

# The Faith of the Gospel

Viewed in Relation to  
Current Popular Unbeliefs,

By  
**ALFRED E. KNIGHT.**

Author of  
"Lyra Christi," "Philistia,"  
"A Concise History of the Church,"  
and other works.

ONE SHILLING  
& SIXPENCE.

**G. F. VALLANCE,**

**GOODMAYES, ESSEX.**

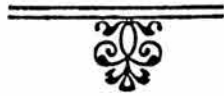
PUBLISHER OF  
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# FOREWORD.

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THOUGH "The Faith of the Gospel" is strictly speaking a controversial work, the writer's aim has not been so much to combat error as to furnish error's antidote, the Word of God ; to nourish with comfortable doctrine even whilst exposing the foulness and deformity of disease. In the face of current unbeliefs, now pressed upon the unwary in the name of the latest enlightenment and culture, it is most necessary to "contend earnestly;" yet contention has been less his object than the presentation of Grace and Truth as divinely given stimuli—dynamic forces, as we may call them, which, while exposing the fallacies, challenge the conscience in view of ultimate healing and enfranchisement.

It will be noticed that, at the back of man's perverseness and opposition to God lies oftentimes a singular ignorance of the letter, no less than of the spirit of Scripture; so that to rectify a misquotation, or to clear up some palpable misinterpretation, will suffice to dispose of a whole battalion of objections; yet underlying this ignorance one finds also most touching evidences of a need whose roots lie deeper—an urgent soul-need, inarticulate perhaps and almost voiceless, yet to which the message of the Gospel comes as dew from heaven upon dry and thirsty ground.

That the present volume, while dealing outspokenly with certain popular re-hashes of old time unbeliefs, may, in the goodness of God, minister to such an end, by bringing light and rest to some groping world-weary heart, is the writer's prayer:

April, 1928,



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# THEIR RELIGION.

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## A REPLY TO RECENT ARTICLES BY NOVELISTS AND PLAYWRIGHTS ENTITLED "MY RELIGION."

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THE world's pulpit, our opportunist modern Press, has been thrown open in recent months to some of its most popular playwrights and novelists, who, under the catch-word title, "My Religion," have laid bare their romantic souls for the edification of the Man in the Street, that fin de siècle Athenian who so loves to tell or hear of "some new thing" (Acts xvii. 21).

It has been said that Journalism is the art of expressing ignorance in the terms of knowledge, and somehow this is just the impression which these essays have produced. The essays appeared for the most part in "The Daily Express"; though the pulpit was afterwards exchanged for "The Evening Standard," where one of the contributors continued his attacks upon Christianity in the form of a religious autobiography. One of these journals has been extravagantly praised for opening its columns for such an object, as though the cause of Truth can be served by discharging a sewer in a public thoroughfare; but those who know best the principles and methods of the modern Press have wisely reserved their encomiums.

The philanthropy of the Press is one of the most tenaciously held of popular delusions; and the credulosity of the public on this subject is remarkable and

almost pathetic. We are so slow to realise that newspaper proprietors are just men of clay like other men, whose business is to make money or to serve a caucus; and that editors care about as much (or as little) for the vital truths of religion as they do for the laws of tidal friction or the Einstein theory of Relativity. What they do care about is "copy," and the "copy" which they chiefly value is the cleverly disguised fiction which looks like fact. A plain representation of Christianity would be unacceptable to them. There would be nothing sensational in it, nothing new; and the very life-blood of the daily newspaper is novelty and sensationalism.

The idea of getting a number of novelists to write about their religious experiences was, therefore, something of a brain-wave, an idea teeming with quite phenomenal possibilities; and be sure the experiment paid. One hears that the publication of the articles sent up the circulation of the papers by leaps and bounds; indeed, that other editors took hold of the idea and touting for confessions became a nine days' craze. Two other popular writers are even now stripping their souls for public admiration. Incidentally the sluice-gates of infidelity have been flung open, and a dangerous flood of freethought has been let loose upon the country. For this the proprietors of the papers are equally to blame with their editors, a circumstance too easily overlooked. When a house is being used for anarchist purposes the landlord who has knowledge of the fact shares the responsibility of the servants who slip the bolts to let in the bomb-throwers. The responsibility in the present instance, involving as it does the publication of the manifestoes before us, could hardly be more serious.

Ten playwrights and novelists contributed to the "Express" series, and (if the term may be permitted) one layman, who wisely concealed his identity under a pseudonym, "The Unknown Man." The first of the writers, Mr. Arnold Bennett, was the most prolific, contributing two articles to "The Daily Express," and

three or four to "The Evening Standard"—his heart was so full. Most, if not all the articles, were reprinted in volume form, so that they cannot be regarded merely as newspaper ephemera. They take the form of records of personal religious experience, and are really confessions—not, alas, of Christian belief, but of Pantheism, Spiritualism, Modernism, diluted Positivism, Agnosticism, Romanism and Atheism—and they are addressed, for propaganda purposes, to the readers of a popular newspaper—that is, to the world at large. The grave responsibility incurred in publication lies in this; and the responsibility must be shared, though not equally, by the ten contributors and their paymasters.

The most confused of all these novel confidences is the confession of Mr. Arnold Bennett. It is a lusty sort of manifesto, which leaves the reader clear enough upon one point—that the writer does not know his own mind. Mr. Bennett is by turns Agnostic, Atheist, Pantheist and Modernist; while at the same time, and all the time, he is the most devout of Egoists. Arrogance and ignorance are the twin trumpeters of his weird challenge, and which of these makes the most noise it would be difficult to say.

In the midst of a welter of infidelity one is pulled up in wide-eyed astonishment by the confession that the oftener Mr. Bennett reads the Sermon on the Mount, the more deeply he is convinced that "here is the final practical wisdom." The wonder is not that Mr. Bennett recognises the wisdom, but that he admits that he does so. Yet the admission is significant, and in view of his self-confident strictures as to everything else in Christianity it is safe to affirm that Mr. Bennett has read the Sermon to little purpose. The very first pearl in that wonderful string of pearls is: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven"; and assuming, as I suppose we may assume, that Mr. Bennett believes in emulating the precepts which he admires, we must regret the painfully unfilial exposure of his old

father with which the sordid inconsequences of his life-story open. Not poverty of spirit, but an overweening estimate of his juvenile importance is what we find; indeed, in reading this part of his autobiography it is difficult to resist the comment: What an appalling little prig he must have been! One wonders, too, how the statement of Christ as to the Kingdom of heaven can be the finality of wisdom to a man who doubts whether a Kingdom of heaven exists!

Again, the Lord says: "Blessed are the meek;" and in the light of this beatitude the natural question in regard to a person of Mr. Bennett's consuming egotism is: Does he believe the statement? He is obviously vastly elated with the notice of the bishops, and glozes over them rather fulsomely in return; but his pride is much wounded by those who, like "The Church Times," treat him less seriously. Meekness can hardly be named as one of this man's shining characteristics. The sixth beatitude is: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." It is not my business, of course, to make inquisition on Mr. Bennett's purity of heart, indeed, his conviction as to it, if we may judge from his autobiography, seems pretty well established; but in view of this expression of the wisdom which he approves, I am perhaps entitled to enquire: Has he the enlightened eye which discerns God? Does he see God? He believes (we have his own authority for saying so) that there is a God; though when we come to grips on this question we find that the God of his conception is merely a sort of blind automaton, a "Life-Force" (his own term) provided by the necessities of an egoistic and rather shallow mind. I fear there is not much saving faith in that. The apostle James tells us: "The devils also believe, and shudder" (ii. 19); and probably, if the truth were known, their belief goes farther than Mr. Bennett's; indeed, he frankly confesses that he has "not the slightest idea" as to "what may be the attributes of God and His ultimate aims." Now one of the declared

purposes of God according to Scripture is to "show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. i. 1) and St. Paul announces that the mystery of His (God's) will is made known unto His children, to wit, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times (a dispensation for which we still wait) He might gather together in one all things in Christ" (Eph. i. 10); a mystery which was hid from man throughout the pre-Christian ages, and into the good of which "the whole family in heaven and earth," the full company of the redeemed, is presently to be brought (ibid iii. 3-15). What is this but that "ultimate aim" of God about which Mr. Bennett admits his ignorance? a tremendous consummation worthy of a God whose nature is love; while—a fact of profound significance—this plan of the Ages has been made known to faith by express revelation, though Mr. Bennett seems rather proud to confess a most abysmal ignorance as to it.

Turning once again to the Sermon on the Mount, consider for a moment the Lord's declaration: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17, 18). The Law and the Prophets mark!—the teaching being that every unfulfilled prediction in the five books of Moses and the yet larger body of Prophetic Writings is to be fulfilled, even to the last jot and tittle. And these books are precisely the documents which infidels like Mr. Bennett discard as "without divine origin," affording "very unsure ground for dogma," and as being tainted by "the bias of religious tradition."

Yet supposing we accept without question Mr. Bennett's statement as to the Sermon on the Mount, taking it at his own eccentric valuation, what then is the position? The Sermon consists of Christ's own words,

and Mr. Bennett finds in them (the reiteration must be forgiven) "the final practical wisdom." That is his considered judgment. Now among those words I read: "Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. vii. 13, 14). What has Mr. Bennett to say to this? Information as to the straight gate leading unto life is furnished by other sayings of Christ—by His discourses in John's Gospel, for example, where we have the profoundly weighty announcement: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (xiv. 6): and again: "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (x. 9). Christ's own words, remember! Here are facts which even a successful novelist cannot afford to ignore; the words of the Son of God: words which have a gracious meaning to-day; but which, as we are plainly taught, will be fraught with a quite different, even sinister meaning in the Age to come. "He that rejecteth Me," says Christ, "and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day**" (John xii. 48).

If the words of Christ are "the final practical wisdom," and Mr. Bennett says they are, what, I ask again, is his attitude with regard to them? The challenge of the question is one which should give him pause. He may brush it aside with a contumelious sneer, but I would submit to him in all earnestness that to do this is to trifle dangerously with great matters. The infidel support of hirelings like Dr. Inge or Bishop Barnes is useless here. It may emphasise their own condemnation, but is no more authoritative than the Bible-twisting verbiages of Mrs. Eddy. "Everyone that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not," says Christ, in the very discourse which Mr. Bennett marks out for unique approval," shall be likened unto a foolish man, which

built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. vii. 26, 27).

Too full of himself to listen seriously to the voice which he pretends to admire, Mr. Bennett may dismiss this urgent warning of love; he may cry aloud in the newspapers that evil is "a purely negative conception"; that there is no divine Christ; no devil; no wrath of God; no heaven; no hell; and he has said all these things; but let him not forget that the Word of God is not neutralised by such infidel negations. The denial of facts does not abrogate the facts. Truth survives all denials, and the old proverb, *Magna est veritas et praevalerebit*, has a transcendent application when the Revelation of God is in question. Moreover, the supercilious rejection of proffered love—a love revealed from heaven and brought at infinite cost to man's very door—can be no light offence in the sight of Him who proffers it.

