of thought, dominant in modern philosophy, which is designated by the terms "Rationalism" or "Intellectualism."

When Scholasticism, which had constructed its own philosophy of the Christian religion, was discredited by the advance of new ideas and secular learning, the human intellect had a task thrown upon it which was bound in due time to disclose both its resources and its limitations. If the dogmatic authority wielded by the Medieval Church had depended more on its appeal to the heart and conscience, or conversely, if the personal spiritual life that it contained had been deep and diffused enough to have captured and utilised the intellectual machinery of her universities and monasteries, then we may assume that theology, even though it drastically reformed itself, would have done so with a greater sense of continuity with the past. The Reformers, especially in England, certainly realised that their task was not merely to destroy, but rather to reconstruct on primitive models: but the Reformation was but one aspect of a great movement of emancipation of the human intellect, fraught with good and evil. The essence of Intellectualism, as it seems to me, is not its claim to criticise, but its claim to construct. I do not mean to construct truth as such, but to construct systems—systems, that is, of abstract thought which are envisaged as concrete reality. Reason, when awakened to full consciousness, and seeking to come to its own, is in a mood not merely to scrutinise the theological doctrines transmitted for its acceptance, but provisionally even to reject them, because they are already the rational construction of other people; and reason, when suddenly emancipated, seeks to do its own constructive work from the very foundation, and out of the most elementary materials.

Now this could have been wholesomely checked only by a strong sense of spiritual solidarity with the community that transmitted those doctrines. And such spiritual solidarity had been forfeited by the Medieval Church.

It is significant to note, in this connection, the attitude of Descartes, the father of modern metaphysics, himself a member of the Roman Church. Describing the process by which his mind extricated itself from mere traditional acquiescence and attained to an independent standpoint, he tells how he came to place more confidence in the simple inferences of an individual mind than in the systems constructed by many minds, and adds: "And because we have all to pass through a state of infancy to manhood, and have been of necessity, for a length of time, governed by our desires and preceptors (whose dictates were frequently conflicting, while neither perhaps

always counselled us for the best), I farther concluded that it is almost impossible that our judgments can be so correct or solid as they would have been, had our Reason been mature from the moment of our birth, and had we always been guided by it alone."* And elsewhere, referring to this intellectual crisis in his life, he says: "From that time I was convinced of the necessity of undertaking once in my life to rid myself of all the opinions I had adopted, and of commencing anew the work of building from the foundation, if I desired to establish a firm and abiding superstructure in the sciences."† This procedure was of course in itself reasonable; under the circumstances, he could not have done otherwise. But now, after nearly three centuries, it is time to take account of the gain as well as the loss which falls to us through this breach with the past. Elevated from the position of a passing necessity of the age to that of an accepted principle in metaphysics, it meant simply this: that the reason of the individual thinker, however much help he might accept from previous thought, must accept no material already organized by previous thought, but must start—like Descartes with his "*Cogito, ergo sum*"—from the barest and most inchoate data he can find in his own mind. This would be all very well if philosophy were concerned with bare reason, but when we have to deal with religious systems, pulsating with life, the actual creations, under whatever disadvantages, of the self-organizing experience of living communities, the case is different. But the difference was not realized. So we come to the age of Deism and the Illumination, when reason in this narrow sense reigned supreme, and to Kant, the great forerunner of the modern Idealists. Kant excellently illustrates my account of Intellectualism. For him reason as such does not work upon rational material but upon phenomena, and by phenomena he means mere sense-material, conveying no knowledge. The thing-in-itself which lies behind the phenomena is unknown. Reason is a sort of active mechanism working in, or behind, our minds (for of course its activity must be distinguished from that of our own personal volition) which does not receive, but constructs, knowledge. Experience, which for Kant is merely sensuous, is unorganized, colourless, shapeless, dumb, till Reason has done its work upon it. To some this will seem obviously sound, because our simplest perceptions (short of bare sensation,

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* *Discourse on Method*, etc., tr. Veitch, p. 14.
† *Meditations*, *Id.*, p. 97.