A word as to ecclesiastical history. Mr. Bennett is at great pains to convince us that the saints of God, especially in past ages, have been a very bad lot. "In no field of human thought," he tells us, "has the teaching of Christ been more disastrously ignored than in theology. Millions of people have killed or been killed, tortured and been tortured, ostracised and been ostracised, because of differences about the proper attitude towards the Unknowable. Dogma may be necessary to humanity, but it has been the occasion of nearly every sin." To which burst of rhetoric it is sufficient to say that neither the Judaism of the pre-Christian centuries, nor the Christianity which Christ and His apostles founded was responsible for these things. In Old Testament times Israel, it is true, had some stern stiff work committed to them. They were commanded to "blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Deut. xxv. 19) and to destroy the Canaanitish nations: but those nations were



hopelessly sunk in idolatry and every bestial vice, and Israel in this matter were simply instruments of divine judgment; the command to slaughter was a punitive command.

But the code of moral laws committed to Moses was quite another thing, as the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy abundantly testify. Here the enactments are merciful to a degree, provision even for the brute creation being made under it; albeit, when all is said, law is law, and it must not be forgotten that the Jewish dispensation was a dispensation of law. "The law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17), so that it is not surprising if the commands of the law, belonging to a category very different from the precepts of the Gospel, have a surface-roughness. I say, "precepts"; for there is no law in Christianity—unless the law of love (John xiii. 34, 35). Therefore if Christians came into conflict with professing Christians in the days of Arius, as Mr. Bennett reminds us they did, and cruelties were practised on both sides, this only teaches how frail the flesh is, and how much like other men Christians are. But the reproach for such failures lies not at the door of Christianity. Christians, and not the religion of Christians, must bear the blame of such defections. And this applies to all the bitter and cruel things which have been done and spoken in the name of Christ, and within the fold of the professing Church from that day to this. Many of these evils, no doubt, have been the work of men who were no Christians at all, wolves in sheeps' clothing (Acts xx. 29, Jude 4) who crept in unawares with no other object than to spoil and harass the flock, or to satisfy their own lust and ambitions. The unspeakable horrors of the Inquisition would come under this category. But it is also quite clear from history that, at certain great crises in the Church, even large companies of undoubted Christians have been so far led astray by sectarian passions as to become persecutors of their brethren. We cannot hide the shame of

this, and were we to seek to do so, there would always be Arnold Bennetts enough to publish the disgrace. The Accuser of the brethren has his faithful henchmen in every age and every city, and at the first whisper of encouragement they will show themselves and be ready to fling the Edomite stone. Still, what I would press again most urgently is this: that Christianity is not responsible for the failures of Christians. The New Testament, which is our only code-book of Church dogma and practice, gives no warrant for those things, but the contrary; and it may be added that the widespread departure from the faith to-day—the rush to Modernism now in full flood—is due to nothing else than giving up the pure faith of Christ enshrined in the Gospels and Epistles. Would that Modernist doctors throughout Christendom might take these things to heart!

I will go farther. When Mr. Bennett rides his tilt at theology, meaning, of course, dogmatic Christianity, in which, as he says, "the teaching of Christ has been disastrously ignored," he is really attacking those truths as to the Person and work of Christ, and the ordering of His Church, which are the sole basis of ethical Christianity, and which are dogmas because they are part and parcel of the one Truth. Ethical and dogmatic Christianity are but warp and woof of the same seamless robe, and when Mr. Bennett rejects Christian dogma he rejects Christianity; in other words, he rejects the greatest instrument for good the world has ever known. I am not speaking now of the spiritual benefactions of Christianity. I refer to Christianity as an alleviating force in the social world; a softening, healing, elevating influence among nations, to which no teaching before Christ or since has offered even a feeble rivalry. It is the practised dogmas of Christianity which have given us our hospitals and nursing homes; our orphanages, asylums for the aged, blind and incurables, and all the varied institutions for relief of indigence which are with us to-day. Mr. Bennett knows this very well, for he has

read history; and yet he has the hardihood to affirm that, "Of all the Oriental creeds of which I have knowledge, the Christian creed is to me the least satisfactory, save only that of Mohammedanism"! The obstinacy of infidels in ignoring the most elementary history when the awkward facts of Christianity confront them has often been remarked upon, and there could be no more speaking illustration of this obsession than the supercilious ignorance of the remark just quoted.

Others have dealt with Mr. Bennett's reckless—ought we not to say, dishonestly reckless?—assertion that "there is scarcely a passage in it (the Bible) upon whose interpretation all Christians are agreed"! The falsity of this statement is too glaring to be dwelt upon; and the further statement that, "The Bible has been riddled through and through by historical and other criticism," is simply futile; though if Mr. Bennett has been feeding his mind on English and American Modernist re-hashes of obsolete German theology, we need not attribute wilful misrepresentation. I wonder what he knows of criticism on the other side! The Bishop of London has wisely drawn attention to Sir William Ramsey's classical volumes, "St. Paul the Traveller and Citizen" and "The Church in the Roman Empire"; and if I might suggest a third and more elementary book, it would be Dr. R. D. Wilson's "Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?"—which deals more with the Old Testament, and which is to be had of Messrs. Marshall Brothers at a very small cost. Dr. Wilson is a scholar of vast linguistic attainments (a critical knowledge of forty-five languages and dialects is among his accomplishments), and the preparation for his arduous labours in the wide field of Old Testament philology, history and archæology was the most thorough that modern advantages of specialised study could afford. Delitzsch was his tutor in Assyriology; Sachau, Jahn and Dieterich in Syriac and Arabic; Dillmann and Strach in Hebrew, and Brugsch Bey in Egyptian. Fifteen years were spent by him in

language study; fifteen in Biblical textual study; and fifteen in working out his findings. In the course of this stupendous task he read most of the extant ancient literature included in his chosen field of enquiry; collated no less than 100,000 citations from that literature; and, actuated by an ardent love of the truth, aided by professional insight, microscopic accuracy and iron tenacity, he arrived in due time at conclusions which completely demolish the whole straw-built edifice of so-called "Higher Criticism."\* In fact he came to the conclusion, as so many other learned men and thinkers had done before him, that the "Higher Criticism" is **not** scholarly. **"I have come now to the conviction,"** he said three or four years ago to a friend, **"that no man knows enough to assail the truthfulness of the Old Testament. Whenever there is sufficient documentary evidence to make an investigation, the statements of the Bible, in the original texts, have stood the test."** Surely we live in a strange world—and in strange times—when a man who is neither a theologian, nor a scholar, nor a Christian, finds it not inconsistent with prudence and common sanity to advertise from a daily newspaper that "the Bible has been riddled through and through by historical and other criticism!"

But I have not yet done with Mr. Bennett. On reading further into his autobiography one is not surprised to learn that he is an evolutionist. "Of course, after all, I have a dogma," he tells us, and "if it is convenient to call my dogma my religion, let my dogma be so called. The theory of Evolution has been scientifically proved to the satisfaction of the great majority of intelligent and thinking persons. We see illustrations of Evolution everywhere and all the time. Evolution is the development of organisms in themselves, and in their relation to other organisms. Now my dogma is that, in its broadest aspect the movement of evolution is from

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\*That is, on the Old Testament side.

something worse to something better. It is that human nature, with all its ups and downs, does improve—however slowly.”

A statement like this might have passed unchallenged in certain circles thirty years ago; but even evolutionists have been finding out things since Darwin's statue was set up among the stuffed animals in South Kensington; and the once proud theory of Evolution has moulted almost all its feathers, so that it looks to-day the very ghost of a “*rara avis scientiæ*.” In any case, it may be well to assure Mr. Bennett that the dogma on which he so confidently leans is a broken reed at best, and that he is sadly behind the times if he supposes that savants to-day are supporters of that once much trumpeted superstition. The mischief, of course, is that men like Mr. Bennett, who get their ideas of science from tainted materialistic sources, are not only pathetically ignorant of the present attitude of Science towards the Evolution theory, but are equally ignorant of the vast body of scientific opinion which has been arrayed against it from the outset\*

Nearly a century ago, the famous naturalist Cuvier declared that “not a single one of the facts unveiled by geognostic observation can be regarded as refuting the account given in Genesis”; and fifty years later, another equally famous zoologist, Sir Richard Owen, announced that “there is nothing like parental descent connecting the fauna of different ages . . . nor does man descend from the mammals which preceded him in the tertiary age. The link by which they are now connected is of a higher and immaterial nature; and their connection is to be sought in the plan of the Creator Himself.” A number of scientific men did, indeed, fall into the Dar-

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\*Since the above was written, Sir Arthur Keith has re-opened the attack on the Darwinian side, but as his special pleading is largely dependant upon a purposeful ignoring of evidence on the other side, in which the matured conclusions of first-class anthropologists like Rudolf Virchow are not even referred to, we may safely disregard him.

winian snare, and proclaimed their allegiance to the novel theory with no uncertain sound. Rationalist theologians, too, imbibed the teaching greedily, almost to a man, and reproduced it in their books and sermons as dogma; as did also a considerable portion of the Press. Christians, however, fortified by the Word of God, and possessing what Scripture calls, "an unction from the Holy One" (1 John ii. 20) which gives ability to discern between truth and error, saw the folly of the theory from the first, and when the Philistines of Darwinism—Huxley, Clifford, Tyndall and their disciples—were noisily advertising the supposed discovery, and the timid Modernists of that generation (they called them Higher Critics then) were falling down before the new Dagon, our Christian stalwarts were demonstrating on sound inductive lines the complete untenableness of the theory and the flimsiness of the material out of which it had been spun.

And to-day, in this first quarter of the twentieth century, where have the conclusions of a saner science brought us? In 1903, Professor Shaler of Harvard University made public declaration that "the Darwinian hypothesis is still essentially unverified." Professor Virchow, probably the greatest anthropologist of modern times, announced that the attempt to find the transition from the animal to Man "had ended in total failure." A little later, Professor St. George Mivart scruples not to refer to the Darwinian theory as "a puerile hypothesis"; while Professor E. von Hartmann confesses that "in the first decade of the twentieth century it has become apparent that the days of Darwinism are numbered." Dr. Etheridge, an eminent fossilist, affirms that "ninetenths of the talk of evolutionists is sheer nonsense, not founded on observation and wholly unsupported by facts"; that the Natural History Museum of which he is the distinguished curator contains "not a particle of evidence of the transmutation of species," and "is full of proofs of the utter falsity" of evolutionary laws. Professor Lionel Beale, an experimental biologist of

European fame, who was boycotted by Huxley in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" because of his pronounced Christian views, affirmed publicly in 1903 that "there is no evidence that Man has descended from, or is, or was in any way specially related to any other organism in nature through Evolution, or by any other process"; and further, that "there is not at this time a shadow of scientific evidence" in support of any of the "naturalistic conjectures concerning Man's origin." Sir George Stokes, sometime President of the Royal Society, whom Dr. Gladstone dubbed "the Sir Isaac Newton of to-day," bears similar, if more general testimony. His unequivocal witness is: "As to the statement that 'recent scientific research has shown the Bible and Religion to be untrue,' the answer I should give is simply that the statement is altogether untrue. I know of no sound conclusions of Science that are opposed to the Christian religion." Sir J. W. Dawson, the great Canadian geologist, characterised the doctrine of Evolution as "one of the strangest phenomena of humanity . . . utterly destitute of proof"; and Professor G. F. Wright of Ohio described it as "one tenth bad science and nine tenths bad philosophy." Professor Kellogg, a still later authority, points out that the Darwinian theories as to Selection — "Evolution's stoutest link" — "stand to-day seriously discredited in the biological world"; and Dr. H. F. Osborne, writing on the subject generally, finds that the old paths of research have led nowhere," each wave of confidence in succeeding theories of Evolution having "ended in disappointment; until finally we have reached a stage of very general scepticism." Lastly, we have the statement of Lord Kelvin, the Napoleon of modern science: "If you think strongly enough, you will be forced by Science to the belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion. You will find science not antagonistic but helpful to Religion." And again: "I marvel at the undue haste with which teachers in our Universities and preachers in our pulpits are restating truth in the terms

of Evolution, while Evolution remains an unproved hypothesis in the laboratories of Science."