if we regard this as cognitive at all) have rational implications behind them. Experience, it may be said, does as a matter of fact convey no knowledge without the co-operation of reason. True enough, but that is not the question. Granted that the two cannot be separated, does it follow that they stand related to each other as form does to matter? May not reason live at the very heart of experience? May it not be the child of experience, and may not its highest task be, not to construct its own systems out of experience in its rawest forms, but to draw out the implications of experience in its richest forms? Personally I am convinced that this is the sound method, and the only possible method whereby a genuine philosophy of Christianity can be formed. It rests on the great intuitionalist principle which I may thus formulate: *Experience is as such internally significant.* In other words, it is not to be identified with feeling or sensation, but includes entire rational systems in their aspect as the creation of spiritual instincts and as answering to vital needs. Intuitionalism is not always as bold as this. It may be hard and narrow, tied down to so-called common sense Realism, but it may also be mystical, comprehensive, and spiritual. In this latter aspect, I contend, it is the theory of knowledge which must belong to any true Christian philosophy that shall arise.

The spiritual instinct, the sense of the Divine presence, the feeling after a deeper and fuller life, are now beginning to receive more of their due. Yet still we generally find, as I think, a conspicuous failure to do justice to the full significance of the higher consciousness as a plane of actual knowledge and organizing centre of thought. And one reason is that though our intuitions are introduced to balance reason, or to fructify it, or to give it more adequate material for its inferences, yet modern philosophy still fails to appreciate the *inherent rationality of intuition itself.* To go back to the Kantian era, Schleiermacher, the great champion of the emotional claims of religion, in contradistinction to the prevailing Rationalism, is like Kant in his de-rationalizing of intuition. Religion he regarded as feeling, in a narrow and exclusive sense, not, of course, in isolation from knowledge and morality, but as, in itself, non-intellectual. And so with modern Empiricism. Even the late Professor James, for instance, though he certainly defends the validity for knowledge of special religious experiences, defends them essentially in their individual character, as our own impressions then and there, of a spiritual world. In fact, the more we use them as a basis for definite beliefs, the more individual and unauthorized—however interesting in their way—they become.

Thus we are still far from the conception of rational and social intuition, the subjective correlative of historical revelation. And even if we go on to draw inferences from these psychological phenomena, supplemented by the study of Comparative Religion, we are still rationalizing, however usefully. Whether or no such methods as these are the only admissible ones, it is not my object—at least not my main object—here to discuss. Suffice it to insist that, if so they be, we must abandon our efforts to enthrone the Christian consciousness over the realm of intellect. To some good Christians this conclusion will not seem distressing, or at least they can comfortably contemplate the indefinite postponement of the synthesis. My own feeling in the matter is quite otherwise; and here let me merely observe that the consummation of which I am speaking will not need to wait for the complete articulation of a Christian philosophy, but will be attained, for all who may accept it, when the foundation is laid.

I do not believe in any attempt to synthesize Empiricism and Rationalism, or at least that any such synthesis can satisfy the demand for a Christian Philosophy. It may seem attractive to combine the apparent concreteness, the colour, the wealth of actual fact, in which Empiricism glories, with the vastness, the loftiness, the close articulation, of the great monistic cosmologies. But both methods, as I have tried to show, fail to reach to the real inwardness of the religious consciousness, and therefore it is not sufficient that the two should be balanced or correlated: we must find a deeper standpoint, and from that standpoint avail ourselves of what is true in both. Psychology cannot fill the ratiocinative skeleton with flesh and life; for psychology, as has been justly maintained, cannot deal with the real living reality of the phenomena it examines: it kills before it dissects. Christian philosophy must rest on personalism, for the Christian religion is personal to the core: and personality (for us at least who maintain, as against all forms of Determinism, that it is radically free) transcends the scope of all science, even psychological science; for science abstracts from freedom, and as Bergson has shown, can study even life only from an external and mechanical point of view. And besides, not only could not Empiricism supply the content, but no speculative system, starting from the supposed immediacy of sense data could possibly receive it. No methods can satisfy the intellectual demands of religious experience except those which bring to expression its own latent implications. Religious experience cannot be formulated *ab extra*. It cannot be rationalized from

an external basis: it can only be helped and encouraged by the removal of traditional hindrances to vindicate its inherent rationality on its own basis.

It may be well to make a few comments upon a type of religious thought, broad and spiritual, and in every way deserving of the most respectful handling, which claims to transcend the one-sidedness of these opposing methods. Rudolf Eucken, who is now becoming known in England, is the author of a philosophy distinguished, not perhaps by much thoroughness or depth of analysis, but by breadth of range, loftiness of tone, sympathy, and spirituality. He is a decided anti-intellectualist —though not, I think, free from all intellectualistic limitations —and yet on the other hand his outlook is cosmological and the tendency of his thought monistic. His key-thought is not any variety of the Hegelian Absolute, but the spirit-life or *Geistesleben*. If you read such a book as his *Geistige Strömungen*, you find it recurring like a sort of *Gloria* at the ends of chapters, as the positive complement of his various criticisms. Subjective and Objective, Realism and Idealism, History, Culture, and so forth—all these conceptions, for him, run up ultimately into the *Geistesleben*. Life, not mere animal or mere mundane life, but the life of that larger and deeper self which unites us with God and the cosmic Whole—this is the broad idea that is continually called in to correct the narrowness and one-sidedness of warring creeds. But it enters the field, I cannot but think, somewhat as a *deus ex machinâ*. It does not so much conciliate, as overtop, the antitheses: it does not solve, so much as cover, the difficulties.

One-sided aspects of truth are such, for Eucken, because they are one-sided aspects of life. But then, of course, the *Geistesleben* itself must make good its reality. This it does by its own self-evidence, if we set ourselves to live up to it. The spiritual side of our nature, if put into active exercise, will vindicate itself to itself. And so it is really a datum, while at the same time it is a standard for the reconciliation of essentially intellectual oppositions. But this can only yield fruitful results if the *Geistesleben* possesses in itself a standard of intellectual truth. And where are we to look for this? Surely only in concrete religious doctrines, interpreted by our own religious intuitions. For such a standard of truth, if really available for general philosophical purposes, must be social and not merely individual. And this is in fact involved in what I have contended for. But Eucken does not allow this. He does not seem to see that if religious truth

is to have speculative supremacy, and is itself based on experience, we are bound to give to the formulated theology, which is the primary expression of that experience, the priority over all other forms of thought. Of course such theology must make good its claims in terms of general philosophy: but the point is that theology must be allowed to posit its essential ideas at the outset, and philosophy, on its side, must try and do all the justice it can to those ideas as the vehicles of corporate experience, before it deals with them in their relation to logic and psychology. To be sure there must be an initial sympathy and even provisional acceptance: but this is only to say that no Christian philosophy will ever satisfy which does not spring from the heart of specifically Christian experience.

Eucken stops short of this. He does not set himself to interrogate the *Geistesleben* and to interpret its deliverances. Though a Theist, he has little to say even about Theism. Indeed, Mr. Waterhouse goes so far as to remark: "Professor Eucken's system is by no means inevitably a religious idealism, and if some future Left Wing develop it upon non-theistic or even anti-theistic principles, it will cause me no surprise."*

As regards, then, the general relation of this philosophy to Christianity, I think there is no room for doubt. Affinity in certain points we undoubtedly find; notably in his views respecting the "negative movement," corresponding to the Christian conception of the New Birth. But the idea of a historical Redemption, in the Christian sense, could not, I think, even be worked into his system, much less drawn from it. An exceedingly friendly critic in Germany, Dr. von Gerdtell, has examined Eucken's views on Christianity in a pamphlet,† and has, it seems to me, shown this clearly. It is particularly evident in Eucken's conception of history. "We must endeavour," he says, "in history to separate the past and the abiding and to extract from it a spiritual present."‡ This is relatively true, almost indeed a truism, but as the ultimate truth it certainly conflicts with the Christian belief that the Eternal has, as such, entered time. And I think it is true to say that Eucken applies this principle to Christianity all along. He explicitly refuses to identify the absolute religion with any of the historical religions. And as against this, surely we cannot

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* *Modern Theories of Religion*, p. 258.
† *Rudolf Euckens Christentum.*
‡ *Geistige Strömungen der Gegenwart*, p. 258.

hesitate to agree with Von Gerdtell's comment: "The Gospel is not related to its world-view as the pulp of an orange to its peel, out of which the inside of the fruit is cleanly extracted. The relation of the two is rather that of two kinds of thread, interwoven in one fabric. If we try to unpick one of these two threads from this fabric, we have thereby annihilated the fabric itself."