In the face of these impressive testimonies from men of first-class scientific reputation—and the list might be indefinitely extended—Mr. Bennett truculently assures us that "the theory of Evolution has been scientifically proved to the satisfaction of the great majority of intelligent and thinking persons!" What a thing it must be to be an intelligent and thinking person, and to possess an imagination like Mr. Bennett's!

Taken all in all, Mr. Bennett's pernicious manifesto is hardly better than blank Atheism, the crazy denial of God as a Being competent to reveal Himself to His creatures in a manner to be understood; and this is the sort of teaching which has contributed, perhaps more than anything else, to the shallow infidelity and boastful licentiousness of our time. What Mr. Compton Mackenzie well calls "the horrors of a twentieth century existence" are largely traceable to such polluted propaganda. Let us not forget (and if we do, be sure there is One who keeps a reckoning) that there are moods of thought as heinous as the worst of deeds, and that the writer who prostitutes his gifts to sowing infidelity among the people is responsible before God for the devil's harvest which will surely be reaped. Is it not to such the words of Christ apply: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6). In the trial which followed the bomb outrage on Russell Sage, the dollar magnate of New York, some years ago, the mother of the murderer deposed to the coroner: "My son was always mild-mannered . . . He advocated the limitation of wealth. He was regular in his habits, **and was a freethinker and believed in no hereafter.**" It transpired that his father, a disbeliever in Christianity and the Bible, had educated his son in that way of thinking. At the final Grand



Assize, upon whom, think you—the man who conceived the crime, or the man whose training made conception possible—will the greater judgment fall? It is a commonplace of history that the infidel philosophy of Rousseau and the Encyclopædists let loose the wild beast of the French Revolution; and the apostasy from Christianity which Mr. Bennett views with ill-disguised approval, and which is receiving its greatest impetus just now from Modernist professors of Christianity, is what is loosening, unseen but surely, the links which bind society together; so that the way is being stealthily prepared for that mighty avalanche of evil, which as Scripture teaches, will presently sweep over the Western world. That many who are actively responsible for this widespread departure from the faith are blind to the fact, the mere tools of a power stronger and craftier than themselves, I do not doubt; but that does not shift the responsibility or make the outlook less serious. The present is “man’s day” (1 Cor. iv. 3 margin) and from all accounts, egotists like Mr. Bennett appear to be having a pretty full time of it. Pride is the dominant feature of man’s day, and has been since Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and built a city. God’s day is coming, and then everything will be reversed. “The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; . . . and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (Isa. ii. 12, 17). In this present self-confident mechanical age the hectoring pushful type of man is exalted, and spreads himself abroad in the earth like a green bay-tree (Psa. xxxvii. 35); in **that** day everything will be righted. “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree” (xcii. 12) and “the meek . . . shall inherit the earth (Matt. v. 5). There will be no room for vain-glorying then.

That success of a sort is attending the efforts of the enemy to root out or pervert the Christian faith at the

present moment, is only one of the many indications that the judgment of God is about to fall. When the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing—when, according to the second Psalm, the great ones of the earth take counsel together against Jehovah, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us—when, I say, these efforts to shake off the restraining influences of Christianity are before us, man going his own way and carrying out his own devices in utter independence of God—it is then that He who sitteth in the heavens will act in swift retribution, reversing suddenly and irrevocably His longwhile attitude of patient grace and pardoning love. Would not Mr. Bennett do well—would not everyone who knows himself obnoxious to such a visitation do well—to heed the counsel with which this Psalm of judgment closes: “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little? Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

In Mr. Zangwill, as in Mr. Bennett, we have egotism not merely full-blown but going to seed. His article is little more than a blatant advertisement of his own books, and therefore need not detain us long. It is full of “I myself” and the great works (somewhat overlooked, it seems, by a too casual public) which Mr. Zangwill has produced, interlarded with irrelevant confidences that certify his own importance, so that one wonders in reading them how ever the world can keep in its appointed orbit without him. “I myself,” he tells us, “though that alone is no proof of greatness”—priceless touch!—“have been misunderstood”; but readers of “The Daily Express” may be comforted in the thought (Mr. Zangwill again speaks) that “the Jewish masses the world over still believe in me as a racial Jew.” We are also assured, for what reason is hardly clear, that Mr. Zangwill published years ago, in a magazine now defunct, a certain poem in emulation of Messrs. Bernard Shaw and

H. G. Wells. "Since then," he modestly confesses, "I have become less omniscient." How a superman like Mr. Zangwill can by any means become less omniscient may surprise those Jewish masses the world over who still believe in him, and doubtless they will find food for contemplation in the thought; obviously the question is one of international importance.

The religious outlook to Mr. Zangwill's rather squint-eyed vision, is not cheerful. "A future life is unthinkable," he tells us, and everything is so uncertain that the only phrase that would adequately express "the life of the universe and our own is 'The Great Adventure.' " Not a very hopeful outlook that! "Our guiding stars in the darkness of the infinite spaces," again we quote, "are duty, loving-kindness, pity and courage." As for the religion of the future, he shares the faith of the rationalist Renan, that only drama . . . can give the full reply to any real human question"; and therefore—think of it!—"the theatre may claim to replace the dying Church!" Life, in short, is "a tragi-comic mystery" and—paradox of paradoxes!—the fact that Mr. Zangwill "despairs of God is common ground for hope and trust in Him!"

As for the modern Church, "the rock on which it is founded is a golden reef. De-salarize the creeds, and you will soon unify them." Perhaps this is the one truth—or rather, half truth—in Mr. Zangwill's vainglorious paper; and, as uttered by a Jew, it is really thought-worthy. "Rich, and increased with goods" is, alas, a conspicuous latter-day feature of the Church (Rev. iii. 17) and I, for one, have long felt that new power might be breathed into Christianity if it could be purged of the reproach that "it pays." It is significant, indeed, that the most effective work in the Christian ministry to-day is being done by unpaid teachers, pastors, and evangelists, whilst the purveyors of Rationalism—our Hensons, Inges

and Glovers—are drawing large salaries.\* It is the scent of the loaves and fishes which has gathered the vultures of infidelity to the Church; and one cannot forbear the reflection—Where would Modernism be to-day were there no snug deaneries and bishops' palaces in the branches of the Mustard-tree? (Matt. xiii. 31, 32).

One other point from Mr. Zangwill. "The Bible," he affirms, "is not a book. A literature covering seven or eight centuries is mistaken for a single volume, because it is all bound together." Now, waiving the question of the period covered in the process of revelation—which the highest scholarship puts at about 1,600 years, as opposed to Mr. Zangwill's seven or eight centuries—we are still faced with the enquiry: Is the Bible merely a collection of scattered books, brought together in a promiscuous manner, as Mr. Zangwill alleges? or is it an organic whole with God for Author, a plant of heavenly growth from which no excision can be made without injury to the whole? I am in favour of the latter view, and maintain that the proofs of it are practically endless.

One of the most astounding marvels of Scripture to any serious observer is its unity of theme and continuity; its wonderful relation of part to part in a most perfect sequence and interdependence; so that the evidence of One Mind controlling and informing all is clear, incontrovertible and absolute. The circumstantial proof of this would require a dozen pages at least, and might be extended to as many volumes, but for the purpose in hand it may be sufficient to indicate a single line of thought.

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\*God forbid that I should speak slightly of men who, having forsaken all in order to give themselves without distraction to the service of God, are dependent upon Him for the supply of their temporal needs. It is a divine institution that "they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 14); but I nowhere read that they which subvert the Gospel should misappropriate to their own uses funds and emoluments which they know have been set aside for Gospel work. Plain men of the world call these misappropriations fraud.

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, opens with Creation, and man's entrance upon the scene; his brief tenure of happiness in Eden; the Temptation and the Fall. The Apocalypse, the last book of the Bible, takes up New Creation conditions and shows us redeemed man, reinstated in the Paradise of God, happy, glorified, and praising. Between the two books the whole moral history of the race is presented in a series of dispensational unfoldings wherein man's failure under successive tests is brought out; but also the grace and goodness of God which meet the failure.

These intervening dispensations are seven in number, and a clear view of them greatly helps in the knowledge of God's ways with His creatures. The brief Age of Innocence, which closes with the expulsion of man from the garden, consequent upon the Fall, comes first; the expulsion being seen to be an act of mercy, as holding back the hand of Adam, who might otherwise have eaten of the Tree of Life and so have lived on for ever in a state of sin (Gen. iii. 22). To have become immortal in that condition would have been unparalleled calamity. The second dispensation is the period from Adam to Noah (Gen. iii.-vii.), a period of unrestrained self-will, when conscience (a thing unknown to Adam innocent), becomes man's monitor and guide. It is the Age of Conscience. The Age of Conscience passes on to the third dispensation, or Age of Patriarchal Government, the period from Noah to Abram, when the direction of the world and all things in it was committed to man (Gen. ix.) and man became responsible under Heaven to exercise patriarchal rule in righteousness and the fear of God. The fourth dispensation opens with Abraham, to whom and to whose seed the promises were made (Gal. iii. 16), and continues to the time of Moses. We may call it the Age of Promise. Secure in the faithfulness of God, Who made a wholly gracious and unconditional covenant with Abraham, Israel had only to abide where they were to inherit every blessing; but at Sinai they

made the fateful choice of a covenant of works in place of the already established covenant of mercy; and the Age of Promise gave place to the Age of Law (Exod. xix. 8). This was the period during which Israel was subjected nationally to many tests—under priests, under judges, under kings, under prophets, under Gentile oppressors; a dispensation which came to a close with their definite rejection of Christ. Then was ushered in the sixth dispensation, the present Age of Grace. The Law was given by Moses amid the thunders of Sinai, Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ (John i. 17) with angels' songs and the pregnant message of peace on earth and goodwill to man. Peace had yet to be made, and not till the Holy Babe, born that night in Bethlehem, had fulfilled His blessed ministry on earth, and for us men and for our salvation had suffered on Calvary, could peace be proclaimed. He "made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). Then in very deed the kingdom of heaven was opened to all believers, and the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified, risen and glorified Saviour might be told out in all the majesty and loveliness of sovereign grace. The dispensation of the grace of God had entered fully upon its conquering course, and man, who had been shut up hitherto to the voice of Him that spake on earth (i.e., by the Law), was called upon to listen to "Him that speaketh from heaven" (Heb. xii. 25). Alas for the multitudes who are turning from this voice to-day! The Age of Grace is nearing its close, and for those who reject the Gospel "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment," a devouring fiery indignation which nothing shall be able to resist (Heb. x. 26, 27). "Our God"—presented as Love in this day of Gospel light—will then be found to be "a consuming fire" (ibid xii. 29); for "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31) and from that judgment there will be no appeal. It will be a swift work, marking the lurid dawn

of a new dispensation—the seventh; a period of unprecedented blessing—the Age of Righteous Rule, the bright Millennial Day.

When the besom of destruction has done its terrible work, and the forces of evil have been crushed, peace will revisit this distracted earth. Then the great enemy of God and man will be restrained by Almighty Power; the supremacy of Christ will be universally acknowledged; mankind will be contented, happy and prosperous; and righteousness will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. xi. 9). The rights of the Lord's Anointed will then be fully vindicated, all things being put under His feet as Son of Man (1 Cor. xv. 27), and when all things shall thus have been put under Him, and the thousand years have run their course, then will the Son also become subject, that God may be all in all. Needless to say there is no surrender of His Godhead in that august suspension of Kingdom rule. That is not the thought. What we are told is that the Son will deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, and God will be all in all: God in His absolute Being, without distinction of Persons. Throughout the Millennium the distinction of Father, Son and Holy Spirit will obtain as now; but when Time shall be no longer; when, at the close of the Millennial Age, man's last rebellion has been crushed (Rev. xx. 7, 10) and the great Accuser of the brethren has been for ever put to silence, the sin-conditions which made necessary the manifestations of the Godhead as Father, Son and Holy Ghost in relation to the governance of the world, will exist no longer. The Eternal will retire into Himself, so to say, and God will be all in all.

Thus the Bible bridges, like a mighty seven-spanned arch, the two eternities, and within its wonderful pages is contained the whole history of man's ruin and redemption; of paradise lost and paradise regained—not, indeed, as Milton imagined it, but as God has been pleased to reveal it; the whole forming a series of revelations, made at sundry times and in divers manners

through the mouths of prophets, evangelists and apostles, holy men of God speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. i. 21). In this way all Scripture was given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. iii. 16); and that is why we find in it one plan, one mind, and, the successive revelations being brought together, one organic whole—the Bible.

If Mr. Zangwill will explain to us how it came to pass that a number of writers, living at widely different periods, each occupied exclusively with the moral bearing of his own message, and ignorant for the most part of what others might be led to communicate, have produced a book which, when considered as a whole, is found to have one single thread of purpose running through it; a book whose several parts, when brought together centuries after most of the writers have passed off the scene, fit like a beautiful mosaic, so that they present in their entirety an ordered panorama of God's ways from the creation to the end of time—if, I say, Mr. Zangwill can account for this phenomenon on any other supposition than that of one co-ordinating Mind operating through all the writers, and this mind the mind of God, he can do what none other has done before him, though better furnished minds than Mr. Zangwill's have eagerly essayed the task.

Mr. Stacpoole's manifesto may be dismissed in fewer words. For sheer inanity and childishness the palm must be given to this writer—unless, indeed, the honour should be divided with Miss Rebecca West, whose foolish outbursts recalls the acidulated polemics of the late Miss Corelli, which provided amusement in literary circles some years ago.

Mr. Stacpoole dismisses God from his creed as unknowable, or, at least, as a God to be in no wise approached—unless, perhaps, by a select few of exalted piety; and he finds in man's unaided moral efforts his hope for the future. For purblind people like himself



(the adjective is his own), "belief in good and evil . . . a clinging to good as far as in us lies, is the best form of worship of the spirit of good; and avoiding evil, as far as in us lies, is the best means of fighting the spirit of evil." The teaching is, of course, pure paganism; the dreariest skeleton of a creed, in which the words and works of Christ have no place and the words and works of man count for everything. God, to quote again, "surely exists," yet He "can by no means be visualized"; and so is useless in His own universe, a God who does not show Himself. Apparently Mr. Stacpoole has never visualized another side of the question, that beautiful reverse of the medal, as I may call it, which the Gospel presents to us in a well-known verse. "No man hath seen God at any time,"—that is the obverse: "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him,"—the reverse (John i. 18). A God invisible? Ah, no! To the pure in heart He is blessedly visible; the pure in heart see God (Matt. v. 8). His glory is seen in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the Image of the invisible God, and who tabernacled among men that He might make the Father known (2 Cor. iv. 6; Heb. i. 3; John i. 14).

Yet Mr. Stacpoole really seems to believe that the Christianity which he so airily abjures is simply an affair of "clergymen" and "stiff collars" and "snapping vinaigrettes"; and that "the birth of an age of reason"—our garish, boastful, pleasure-drunken modern day—has wrought wonders, which the future achievements of the race, based upon a "recognition of the rights of man," are destined to amplify and extend. May we not say of Mr. Stacpoole, as Elisha said of his young servant on a memorable occasion: "Lord, . . . open his eyes, that he may see" (2 Kings vi. 17)?

Mr. Beresford goes a step further than Mr. Stacpoole, and is prepared to recognise some good in Chris-

tianity. At the same time he rather questions its adaptability for present and prospective needs, and, like the latter, finds the panacea for every ill in the fathomless possibilities of human goodness. In pursuance of this conviction, he takes a declaration of Christ, "He that believeth in Me shall not perish," as meaning. "he that believeth in the divine principle in himself and all mankind"! Could human perversity go farther? The inconceivable flippancy with which Mr. Beresford thus separates a passage of profound and universal application from its context and misapplies it for his own ends, signalises one of the worst features of modern infidelity. The context of the passage cited speaks of the lifting up of the Son of Man, as symbolised by Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness; and, viewed in conjunction with the quoted passage, presents the Saviour Son of God in death, the blessed Object of faith and salvation. Mr. Beresford would like to build "a great world-religion" on his sinister perversion of the Lord's words, and conceives that "all our controversies would be blown away, and the whole life of man would be re-organised" in the process. What he calls "the element of faith" is nothing more than "a means to the practice of self-restraint"; and the only God that he postulates is "the essential spirit of the whole universe"; which may after all be just a sublimated form of matter; so that "it really makes little difference whether one believes in the God of matter or a material God"! Of a personal God, brought near by divine revelation, he knows nothing. Here again, the underlying essential idea is Pantheism, the view that God and the universe are identical, that old lie of the serpent which was the basis of the ancient Vedantic philosophies of India and the teaching of Pythagoras and other Greek philosophers in the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ; the heresy which was held by John Scotus, Amalric and other Churchmen of the Middle Ages, and which really is at the root of most present-day false religions, Modernism among the rest. "Ye shall be as gods" was the enemy's

lying promise to our first parents: "we **are** gods," is the pitiful boast of their hoodwinked descendants to-day.

Incipient Pantheism may be traced in most of the essays under consideration, and the confession of Mr. H. A. Jones, the dramatist, which we take next, is just an enthusiastic avowal of that religion. Mr. Jones's contribution is far and away the most intellectual of the manifestoes, as Mr. Walpole's is the most touchingly human. Disguised by no trickwork of circumlocution his religion is just frank, undiluted Pantheism. "I am led," he tells us, "in the company of many of the deepest and devoutest minds of all times, to Pantheism; to that large, simple faith which finds poetic expression in Paul's words to the Athenians: 'He giveth to all, life and breath and all things . . . that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from any one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being.'"

Mark again how our essayists draw upon Scripture for their best thoughts, even when, as here, the sense of the quotation is fatal to their own misbeliefs. "He giveth to all" quotes Mr. Jones; and the question at once suggests itself: "**Who** giveth?" Someone outside of man clearly. Someone—may we not say?—who is independent of man, yet who, in the activities of an all-seeing Providence, influences intelligently the millions of the human race. Nor this in a casual, intermittent fashion, but at all times; not here and there merely, but everywhere and under all conditions; a self-sufficing Almighty Being, knowing all, surveying all, controlling all and upholding all by the word of His power. That is not Pantheism, as Mr. Jones enthusiastically dreams: it is the definite expression of a twofold entity—Creator and creation, God and the universe of God.

That man derives from God in a certain sense is true enough, and the Word of God gives full sanction to the

thought. When man was created out of the dust of the earth—the material source of his being—"the Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7). In that sense we are His offspring, as St. Paul certifies (Acts xvii. 28). Man indeed, is a tripartite being, consisting of spirit, soul and body (1 Thess. v. 23); whereas the rest of the animal creation consists of soul and body merely. The distinction is carefully preserved throughout Scripture, though slurred over in most metaphysical treatises, as well as by not a few Biblical psychologists. The spirit is the highest faculty in man, and it is profoundly interesting to notice that when the citadel of Mansoul (to adopt a Bunyan figure) was stormed by the enemy, the spirit in man was not the first to capitulate. Sin entered by way of the soul, which dragged down the spirit in its fall. Hence sin is almost always connected with the soul in Scripture. "If a soul sin" is a common expression in Leviticus, where the great question of man's guilt and God's merciful provision for its cancelment are typically unfolded, and so throughout the Old Testament. Hence, too, atonement is represented as made both **for** and **through** the soul. "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" is the language of Lev. xvii. (verse 11); and the prophet declares of Messiah: "When Thou (Jehovah) shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, etc."; and again, "He hath poured out His soul unto death" (Isa. liii. 10, 12). Directly a man is converted to God the spirit reasserts itself, and by virtue of a new life given he learns to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Pet. ii. 11). His own spirit is acted upon by the Spirit of truth and holiness, who bears witness with his spirit (Rom. viii. 16); and, as a divinely logical result, he becomes spiritually minded (ibid viii. 6). At death he has done for ever with the natural or soulish body (the word is "psuchikon," derived from "psuche," soul) and he waits for his resurrection or spiritual body.

All this may be a little wide of our subject, but it does at least show that the pantheistic thoughts of Mr. Jones derive no support from St. Paul, whom he would fain use as a buttress for his speculations. It shows also that man without Christ is just fallen man, not by any means a microcosmic deity or cantle of deity; nor even a wonderful "tenement of sensitive electrons," part of some great all-pervading, intelligent, impersonal Force, which creates, sustains and governs all things in the universe. Mr. Jones's ingenious theories are fundamentally at fault in this—that they shut out the thought of sin, and of man's responsibility Godward—albeit (a point of over-shadowing importance) they cannot shut out the **fact** of sin, or its consequences. In obvious contravention of these self-exalting notions, he admits, strangely enough, though in rather elusive terms, the possibility of defection; conceding—surely a very large concession—the fact of human responsibility. "I cannot, dare not, abdicate my responsibility," he says. "If I try to escape from it conscience and remorse stand ready to arrest me."