Another writer on these general lines, but one who has come closer, I think, to a satisfactory conclusion, is Troeltsch. He stands out definitely for a religious philosophy that shall be psychological and at the same time metaphysical. We cannot here dwell on his adjustment of *a priorism* and Empiricism. But his insistence on the significance of history and the value of concrete historical religion is interesting and notable, if disappointing in the end. In his *Absolutheit des Christentums*—a title which raise hopes higher than the argument fulfils—he shows an appreciation of the meaning of concrete historical religion as such which is in decided contrast, if not opposition, to Eucken. For instance: "The productive power of religion pulsates only in the historical religions, and, in fixing our attitude towards the religious values of mankind, it is with these that we have first to do" (p. 57). This is far better than, with many, to reduce religion to a philosophy on the one hand, and a residuum of emotion, sentiment, and cult on the other. And yet Troeltsch pulls up short of the essential Christian position. He will not allow that the absolute object of Christian Faith is realized as such in history. He leaves no room for the supreme claim: "He that hath seen Me has seen the Father." Now of course if we start from the metaphysical side: if we begin by asking whether the Absolute, or even the immanent *a priori* of Christian experience, can be conceived as realizing itself in history, the answer will not be favourable. But this is intellectualism, however concealed, and it presupposes that very view of the relation of Philosophy to historic religion which I am criticizing. If, on the other hand, we begin with the actual fact of Christ, and His self-impression as God upon a living community and upon ourselves, then the case is entirely different. God, in Theology, certainly answers to the Absolute of constructive Idealism, but it is a fatal mistake to explain the former through the latter. Theism is not the popular embodiment of philosophic Absolutism, but Absolutism is the shadow of Theism. Theology as such is less compromised by its symbols and accommodations, than Idealism by its refusal to submit to the dominant claims of Christian experience. This certainly is

what the Christian thinker must logically claim for his religion.

Troeltsch is significant for our purpose, for he is so intensely historical, just until he comes to the crucial point. Religious history is, in his view, a competition of values. It is not the unfolding, in time, of a Hegelian Absolute. The abiding eternal Reality is present, though partially, in actual experience, and makes itself felt, not merely in the organic growth of the Whole, but at the various points where new spiritual forces break in upon the scene. This is a movement of philosophy in the right direction; but a Christian philosophy, such as we are asking for, does not yet find standing-room. The idea of a historical competition, so to speak, between religions, decided by the spiritually enlightened individual as such, is premature till the question is answered: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" Christianity is an historical religion in a further sense than this. It is historical because its centre of gravity is an event, that is to say, a fact of specific experience. Not that this fact is historical first and spiritual afterwards: a mere marvel in the first place; a Divine act by inference. No indeed. It is historical and spiritual at once. Its spiritual evidence for the individual is, in fact, the deepest foundation of its authority. But this involves belief in a spiritual society possessing as such the abiding consciousness of its own historico-supernatural origin.

And here let me sum up the position adopted in this paper. A Christian philosophy, while availing itself to the full of the work of the great thinkers, must proceed from the heart of the Christian Church, and must be primarily an expression of its experience. And since that experience normally finds its centre of gravity, not in general truths, but in a specific Divine event, so the corresponding philosophy must take primary account of those central doctrines, which, as a matter of historical fact as well as of personal realization, define and assert that event. Therefore that philosophy will take its start from experience, not in its lowest and most inchoate form, but in its highest. It will not therefore be a new foundation, but will be continuous with the definite Christian thought of all ages. It will carry on that thought, not in a spirit of submission to external authority, but from a sense of inward solidarity and continuity of life and intuition. I endeavoured to show that this involves a different doctrine of experience in general from that planted by Kant deep in the soil of modern thought: and that the discontinuity of experience and reason, or de-rationalizing of experience as

such, exactly corresponds to the attitude which Reason, as represented by Descartes, endeavoured to maintain in the early seventeenth century, as against traditional teachings. Modern philosophy therefore constructs its theories of knowledge under the impetus, and on the principle, of the intellectual revolution which gave it birth. The individualism, discontinuity, and intellectualism expressed—inevitably, no doubt—in the passages I have quoted from Descartes, find their expression still in the very heart of the metaphysics that worked its way from his—in Hume, in Kant, in the modern Idealists, and even in the Empiricists.

So, at least, it seems to me. And this view of the history connects itself with the position to which, on the most radical grounds, I hold fast; namely, that a Christian philosophy, based as it is on religious intuitions, cannot establish itself except in connection with a consistently intuitionalistic theory of knowledge. Of course it is out of the question to enter further into the problem on this occasion; and I shall even omit my reply to certain obvious objections, with which, on commencing this paper, I hoped to deal.

It appears then that the Christian philosophy, with all its centrality and intellectual catholicity, will have to take sides in certain of the conflicts between the different schools. In the conflict between the idealistic and the realistic theories of knowledge, it will side with Realism: in that between Determinism and Indeterminism, with Indeterminism.

But first of all, and above all, we must take seriously the New Testament doctrine of the self-revelation of God to the individual. It is better to hold this fast, in face of all sorts of difficulties, even as a shipwrecked man may cling to a rock from which the waves almost detach his hands, than to snatch at compromising theories and alien support. There are many philosophies which, in respect of their best elements and their ideals, will fit into Christianity: there is no philosophy into which Christianity will fit. There is no system which must not be broken up before it can yield its materials towards the construction of the Temple of God. "He that is spiritual judgeth all things."

And what of difficulties? Surely the true path, in the highest regions of thought, is to "follow the gleam" over hill and dale, over ditch and hedge. When we are told that our views raise more difficulties than they solve—what of that? If they bring light to our souls, if they bring into our world harmony and meaning—however little expressible in words—

if they raise our lives to new levels, then the difficulties can wait. If we are patient, we shall be able to do justice to all objections, to accept all needed revision, without dimming our vision of that unutterable Truth which our logic must always serve, but can never compass. "In Thy light shall we see light."

Discussion.

The following contribution from the Rev. A. Irving, B.A., D.Sc., was read by the Secretary :—

The perusal of Dr. Whately's paper has given me intense pleasure. It is a masterly sequel to his book, *The Inner Light*. It would not be difficult to mention names of many men of European reputation, who have long shaken off the *impedimenta* of a materialistic "philosophy" and have for years seen through the fallacies of Haeckelism, Spencerism, and a good deal of what we may call Huxleyism, because they have worked their way—in the face of difficulties innumerable on the field of objective experience—to the realisation of the fact that (p. 64) "the Eternal has entered time," to furnish the pivot, on which the whole circle of Christian belief turns. I am sure that many, who have done their best to explore the depths and the wealth of the realistic teachings of Nature, and are fully conscious of the wealth of the intellectual ore to be found in that region of thought and research, yet fail to find in the sciences of Nature the answer to the deepest questioning of their spirits. To such, Dr. Whately's paper will be especially welcome. We must, indeed, "take seriously (p. 67) the New Testament doctrine, of the self-revelation of God to the individual," through the Ministry of the Spirit, as the Spencerian dogma of "the Unknowable" vanishes like a spent bubble from our mental vision; while we recognise that (p. 66) "A Christian philosophy, while availing itself to the full of the work of the great thinkers, must proceed from the heart of the Christian Church, and must be primarily an expression of its experience."

From these two propositions I venture (I hope with Dr. Whately's consent) to make the simple deduction—that the Sacramental System of the Church Catholic (that is, of "the whole congregation

of Christian people dispersed throughout the world"), while not amounting to a formal philosophy, still embodies the essentials of such a philosophy, with all its associations centred in "a specific Divine event," and with its "inward sense of solidarity and continuity," as was, I fancy, seen long ago by Pascal, who was a man of science as well as a thinker in the fields of Religion and Philosophy. To construct a theory of the New Testament without recognising the centrality of doctrine of the God-Man, would be about as scientific as to attempt to construct a system of mechanics without taking into account the fundamental law of Gravitation. "One centre we have" (wrote Archbishop Benson), "but the approaches to it from without, the radii of thought, are infinite."

Mr. JOHN SCHWARTZ said:—

A strenuous business career has left me no time to study the intricate philosophical systems so ably described by our learned lecturer and these I cannot discuss.

My few remarks will be from the common sense standpoint of one who, during hours of retreat, has tried to follow the trend of modern thought. I do not concur in the quotation from Professor Sorley at the Church Congress, "There does not exist at the present time any living systematized body of Christian philosophy," for, alas dogmatic theology seems to me to have been such an attempt, which has acted disastrously on the spiritual religion taught by Christ, which it has defaced almost beyond recognition. This fact has been driven home by the eloquence of Ruskin, Carlyle, Tolstoy, Matthew Arnold, and many Broad Church divines. I illustrate with a few extracts from Matthew Arnold's "Religion is morality touched by emotion." The real essence of the New Testament is "Follow Jesus," "its natural fruits, joy, and life have been taken to flow from the ecclesiastical dogma held along with it. Let us treat popular religion tenderly. Learned religion, however, the pseudo-science of dogmatic theology, merits no such indulgence. It is a separable accretion which never had any business to be attached to Christianity, never did it any good, and *now* does it great harm." I contend that Christ appealed to the heart, not the intellect, both by His teaching and His ideal personality. Our intuitions of the good, like those of the beautiful, cannot be argued about, but are as certain to us as those of natural phenomena on which physical science is based.