Conscience?—that is a good word! Yet conscience as to what? Remorse?—a highly arresting, even pathetic term; yet why remorse? Mr. Jones is by public advertisement a Pantheist; and this is not the language of Pantheism. The "tenement of electrons," so dramatically staged in his essay, is nothing less than a "Deus in parvo" of his all-pervading Force, and can hardly be associated with anything so human as a conscience, or so distinctly ungodlike as remorse. And yet—a conclusion which cannot be gainsaid—the truth is really to be looked for in this guarded concession rather than in Mr. Jones's buoyant and flamboyant Pantheism: and though, as he blithely tells us, he is able at seventy-four to "face death without a fear," and the affairs of this world give him little respite to lay up for himself "treasures in heaven," one would fain hope that he will yet be led to consider seriously this question of conscience; as well as to ask

his own heart whether those movements of remorse, so dimly adumbrated in his paper, may not have a root cause for which even the Great Physician might be usefully consulted. True as it may be, that for death itself Mr. Jones has not the slightest dread, is it not well to be reminded that **the last halt on the journey is not there**—that physical death is not the final act of the soul's drama? "It is appointed unto men once to die, but **after this the judgment**" (Heb. ix. 27). Death may be borne with equanimity, but what of the state that succeeds death? This is the fly in the apothecary's ointment which no amount of pantheistic make-believe can dispose of; "a something after death," as Shakespeare says, "which puzzles the will." The "Dies irae," according to Scripture, is **"the time of the dead, that they should be judged"** (Rev. xi. 18); and the Apocalyptic Seer not only speaks of a "second death," but describes with awful brevity the scene of judgment. A Great White Throne is set up, and the dead, small and great, are arraigned before it. Books are opened, the biographical records of the unregenerate; and another book is opened "which is the book of life." The issue of the ensuing inquisition is told in few words: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 11-15). That, not the article of physical death, is the closing scene.

None the less, the great mission of Christ in coming into the world was not so much to testify of judgment as to confer upon mankind, wherever the receptiveness of faith was found, every blessing in Him: rest of heart in lieu of remorse, a purged conscience where all was uncertainty and fear, and the promise of full abiding happiness in that heaven of heavens which Mr. Jones contemplates so lightly. May he be led to look into these great matters with chastened spirit! The enquiry is worth while, and a mind of Mr. Jones's strength and earnestness is worthy the exercise,

In Sir Conan Doyle's manifesto we are introduced to a religion different from all the rest, the religion of Necromancy. "It is to my mind conclusive," he tells us, "that those we call dead have long been able to reach us, but have found us insensible to their approach"; so he and Lady Doyle have dedicated their lives "to handing on this knowledge and comfort to others." The inventor of Sherlock Holmes has constituted himself an apostle of Spiritualism.

Sir Conan Doyle's mental evolution, as described in his confessions, amounts to this. He began as a Catholic; thought himself out of Roman Catholicism into Agnosticism; then began dabbling in necromancy and telepathy; and having come to the conclusion that all the phenomena were not fraudulent, threw in his lot with the Spiritists and became an ardent explorer in the miasmal swamplands of occultism. The strangest thing of all is, that, as the upshot of these quite commonplace excursions into infidelity, he discovered that he had got back to Christianity!

Now to get back to anything one must have been formerly there; and nothing is more clearly established in Sir Conan Doyle's paper than that his supposed past acquaintance with Christianity—always assuming that he means Biblical Christianity—is a complete delusion. Sir Conan Doyle does not know what Biblical Christianity is.

The theme of my enquiry is not, however, Sir Conan Doyle's misconceptions of Christianity, but his advocacy of the practice of Spiritualism as "the most solemn and sacred of functions." Either it is that, he tells us, or "it is an absurd farce." He appears to have overlooked another alternative, namely, that Spiritualism may be a form of witchcraft, a re-discovery of the ancient art of consulting familiar spirits; in fact, a religion of demons. Assuming the reality of this other alternative, we are up against a very solemn issue, and, as the late Dr. Cook of

Boston once remarked, "there is a great necessity of proclaiming with Biblical earnestness the untrustworthiness, mischievousness and wickedness of such a cult." These being the conditions, what we have to examine is neither "a sacred function," nor "an absurd farce," but a species of diablerie than which few religious delusions could be more loathsome and defiling.

Now the Word of God speaks with great clearness on this subject. Not only is there a positive command to "regard not them that have familiar spirits" (Lev. xix. 31); not only is it said that God would set His face against the soul which "turneth after such as have familiar spirits" (ibid xx. 6); but, according to the Levitical law, capital punishment was to be inflicted on persons guilty of such illicit intercourse. "A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them" (ibid xx. 27). This was one of the crimes which led to the expulsion of the Canaanitish nations. "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," was Moses final charge to Israel, "thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one . . . that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer" (literally, one that enquireth of the dead), "For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee" (Deut. xviii. 9-12).

For "asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit," Saul, who had formerly been zealous in suppressing Spiritualism, was cut off by God; and Manasseh, who "observed times, and enchantments and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards," as well as wrought other evil in the sight of the Lord, was delivered into the hands of the Assyrians and carried captive into Babylon (1 Sam.



xxvii. 3; 1 Chron. x. 13, 14; 2 Kings xxi. 6, 11, 12; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11).

Two things are thus far evident, namely, that notice is taken in the Old Testament of the existence of Spiritualism, and also that the thing itself was abhorrent to God. The familiar spirits were, in fact, evil spirits, and the result of heeding them was moral and spiritual degradation, often accompanied by judicial penalties.

The testimony of the New Testament is equally, if not more explicit. The presence on earth of evil spirits during and after the time of Christ is fully recognised, as well as their power, under certain God-imposed limitations, to communicate with man. Cases of demon or spirit possession are common in the Gospels, as also other phenomena having links with present-day Spiritualism. In Galatians v. 20, witchcraft is named among the works of the flesh, along with adultery, fornication, murder, and other grave sins; and in Revelation xxi. sorcerers are included in the list of those who will "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

The Gospel references are very instructive. The demoniacs of Scripture were not insane persons, as some have supposed—or, at least, their insanity was no mere functional disorder of the brain. The Evangelists distinguish between demoniacs and the mentally afflicted (Mark i. 32; Luke vi. 17, 18); as does the Lord also (Matt. x. 8). Moreover the demons recognised Him both as the Son of God and Messiah (Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24; v. 7; Luke iv. 41); and the fact that He enjoined silence upon them, and commanded them to come out of possessed persons, shows that possessors and possessed, though morally associated, were not identical (Mark i. 25; Matt. viii. 32, etc.).

The damsel at Philippi in Acts xvi. was possessed with a spirit of divination, which recognised, in a way the

damself could not of herself have done, the divine commission of Paul and his companions; and her case approximates closely to many well-known instances in modern Spiritualism. It forms, indeed, a connecting link between the demonism of Scripture and the demonism of secular history. This spirit of divination is called in the Greek text of Acts xvi. 16 "pneuma Puthonos," a spirit of Python, the name which was given to the celebrated heathen oracle in the temple of Apollo at Delphi, as well as to the priestess of the temple, whose raving and ambiguous responses undoubtedly proceeded from the same demoniacal source.

That modern Spiritualism is also of demoniacal origin admits of many proofs, but reasons of space forbid more than a very cursory glance at them. A few may be cited.

Spiritualism is proved to be of demoniacal origin by its doctrines. Sir Conan Doyle has said, though not in the paper under discussion, that Christianity must "change or perish," to which Dr. A. T. Schofield has appositely remarked, that "it is just in proportion as it has changed that it has perished"; but the attitude of Sir Conan Doyle is well indicated by his own statement. The Fall of man and the fact of sin are both denied by Spiritualists, and, as a necessary consequence, the doctrine of vicarious atonement. The Fall is "a descent of spirit into matter." Their substitute for atonement is what one of their writers calls "a sacrifice of the senses"—whatever that may mean.

Another doctrine, either set aside by Spiritualists or treated with scornful indifference, is the doctrine of the Incarnation. The teaching is that it does not matter "whether . . . this birth of Jesus is a tradition, or whether . . . it is a reality." His essential Godhead is also denied, one of their most popular lecturers affirming that "Christ's words when He says 'I and the Father are one,' does not mean that He was God." "By good deeds man worships God," says another; "by living a

noble life he merits heaven and escapes hell." The same writer's conception of heaven may be gathered from the essay just drawn upon. "All souls are going forward towards the light, ever upward and onward to truth. The further they go, the nearer they seem to reach that mighty and mysterious source, the more deeply mysterious does it become. Ever onward and upward to God, though never reaching Him." A cheerful sort of progression that!

The unscriptural doctrine of a middle state or purgatory also forms part of the system of Spiritualism; though it differs somewhat from the teaching of Rome. The purgatory of Romanists is a middle state of souls which depart this life in God's grace, whereas the purgatory of Spiritualists is a middle state of unbelievers, who pass away in an utterly lost condition. The definite declaration of Christ that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" is, of course, conveniently ignored (John iii. 36). One of their most prominent soothsayers substitutes for this teaching the following mischievous invention. "Though a man go down to hell a blaspheming infidel, your prayers and tears and aspirations can reach that spirit in prison, and draw it up to light." The "great gulf" between the blessed dead and the lost, which the Lord, in words of inexpressible solemnity declared to be "fixed, so that they which would pass" from one to the other are not able, is dismissed as a pious myth.

But the most effective missionary doctrine of the Spiritualists, and that which forms the backbone of Sir Conan Doyle's repulsive propaganda, is the doctrine which affirms the intercourse of persons in the flesh with the spirits of the departed. To practise the rites of this superstition is a spiritual duty or pious recreation according to Sir Conan Doyle. The Bible calls it necromancy, and declares that a necromancer is "an abomination unto the Lord" (Deut. xviii. 12). Some years ago a corres-

ponent of the "Queen" newspaper saw on Bunyan's grave in Bunhill Fields a wreath of artificial flowers bearing this inscription: "Anniversary of his death, August 31st, 1890, by A.R.V. and a few Spiritualist friends; as a token of grateful thanks for his spirit-control and guidance." The inference is plain. "A familiar spirit" or demon impersonating Bunyan, had duped A.R.V. and his friends into believing that they had held intercourse with the great allegorist. Doubtless had the deceiving spirit been challenged in the Lord's Name this fact would have been promptly elicited. Challenges have been often made in similar cases, and the spirits have quailed before the adjuration, confessing at the same time the imposture. Well authenticated instances are not uncommon. About half a century ago the Dialectical Society of London conducted an impartial and exhaustive enquiry into modern Spiritualism, and a Mr. Chevalier gave important evidence before it. Part of his testimony related to a seance at which he challenged one of these lying spirits. The seance was held in a friend's house and as Mr. Chevalier was a Christian and known to be hostile, he was entreated not to interfere. "I sat for two hours a passive spectator," he relates, when spirit manifestations occurred. "I then asked the name of the spirit, and it gave that of my child. 'In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost,' I said, 'are you the spirit of my child?' It answered, 'No,' and the word 'devil' was spelled out."