These certain moral intuitions, I consider, are limited to the simple fundamental verities as enunciated by Jesus, and do not extend to the one thousand and one vagaries of imagination of devout adherents of various religious beliefs. The touchstone of science is the universal validity of its results for all normally constituted and duly instructed minds, this applies equally to the teachings of Jesus, but is the rock on which all philosophical, mystic, and metaphysic teachings are shattered.

If I understand the lecturer aright, he contends that keeping aside scholastic theology Christians, who really represent modern thought and are really sensitive to its spirit, should make efforts to enthrone the Christian consciousness over the realm of intellect. I think that such efforts would be disastrous, and that as primitive spiritual Christianity was maimed (I almost said destroyed) by amalgamation with pagan philosophic mysticism which led to a large increase in the quantity of normal adherents, but an abysmal decrease in their quality; in like manner the attempt to strengthen spiritual religion by philosophical, metaphysical, and mystical reasoning, all of which are falling into greater discredit day by day, would undermine the rock of our salvation.

May I give a few quotations of modern views.

Professor Romanes, *Posthumous Notes*, edited by Bishop Gore :—

> "The further we ascend from the solid ground of verification the less confidence should we place in our wings of speculation" —"the rashness of undue confidence in syllogistic conclusions even when derived from sound premises in regions of such high abstraction."

W. H. Malloch, *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1902 :—

> "The metaphysician's claim to transcend facts has been rejected by every thinker and discoverer of the last three generations who has ever done anything for the cause of human progress as an elaborate self-delusion."

Sir J. FitzStephen :—

> "All metaphysical verbiage is an attempt to convert ignorance into a superior kind of knowledge by shaking up hard words in a bag"—"all our words for other than material objects are metaphors liable to be understood."

G. H. Lewes, *A Biographical History of Philosophy* :—

> "Philosophy only moves in the same endless circles."

"Its first principles are as much a matter of dispute as they were 2,000 years ago.

"Philosophy was the parent of Positive Science. It nourished the infant mind of humanity but its office has been fulfilled. The only interest it can have is an historic interest."

"Philosophy in all its highest speculations is but a more or less ingenious playing upon words."

Bishop THORNTON asked where the intuitions of a corporate Christian conscience were to be found?

Archdeacon POTTER said that it was difficult for him to criticise quite impartially the paper, which he felt was an interesting and instructive one, as it seems to start from a standpoint which differs largely from his own. He looked on Philosophy as the Queen of Sciences, which must impartially take up the data belonging to each science, and co-ordinate them into a consistent whole. Therefore in his view it must begin, as Descartes said, with no assumption but a bare "cogito, ergo sum." A Christian philosophy, if it is to be a philosophy at all, must not be the servant of dogmatic theology, but work upwards from the very bottom, and systematise the results attained in *all* the sciences with Christian beliefs, so far as they can be found to agree. But it must discard all that will not thus work into a unity, not as untrue, but as unproved. Doubtless all spiritual truth that was really taught by our Lord would be found to be capable of this agreement, but not necessarily all that had been formulated in later periods by the Christian Church.

Real spiritual experience might be taken as intuitions. But we must distinguish between the real and imaginary. The Archdeacon then instanced the case of a lady who, replying to the question, "how did she know that our Lord was Divine, and now existent," said that she had met Christ, spoken to Him, and so on. But though doubtless she had experienced a real religious intuition of a spiritual presence, that intuition was no proof that the power present was the historical Jesus of Nazareth. It might be quite true. But the intuition did not prove it.

Therefore the speaker could not approve, what seemed to be a main thought in the paper, that we should "start with the consciousness of redemption as the foundation of the Church's existence," or "give to the formulated theology which is the primary expression of (religious) experience the priority over all other forms of thought,"

or "begin with the actual fact of Christ and His self-impression as God upon a living community." Nor did he think that a real philosophy should start by "siding with indeterminism." Christian Philosophy may end with the establishment of these beliefs, or it may not; but it must not begin by assuming them.

Professor LANGHORNE ORCHARD.—The able author takes the position that Christian Philosophy must be founded in Christian experience of the redemptive revelation that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—a fact made known intuitively to the individual personally by a personal God. He is thus led to say something about experience and intuition.

On p. 57 of the paper we read that "the experience of the reality of the saving grace of God in those who recognise the reality of that experience, gives the key to the interpretation of the history"; and we are reminded further (on p. 61) that "*Experience is as such internally significant.* In other words, it is not to be identified with feeling or sensation, but includes entire rational systems in their aspect as the creation of spiritual instincts and as answering to vital needs."

Undoubtedly, to restrict all experience to sense-experience is alien to science and philosophy.

The author speaks (p. 61) of "*inherent rationality of intuition.*" In this connection it may be remarked that all our knowledge comes to us either directly by intuitive consciousness, or indirectly through reasoning. Now, in every argument, we have two propositions or "premises" which, being taken as true, the truth of a new proposition (called the conclusion) necessarily follows. The premises are either given directly by intuitive consciousness, or are conclusions of other arguments. But in the last analysis it is evident that these conclusions must themselves ultimately rest upon premises supplied by intuition. Hence, all our knowledge rests, for its validity, upon the validity of our intuitions. This has been well pointed out by Hamilton, with the remark that reliance upon these intuitions is warranted, since if they were untrustworthy our good Creator would be a deceiver. Reliance is also justified by the supposition of their truth harmonising with the practical experience of daily life. Any argument seeking to prove the invalidity of intentions must be *suicidal*, for, like every other argument, it rests for its *own* validity upon the validity of those

very intuitions. In intuitive consciousness we find the basis of all our knowledge of truth.

With reference to Descartes' argument—"Cogito, ergo sum"—it may be noted that, though logically unassailable (since thinking implies a thinker), there is a psychological redundance, for the "cogito," equally with the "sum," depends for belief upon the intuitive testimony of consciousness.

The author tells us (p. 67) that his position is open to "certain obvious objections." Undoubtedly, that cannot be true which is in antagonism to any truth, for truth is one and does not contradict itself. The individual personal experience of the redemption revelation "must be, in the nature of the case, at once historical and supernatural . . . It must have created on the plane of history those doctrinal propositions that create it in the individual" (p. 58).

The Son of God, in Whom we put our heart-trust, must be the historic Christ, the Christ of the Bible—not a false Christ, not a Christ Who is the product of a devout or of an undevout imagination. The faith must have warrant, not subjective only, but also objective, if we would adequately commend it to men and be secured against self-delusion. This is enjoined by the Bible. The Lord Jesus Christ appealed to His miracles as evidence, and Christians are exhorted to be able to give a *reason* to inquirers for the faith that is in them, for Christianity is not selfish. The personal experience, to the individual himself the strongest of all proofs, is not sufficient alone to convince other people. It needs objective confirmation. It may be said that there is such a thing as self-delusion. A man believing himself to be the Emperor of Abyssinia would not necessarily be proof that he was so. Christian Philosophy does not restrict itself to any single department—however important—of human nature. It addresses itself to *the whole being* of man, to his heart, his mind, his life.

The Rev. H. J. R. MARSTON said: He had listened to the paper with great pleasure and admiration. The lecturer was an esteemed friend and co-worker, and this added to his pleasure. He hailed with satisfaction the coming to the front of a young man, a member of the Church of England, an Evangelical, who had given to the subject really profound thought. His language was not throughout quite luminous, but this was a common failing of learned

philosophers. The lecturer had shown *the demand* existed, and this was the best answer to those who did not see the need for a Christian Philosophy. Nothing could stifle it, it must be recognised. We cannot rule it out because a Christian Philosophy was not contemplated by Christ. We may say that no one ever met the demand better than St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans; he gives there a philosophical account of sin and redemption. I concur as to the importance of giving full value to collective as well as individual experience. In reply to Bishop Thornton's question, I may say these are found in the Creeds, the confessions of St. Augustine and in the Pilgrim's Progress, they are the common property of Christendom, in such hymns too as the "Rock of Ages." These express corporate intuitions of Christian men, and in constructing a Christian Philosophy we must take these into account as well as those of the individual.