Dr. Seiss, for many years editor of a journal of prophecy and author of well-known works on Christian themes, quotes the testimony of a Mr. Trenton of New Jersey, who challenged the familiar spirit of a writing medium in that town. The challenge was made in the Name of the Lord, and the following admissions were elicited. "In the Name of the Lord, is the Bible true? Ans. 'Yes.' . . . 'The Bible forbids necromancy and the consulting of familiar spirits; which shall I believe, you or the Bible?' Ans. 'The Bible.' . . . 'Why then

did you tell me that it was right and useful to consult the spirits?' Ans. 'Because I wished to deceive you.' . . . 'What is the business of these spirits with men?' Ans. 'It is to deceive.' . . . 'Are you happy?' Ans. 'No, I am miserable.' . . . 'Are you in hell?' Ans. 'Not yet.' . . . 'Do you expect to go there?' Ans. 'Yes.' . . . 'When?' Ans. 'At the day of judgment.' . . . 'Is there to be a resurrection of the dead?' Ans. 'Yes.' . . . 'Have you any prospect of happiness?' Ans. 'I have no hope.' . . . 'In the Name of the Lord, is there a good spirit, the spirit of a departed Christian, among all these rapping and writing spirits?' Ans. 'No, not one.' . . . 'Where are the spirits of departed Christians?' Ans. 'The Lord has taken them.' "

Dr. Seiss, speaking from first-hand knowledge of the facts, affirms that the above is an authentic account, and that he saw the original of a letter from a Mr. Laning confirming the narrative in all its details. I have only quoted these two instances, but the list to be drawn upon is practically inexhaustible.

"By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20) is a maxim very pertinent to the present enquiry, and coming from the Lord's own lips we do well to ponder it. The fruits of Spiritualism are its moral and spiritual effects upon those who practise it. Its moral effects, on the testimony of thousands (literally, thousands) who have investigated it, and have had every facility for judging, are simply appalling. The late Dr. Joseph Cook, already quoted, a man of wide scientific knowledge and keenly analytical mind, told a Boston audience: "If I could uncover half of the facts which have come to me in unsolicited correspondence, including stacks and deluges of letters on this subject, I could make the cheeks in this house turn pale at revelations of vice stimulated by the belief in the trustworthiness of spiritualistic communications." Only a year or two ago, a well-informed medical man, with a scientific reputation in two continents, Dr. A. T. Schofield, referred publicly to the mischief which Sir Conan Doyle, himself a medical man, is effecting in

the world by his advocacy of Spiritualism. "Considering that every investigator and spiritist leader," says Dr. Schofield, "has earnestly pressed the great danger of the cult to both mediums and audiences, this is a little surprising to his confrères, and much to be regretted. His advice to every young woman to 'try to become a medium' is almost incredible" (Trans. of the Vict. Ins. lv. 77). I could add to Dr. Schofield's my own testimony, having heard within the past few months of two gentlewomen whose lives have been blasted through acting upon Sir Conan Doyle's amazing counsel. The effects in the cases referred to were physical and moral ruin, and both ladies are now in mental homes. Figures quoted by well-known alienists to demonstrate the awful mischief wrought by Spiritualism in this country are appalling, and illustrate the urgent need for firmer legislation on the subject. Medical men convicted of supporting Spiritualism should be dealt with first of all, for they are conspiring against the physical and moral health of the community, not blindly, but in full knowledge of the mischief they are doing.

The menace is grave enough, yet, thank God, "the children of the Kingdom" have nothing to fear. "The world-rulers of this darkness" may rage (Eph. vi. 12); and the lying manifestations of "spirits that peep and mutter" may wax bolder, but their powers are limited, and the tide of evil will not flow on for ever. Even now they can do no hurt to the soul that trusts in God. Believers can say in relation to these things what Paul said to the Roman Christians: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31). Christianity is attested by the supernatural; Spiritualism is attested only by the super-normal; and the comfort of this is immense. The power that is for the Christian—the power that was in evidence when Christianity was established, the power that is with the Christian to-day—is a supernatural power—the almighty power of God. The power behind Spiritualism is not superior to nature, though it may be,

and probably is, beyond man's comprehension and control. Thus the feeblest saint, the weakest child of God, has nothing to fear. Omnipotence is on his side, and, equipped with the whole armour of God (Eph. vi. 11-17) he may offer successful resistance even to the prince of darkness himself.

These facts are the more encouraging because a marshalling of Satanic forces may be expected in the last days. Misled by Modernist deceivers and an almost pagan Press, man fondly dreams of a world advancing; a passing, by easy social and educational up-liftings, to a glorious triumphant zenith; but the Word of God tells another and less flattering tale. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. iv. 1). A world advancing? How vain the dream!—unless the goal of human progress be black ruin and the wrath of God. Scripture witnesses of one "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. ii. 9): and from other passages it is clear that there will be a fearful incursion of evil spirits towards the close of this dispensation, seducing spirits, breathing poisonous hatred of the Son of God. Entering and possessing human bodies, their source will be unsuspected, and man will receive them as messengers of good, while their lying wonders will be discussed by persons of more materialistic mind as curiosities of physical science. Perhaps we are even now in the shadow of those times. Perhaps—it is a solemn thought—some of the false teachers to-day, who are heading the present wild rush to infidelity are the unconscious pioneers of the great apostasy. May the Lord in His goodness deliver many to whom the menace of Spiritualism is at most a far-off danger, or a matter of merely psychological interest.

Sir Conan Doyle closes his essay with the reflection: "Such has been the outcome of my religious evolution.

Is it final? I do not know: but I do know that what I have said is solid, even if more should hereafter be added thereto."

"I do not know!" So he ends with Agnosticism after all. And even the little that he thinks he knows—what is it? A shadowy promise of doubtful good derived from the corybantic mutterings of a wretched medium, as deluded as himself! Whence have come, let me ask, the anti-Christian teachings of Spiritualism? It is not even pretended that they came from God. On the contrary, there is enough of moral depravity, spiritual uncleanness and positive fraud in mediumistic communications to warrant the conviction that they are from beneath. Demons, as we have seen, have admitted this origin when adjured in the Name of the Lord, just as they did in the days of Christ and His Apostles. That demonic communications have been actually received is no longer open to doubt. The evidence, supported as it is by some of the greatest names in science, literature and law, is beyond dispute; and it is only folly to seek to blink the fact. But the question one is pressed to ask is, What is the moral value of these communications? Is the something which Sir Conan Doyle has found—or thinks he has found—so "solid" after all? And granting (as we are quite ready to grant) that there is a substance of reality in the phenomena of Spiritualism, should we not regard it with loathing and horror?—as something to be cast off in trembling haste, like a leprous garment?

Sir Conan Doyle's evolution thus far has been no religious evolution, but an irreligious process of devolution; a passing from Superstition, via Agnosticism, back to greater Superstition; for the debasing credenda of demonology and witchcraft are the embodiment of religious deception in its worst form. "Is it final?" he asks plaintively; and the question is one that ought to be pressed and re-pressed with much earnestness. Enquiry is needed both on account of the mischief already inflicted on



miserable victims of his delusions, and in his own interest as a rational being accountable to God. "Beware," says Joseph Cook, "of a final permanence of character on the bad side. The soul after death may be bound to the evil which it did not forsake here, and yet remain as free yonder as it was here."

I commend this weighty consideration to Sir Conan Doyle. The issue predicates a finality from which even he must shrink.

I come now to Mr. Compton Mackenzie. Mr. Mackenzie has wandered into Roman Catholicism by the illusive dogma-shadowed paths of Sacerdotalism, not realising—perhaps not even suspecting that sacerdotalism is itself an evil, the subject of definite censure in two at least of the Epistles. Resting upon the popular fallacy that the Church teaches, a thought nowhere found in Scripture, and narrowing his conception of the Church to the Romish system, he has surrendered his judgment in matters of religion to the accredited lights of the system, a Pope-ruled priesthood; and these, speaking authoritatively in the name of the Church, command his conscience. In other words, he abandons the divine ground of assurance, the Word of God, and plants his feet on the treacherous quicksand of papal authority. According to this principle of determination, the Scriptures are not to him the Word of God because of any conviction wrought in his heart by the action of the Word itself, but because the Church (that is, a fallible priesthood) assures him that they are.

It is a common challenge of the priests: "How do you know the Bible is God's Word? If the true Church had not conserved the Bible, and given it, who could say it is the Word of God?" And when some troubled enquirer, oppressed in conscience and bowed under the burden of remembered sins, turns for light and comfort

to the Scriptures, they will baffle him with these questions, persuading him by every trick of sophistry that the only rest for his soul is the authority of the Church. Without the Church, they will urge, relief is impossible; you have no certitude, no valid ground of assurance. Too often the lie is swallowed, and the harassed soul, instead of waiting humbly upon the teaching of God, silences conscience, and in sheer bewilderment and fatigue of mind drops anchor in the insecure harbour of human authority. How often is this the history of souls brought under the baneful teaching of Rome! What depths of Satan are here laid bare! Whilst owning—in word at least—the authority of Scripture for themselves, these priestly advisers discourage such confidence in others; and, by a craftiness of misdirection peculiarly cruel, supplant the direct authority of God over the conscience by their own authority.

Now if God has spoken—if in the Bible we have an authoritative communication from God to man, I must believe it because it is His word, not because any man or body of men assures me that it is. And the Bible, as might be expected, approves itself to the conscience for what it is, a divine revelation; differing in this respect from all other books. As the apostle says: “The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. iv. 12). A Word that acts after this fashion has no need of human warranty: it carries its own credentials: in the very nature of things it must be so. And, indeed, the Word existed before the Church, and must have been believed on its own authority by the first Christians, otherwise we could have had no Church at all. The Word of God was neither addressed to a clergy, nor entrusted to a clergy to conserve or certify. The bulk of the Epistles were written either to local assemblies—Rome, Corinth, Galatia, etc.—that is, to all Christians in a given place;

or, as in the case of John's first Epistle and Jude, to Christians everywhere; or, thirdly, to Christian households and individuals. In the second Epistle of John even an "elect lady and her children" are addressed. Facts like these dispel many illusions, and the precious consolation goes with them that God is behind His Word, and by the gracious ministry of His Spirit, opens it to heart and conscience. This direct action of the Spirit, as apart from priestly intermeddling, is scornfully denied by Romanists, who would throw men helplessly on the clergy, thereby neutralizing the blessed promise of the Lord to His people, "They shall be all taught of God" (John vi. 45). Does Mr. Mackenzie deny these plain facts? Or does he (the supposition seems hardly conceivable) seek to justify pretensions which set aside the blessed grace of the Spirit of the Lord among His own?

Another point. The Romish Church has a history which goes back many centuries, and the dogmas which have gathered about it, like barnacles to an old hulk, are practically limitless. In common with Mr. Mackenzie, therefore, I entertain no hope of being able "to circumscribe the Catholic faith within a thousand words"; nevertheless, I venture to affirm—and the proofs lie ready to hand—that what he calls the Catholic faith is not Catholic, and is not faith.

It is not Catholic for the simple reason that of the 560 millions or thereabouts who profess the Christian faith, upwards of 290 millions are outside the pale of Rome. If catholic means universal surely this is a strange way of being catholic. It might be suggested, of course, that Mr. Mackenzie regards all Christians who are outside the Roman communion as Christians only in name; but I credit him with common sense and a charity wider than his creed.