The LECTURER.—I think a written reply will be more satisfactory than the mere reproduction of my verbal reply. For the sake of brevity I must confine my attention to opponents. I would just thank Dr. Irving and Mr. Marston for their very kind personal references, and identify myself with Mr. Marston's answer to Bishop Thornton's question.

It may be well to emphasise the fact that my paper is necessarily a mere fragment and suffers accordingly. All that it contains is based on conviction formed and defined in the course of years of reading and thought, and not the mere throwing out of a few suggestions. I ask that it be read in that spirit.

My dissent from Mr. Schwartz's remarks is so absolute and radical that it is almost a difficulty to know where to begin. The idea that he and those he quotes entertain of what philosophy is, is hopelessly narrow. Not only so, but all that he says about dogmatic theology on the one hand and philosophy on the other is answered in the main argument of my paper, which he ignores. Whatever questions may be raised as to the possibility or necessary conditions of a Christian Philosophy, it is obviously futile to bring charges against it which are excluded *ex hypothesi*. That he should bring forward Mr. Malloch's remark about "the metaphysician's claim to transcend facts," alone shows that the essence of my contention has been missed. But even as to philosophy in general, the attitude he represents is such that I

cannot realise it to myself at all. There are philosophical assumptions behind all our thoughts. Philosophy—however much particular philosophers have erred—is simply reflection on those assumptions. Mr. Schwartz claims to speak from the standpoint of common sense; but common sense, any more than science, cannot support its own foundations. Its practical verifications are only valid in and for its own sphere. Even our ideas in dreams verify themselves within the dreams. The human mind *must* in the long run seek for its own ultimate data; and while I strongly maintain that these are concrete—none the less for being spiritual—the error of resting on abstractions does not lie with philosophy as such. This is the old intellectualism, that is becoming "discredited"; philosophy is becoming more and more concrete, human and vital; and scientists, I believe, are beginning to feel themselves forced back on it by pressure from within their own sphere. Philosophy does *not* "only move in the same endless circles." It never did, and certainly does not now. In an ascending spiral, perhaps, but that is very different. Even intellectualism has done a necessary work, if only spade-work; and at bottom philosophy is but the direct expression of the mind of the generation that produces it, and is organically one with the general mass of human mentality and emotion. Every true philosopher *knows* that. As a devoted student of philosophy, I am in a position directly to deny the truth of Mr. Schwartz's account of it. I *know* in myself its spiritual and emotional value, its integral place in the deepest life of man. To me the quotations he brings to bear are meaningless.

Closely connected with this is the question of dogma. I demur strongly to his description of it as a system of Christian Philosophy. This again is virtually answered in my paper. Moreover, religion is not mere emotion; and if it be said to rest on a few simple propositions, even these propositions, if they really deal with central needs, must have a central place in the intellect, and must thus require to be brought into relation with human thought and defined against the ideas that deny them. How could the body of systematized doctrine possibly be, as such, an accretion? How could the spiritual side of man's nature have allowed the accretion, and fed itself on it—as it has—if accretion it be? An alliance is essentially mutual. In one aspect, the Christian "dogmas" *must*

be a witness to the struggle of the spiritual nature to express itself to itself; and it is just in that aspect—as truly concrete and empirical as it is metaphysical—that I claim its right to primary consideration.

Archdeacon Potter quite misunderstands my position. The "assumption" with which Christian Philosophy, as I understand it, must start, is simply an experiential datum, and all philosophy professedly starts from such. As to particular doctrines, the Christian Philosophy will only accept these at first for examination; though it knows that they have *some* truth because they are at least an attempt to express that central experience which is the Christian philosopher's *point d'appui.* To co-ordinate Christianity with ordinary sciences would be to beg the question of its fundamental position in experience. Of course I quite agree that the very nature and meaning of intuition must be fixed; the case of the lady mentioned does not touch me. I cannot now go into this question, but am quite prepared to meet it, and indeed have dealt with it in print.

But I am particularly surprised at the Archdeacon's misunderstanding of my attitude on the subject of Indeterminism. If I had made Christian Philosophy "start by siding with Indeterminism," I should have been flying in the face of my most fundamental principles. Long reflection on the subject has indeed resulted, for me, in a most emphatic rejection of Determinism; but my opinion is that Christian Philosophy would lead us to a standpoint from which the wrong assumptions underlying Determinism would be revealed; a very different thing from the fallacious procedure of building on a preliminary rejection of it.

A cordial vote of thanks to the lecturer for his thoughtful paper was carried unanimously.