The Romish faith is not the true faith for a number of reasons; but I will take just one. My object in this paper is not to attack the Church of Rome, but simply to

deal with Mr. Mackenzie's manifesto. He has published a confession of faith to the world through the columns of a widely circulated daily newspaper, and for that reason the right to challenge his theological commitments belongs to the simplest reader of the paper. I dislike controversy, would gladly lead a quiet life where strife is unknown; but having found in the religion of Christ—that is, in Bible Christianity—the crown of all desire—rest of conscience, assurance of salvation, love, joy, a way of holiness, a life that death cannot touch, and how much beside!—and having learnt from Scripture that the teaching as to these things is the faith for which the Christian is “to contend earnestly” (Jude 3), the responsibility to speak out is clear enough.

Now I hold that the Romish faith is not the true faith at all. I am not calling in question the Christianity of Mr. Mackenzie, who, of course, may be a child of God in spite of Rome; and I can honestly and gladly suppose that he is in practice a far better Christian than I am; but I am speaking of Romanism as a form of faith, the faith which Mr. Mackenzie seeks to justify by a public confession, and I affirm in all seriousness that it is not the faith of the Gospel at all. It denies, for instance, the teaching of the Word of God upon so considerable a matter as the work of salvation: That of itself is an arresting fact. Scripture teaches that Christ by His one offering—an offering never to be repeated—has perfected for ever them that are sanctified; putting away their sins so fully and completely that they can never more be brought into remembrance. Rome gives the direct lie to this momentous teaching by declaring that offerings for sins—propitiatory offerings—are still required and that the Mass—well termed the “keystone of the Romish system”—is an offering both for the sins of the living and the dead. They call it an “unbloody sacrifice,” declare participation in its benefits to be obligatory, and make a charge for celebrating it. The Gospel teaches that the benefits flowing from the

death of Christ are tied by no human restrictions; that whosoever will may take of the water of life freely; that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord; and that whosoever will may come to Him without any sort of payment or intermediary.

Lest I should be thought to distort the teaching of Rome in order to furnish out an indictment I will quote from their standard authorities, setting their clear statements of doctrine beside the statements of the Word of God. My quotations from Scripture shall be from the Rheims Version, which is the English translation authorised and adopted by the Roman Church.

In examining the teaching of Rome as to the Mass—we may consider first of all what it is said to be, and secondly, what it is said to effect. Article 79 of the Catechism of the Council of Trent affirms that “It is not a mere commemoration of the Sacrifice of the cross, but also a truly propitiatory sacrifice.” Cardinal Bellarmine, the famous Catholic historian, describes the Mass as “an external oblation made to God alone by a lawful minister, which, by a mystic rite, is consecrated and transmuted” (Bell. de Sacr Euch, x lib. v. cap. ii. 26); and Dr. Milner, another recognised authority on the Romish side, calls it “the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass.”

Just what this unbloody sacrifice is supposed to effect may be judged from the following quotations. “By the offering of Him (Christ) the Lord is appeased, granting grace and the gift of penitence; forgives crimes and sins, even very great ones; for it is one deed, the same Victim, the same one now offering Himself on the cross, the manner of offering alone being different. Wherefore it is rightly offered, according to the traditions of the apostles, not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions and other necessities of the faithful who are alive, but also for the dead in Christ not yet fully purged” (Conc. Trid. Sess. xxii. 2). And again: “As often as the commemoration of

this Victim is celebrated, so often is the work of our salvation done" (Catech. of the Council of Trent, Part ii. De Eu. Sacr. 73-76).

So the authoritative teaching of Rome as to the Sacrifice of the Mass amounts to this—That it is an unbloody, propitiatory sacrifice; often repeated; reproducing afresh in each commemoration the work of a believer's salvation; obtaining the forgiveness of sins—even very great sins; appeasing the Lord; communicating grace; and efficacious, not only for living Christians, but also for the dead in Christ not yet fully purged.

Such is the voice of Rome: let us listen now to the Voice of God. In Hebrews 10 (vv. 10-14) I read: "Every priest (under the Mosaic economy) standeth daily ministering, and often offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, offering one sacrifice for sins, for ever sitteth on the right hand of God. . . . For by one oblation He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Again (chapter ix. of the same Epistle), "For Jesus is not entered into the Holies made with hands . . . but into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that He should offer Himself often . . . for then He ought to have suffered from the beginning of the world: but now once at the end of ages He hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; so also Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many; the second time He shall appear without sin, to them that expect Him, unto salvation."

The above Scriptures should more than suffice to brand indelibly the Romish doctrine of the Mass—I mean, for minds that are really subject to divine teaching; but I will add one or two shorter passages. The verses first quoted continue thus: "The Holy Ghost doth testify this to us . . . their sins and iniquities I will remember no more. Now where there is a remission of these, there is

no more an oblation for sin" (Heb. x. 15, 17, 18). Chapter ix, verse 12 (omitting words which only amplify the sense) runs thus: "By His own blood (He) entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption"; and the apostle goes on to argue that if the blood of goats and other animals sufficed to sanctify "such as are defiled . . . how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (13, 14). Lastly, verse 22 in the same chapter states emphatically that "without shedding of blood there is no remission."

"An unbloody propitiatory sacrifice," effecting the work of our salvation wherever offered, says Rome. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," says the Word of God. "An external oblation made to God alone" every time the priest celebrates Mass, says Rome, an oblation "not only for the sins and necessities of the faithful who are alive, but also for the dead in Christ not fully purged"; so that neither living Christians nor the dead in Christ are perfectly saved. "By one oblation (the offering of Himself on the cross) He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," is the language of Scripture; and the effect of this one oblation is "to exhaust"—a very comprehensive term—"the sins of many." As regards the dead in Christ, who, according to Rome, have to undergo further purgations after death, the Biblical teaching is that they are in Christ's own keeping. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8). Even the penitent thief was with Him on the very day he died (Luke xxiii. 43). Does the Lord surrender the custody of these blessed ones—remove them from their sphere of happiness—in order that they may be consigned to penal tortures? The monstrous character of Rome's teaching is seen in the light of such a question.

As to the Mass itself, it has been pertinently asked: At what precise moment in the celebration does the sacrifice take place? and the answer usually given is: In the

act of consumption by the priest; a view which is taken by Bellarmine among others. We are brought then to this, that the eating of a wafer by a poor failing priest is the real propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, an unbloody sacrifice which carries with it remission of sins! Could superstition go further, or denial of the plain Word of God be more complete?

How the teaching works out in practice may be gauged from the following: In a sermon by the late Father Phelan, a Romish priest who was twice received in audience by the Pope, the following blasphemies were uttered: "I never invite an angel down from heaven to hear Mass here. It is no place for angels. The only person in Heaven I ever ask to come down here is Jesus Christ, and Him I command to come down. He has to come when I bid Him. I took bread in my fingers this morning and said: 'This is the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and He had to come down. This is one of the things He must do. He must come down every time I say Mass, at my bidding.'" The sermon appeared in a Roman Catholic organ "The Western Watchman," under date June 10th, 1924, and was reprinted in Dr. Wreford's "Message from God" for April, 1925. This profane nonsense may be placed on a par with a published statement by the late Cardinal Katschthaler, Archbishop of Salzburg, communicated to Dr. Wreford by a friend: "One may even speak of the omnipotence of the priest; of an omnipotence which is beyond that of God Himself. For the priest, by merely uttering the words 'Hoc est enim corpus meum' can compel God ('bones and nerves') to descend to the altar" (Mess. from God, April, 1925, p. 61).

Surely Mr. Compton Mackenzie would desire the prayers of his fellow Christians that he may be delivered from a system which is the forcing-ground of such appalling profanity and superstition.



There are still two novelists to be spoken of, but their papers have so much in common with the quasi-Agnostic and ultra-Pantheistic views of Messrs. Bennett and Jones that they need not be examined at much length. Mr. Oppenheim believes that "there is no other religion left to-day for thinking man but to worship the unknown God through his fellows"; and he sees nothing ahead of him save the "terrifying embrace of the shadows of the great abyss"—an appalling admission in view of the fact that Light has come into the world in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He has been presented for man's acceptance as the true God and Eternal Life. Mr. Oppenheim deliberately ignores this Light of life, and prefers to fumble along blindly in "reverent ignorance," accepting his destiny with what he calls "a curious mixture of fatalism and an ostrich-like capacity for burying his head in the affairs of the world until the last moment." Surely such an exhibition of callous indifference to the gravest of issues is a sight to make the angels weep.

With Mr. Hugh Walpole, the other writer, all is nebulous and vague. On the great problems of existence he "can speak," as he says; "with no positive certainty." Led by his own intuitions he is inclined to favour the thought of the continuity of life beyond death, but it is only an impression, an opinion. The explanation of Mr. Walpole's indecision is perhaps not far to seek. A man of amiable, kindly nature, gifted with a rich and delicate imagination, the prosaic yet profoundly reactionary thought that God has revealed Himself, bringing life and incorruptibility to light through the Gospel (2 Tim. i. 10) has never gripped him. He affirms rather plaintively that a man's only light in these dark days is the poor rushlight of "one's own experience"; and he sums up a singularly touching confession with the vague and secondhand assurance: "I believe that many men to-day would agree with me in this, that they are experiencing spiritual history almost against their will, and that the marvellous

modern progress of science will in the end bring men more securely into religious belief rather than away from it."

Modern progress! How many have made shipwreck on this treacherous reef! As though man, who has separated himself from God by sin, can heal the breach by scientific researches and discoveries! Solomon, indeed, declares that "through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom"; but where does this intermeddling lead him? "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain" (1 Cor. iii. 20), and the "natural man," whatever the depth and range of his scientific knowledge, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. for they are foolishness unto him: **neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned**" (ibid ii. 14). The things of God, the saving, sanctifying truths of Christianity, are "revealed unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (ibid ii. 10) and these things are "hid from the wise and prudent" (Matt. xi. 25) because God's way of entrance into the Kingdom is to become as little children. They are revealed unto babes. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven," are the words of the Great Teacher (Matt. xviii. 3) and if I understand at all Mr. Walpole's kindly, sensitive nature and his sympathetic understanding of youthful psychology, these are conditions which will have for him a touchingly direct appeal.

In the attack on Christianity inaugurated by the "Daily Express," the writer who conceals his identity under the pseudonym "the Unknown Man" stands forth as the elected champion on the other side, the David who, by spiritual sling and stone, was to have slain the ten-toed giant in the figurative Valley of Elah. Unfortunately, the stones which he chose for the work were not stones out of the brook, stream-washed and smooth, but

pellets of clay that fell to powder as they left the sling. Speaking without metaphor, there is no recognition in the essay of the great initial fact that victory for man must come by way of death (the waters of the brook) and that the Cross, not the Incarnation, is the foundation of Christianity.

The popular notion that union with Christ is in incarnation is held to-day by quite a number of Anglicans, Free-churchmen and Dissenters, and has been well called "the root-error of twentieth century theology." It is also one of the mainstays of Modernism, as our unknown Modernist essayist makes clear. The contrary, or Biblical doctrine, that true Christian union is with Christ beyond death, in resurrection, giving as it does no scope to the activities of man after the flesh, is discreetly shelved; while the death which is the necessary prelude to resurrection, is less and less spoken of. The life—Christ's human life on earth—they now tell us is all; and the Modernist deduction that any unregenerate man who fans the "divine spark" within him may successfully imitate that life, is all the fashion.

"The workman labouring day by day in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth," says the Unknown Man, "is the eternal symbol of God in us. The figure hanging dying on the tree, with arms outstretched to all the world, is the eternal symbol of——" What? Of Love shown forth in atonement? Of grace immeasurable told out in the Cross? Not at all—"of the wondrous fact that there is a Cross in the heart of God and that the Way of the Cross is the way of Life because it is the way of love." The cloying sweetness of the phraseology rather cloaks the deadly nature of the doctrine, and the context has to be closely examined if the real drift of the teaching would be understood. The teaching amounts to this: that we are taken into association with Christ in incarnation by virtue of a cross of our own, the cross of personal conflict and suffering. Life itself is a sort of martyrdom, and

according to the measure of heroism with which we face our lot, the great Exemplar is with us—in some such fashion, let us say, as the spirit of Nelson is pictured hovering over British seamen.

It is important to remember that the essay now under consideration was advertised as furnishing the Christian answer to the elaborate anti-Christian manifesto of our nine\* novelists and playwrights; a counter-service most salutary if faithfully performed—indeed a really necessary service in view of so united an exhibition of perversity and unbelief. Let us see how the sacred trust was used.

The unnamed writer opens with an adulatory recognition of the various authors, in which he records the “inspiration and joy” which their articles have afforded him: and then proceeds by mischievous innuendo and a trashy kind of emotionalism to haul down the flag which he was commissioned to defend! His mock defence, extending to about 1,200 words, contains not one illuminating word on the true message of Christianity; not a word about Substitution; not a solitary reference to sin or redemption from sin by faith in the atoning Sacrifice. Instead of these (and let us not forget that without these is “no remission,” no escape from Divine judgment) we have a sentimental disquisition on what the writer calls “co-operation with God,” effected by a trying “to live out one’s life in the Christ spirit”; by which means “we are all” (Christians, Mohammedans, Hindus, Buddhists, Infidels—anyone and everyone without distinction) coming back to Christ; “not so much,” as he hastens to add, “to the Christ of dogma and ritual, but to a ‘layman’s Christ,’ the Christ of Galilee and Gethsemane.” Religion is “a betting your life there is a God”—a somewhat precarious sort of faith, one would think, and scarcely so

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\*Nine, not ten; for of course I exclude Mr. Mackenzie’s paper from this category.

uplifting as the faith of the Gospel, with its associated promise of daily supplies of grace from above, and holiest intimacies of affection with the Object of faith, the blessed Lord Himself. "That which we have seen and heard," says the apostle, "declare we unto you" (believers in that Son of God who went to the Cross) "that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). The Unknown Man talks sentimentally of "a Cross in the heart of God" and a similar cross in men's lives, and affirms that Christ "came and still comes to share the fight and the suffering with us; but he fails to tell us how he knows this, and by whose permission he puts forth a message so alien to the message of the Gospel. He gives no authority for this "other gospel" (Gal. i. 8, 9), yet coolly affirms that it is "the eternal truth behind all the crude and terrible theories of the Atonement!" What a darkening of counsel by words without knowledge is here! (Job xxxviii. 2). What a travesty of Christianity and the express teachings of Christ and His apostles!

That every ransomed child of God may count on the support and sympathy of Christ in all times of conflict and suffering is, of course, most comfortingly true, but there is not a word in Scripture to countenance the delusion that "all humanity" may be "lifted nearer to the Divine" in this way, or that the means of getting into union with God is to live unselfish lives and to eschew pride and sloth. The author of this miserable apologetic must be well aware of these inconsistencies and omissions, but he distributes the honeyed poison notwithstanding.

Union with God, as every believer knows, supposes life, divine life; and the first step into divine life is new birth. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John iii. 3); and this being born again is a definite spiritual process, not a mere figure of speech. It is being born of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, who

becomes in that momentous act the Source and Communicator of a new nature. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"—has the same nature. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (ibid iii. 5). The water, as we know from other passages, is the Word of Truth. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (Jas. i. 18). We are born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God (1 Pet. i. 23) and so we become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26), "The last Adam"—**the Lord in resurrection**—is a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. xv. 45). "This is the record, that God hath given to us (believers) eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 11 and 12). This is something very different from the self-exalting notion of a union with Christ in incarnation. It is a renewing by Divine intervention; a process effected in the soul **from outside**, and made possible only by the death and resurrection of the Incarnate Son of God.

To the same purpose speaks the apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians (chap. v., verses 14-21) where the teaching is that the death of Christ, His dying for all, has placed all under death; but that Christians to whom he was writing, "the Church of God at Corinth," believers in Paul's Gospel that Christ died for them and rose again, were alive after a new order, alive in the risen Christ, and thus part of a new creation. "Wherefore," says the apostle, "henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." How utterly outside the thought of union with Christ in incarnation is all this! How destructive of the fancy that "by one road or another we are all coming back to the Christ," and that by acting upon "the gambling instinct" in man, "betting one's life there is a God," we shall have power to walk with Him and to serve Him worthily!

Well, I have brought my readers over a dreary, weed-encumbered field and it is time to cry "halt." That we are in the "last days" of the Christian dispensation, the "perilous times" foretold by the apostle (2 Tim. iii. 1-8) every scripturally-taught person would probably agree. Modern Infidelity, decked out to appeal to every class of mind, is daily gathering strength, and the flood-tide of undisciplined pleasure, fed from a hundred tainted sources, is sweeping all before it. Honoured and ancient landmarks are being blotted out in the whirlpool rush: great principles, for which our fathers spent themselves and travailed even unto death, are flippantly challenged; the noblest ideals are replaced by specious half-fledged follies on the flimsiest pretexts of expediency; platforms from which the Word of God was wont to be sounded forth with conscience-probing, soul-subduing, life-transforming power, are usurped by men who call into question every sacred truth; so that the minds of the young are poisoned and the moral strength of the nation is being sapped; while, thanks to the perverted zeal of rationalizing pulpiteers and an irresponsible Press, a form of godliness in which the power of godliness is denied (2 Tim iii. 5) is acclaimed everywhere as the last word in neo-Christian thought and culture.

To one who studies with any attention the phenomenal re-crudescence of old philosophies and long-exploded heresies dealt with in this paper, it will, I think, be apparent that the enemy's attacks are concentrated upon four great advance-post doctrines of the Christian Faith:

1. The Verbal Inspiration of Holy Scripture.
2. The Doctrine of the Fall of Man as found in Genesis iii., Romans v. and other Scriptures.
3. The Doctrine of Redemption as foreshadowed in the Levitical law and made good historically in the death and resurrection of the Divine Substitute.

4. The Doctrine of the essential Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, incidental thereto, His virgin birth and sinless life.

Doubtless other truths are assailed, but I think it will be found that all the popular anti-Christian and heterodox religious systems in evidence to-day—Christian Scientist, Spiritualist, Theosophist, Modernist, Pantheist, Atheist—have this in common, that they renounce, or seek to explain away, every one of these fundamental truths. It will also be found that there is a significant drawing together of these incongruous religious and irreligious elements, an agreeing to disagree on all sides, provided that man after the flesh is exalted, Christ lowered to a merely human level, and God, as a righteous Arbiter in human affairs and an authoritative Voice in the conscience, is shut out.

It would seem, indeed—and other indications might be cited—that “the mystery of iniquity” pre-visionsed by the apostle is nearing the time of his manifestation; that sinister personality “whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved” (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10). By a strange perversity of will, or obliquity of moral judgment, the secret springs of which are but little suspected, men’s minds have become extraordinarily open to such deceptions, and the rush towards infidelity has been fearfully accelerated. O that men would heed the warning signs and turn to Christ! Is not He—this glorious Centre and Theme of all Revelation—better than all the isms? We have heard the voices of the essayists and what are they? A medley of voices, of which no two speak alike. The Voice of God is one, albeit it speaks in many cadences, that men may hear and heed.

“The Voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and the goodness thereof is as the



flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. . . . The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. xl. 6-8).

"AND THIS IS THE WORD WHICH BY THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED UNTO YOU" (1 Pet. i. 25).

A universe shall praise Him! What are we  
That lisp in childish treble His dispraise?  
Known unto God are all His ways  
From the earth's birth-time and the travail-dawn  
Of all Creation. He will see  
His glory is safe-guarded. Presently  
There will come morn  
And the long Day; and we shall rest with Him,  
And in the rest-time learn the wonder-deeps  
Of an unerring Mind that never sleeps,  
Nor slackens, nor grows dim,  
But by Love's flame is lit;  
And of a sovereign Will that governs it,  
And shafts the Word with power freighted  
That now all things sustains as once it all created.

A universe shall praise Him! Powers of light,  
And powers of dark; and all material things.  
The Seraphim, that stand with covering wings,  
Holy, and crying "Holy!" Angels bright,  
And brooding rebel spirits, hid in night:  
All creatures formed for earth,  
Compact of body and soul;  
And Man, that crowns the whole,  
And is of higher birth;  
Triune in nature, the twin mystery  
And simulacrum dim of Triune Deity!

Praise in the Highest—in the Lowliest, praise!  
All lifeless things that are,  
Earth, moon, and sun, and every star,  
As well whatever breathes or moves,  
Acts, thinks, or loves,

Shall vindicate and celebrate His ways.  
New heavens, new earth, and an eternal Day,  
Bright with the shinings of His face,  
Where no disturbing element finds place—  
These are the twofold limits of His sway.  
Death comes not there, nor pain, nor fret, nor sorrow,  
Nor dark forebodings of a dread to-morrow:  
But praise, joy, rest,  
And work that is all three,  
So easy-pleasant and so burden-free,—  
Love's willing work, by loving hearts addressed  
To God, the Spring of Love, all blessing and all blest!  
Praise in the Holiest! Why should we fret  
Because of evil, bending bulrush heads?  
Man's Day grows dark. What matter? God's is coming!  
His sun uprises after man's has set.  
To brood upon the ill no comfort sheds,  
Nor soothes the grief that other hearts is numbing.  
The Christian keeping tryst  
For his dear Lord, throughout the deepening night,  
Sustained by faith, not sight,  
Is no weak pessimist.  
His heart—although through tears—looks on  
To times of restitution; when the sum  
Of things foreplanned for blessing, and foretold  
By prophet seers of old,  
Shall be established by the conquering Christ.  
And earth shall own to heaven His Kingdom come.  
He that (betimes enticed  
Out of his worshipped self) the Son has kissed,  
Is the true optimist.  
That moment in his glowing breast  
The Kingdom is set up.  
Wherefore, beyond contentment blessed,  
And by the very source of joy possessed,  
His heart runs o'er,  
Attracting other hearts; the brimming cup  
Passing through zones of life that broaden evermore!

## BIBLES AND THE BIBLE.

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IF faith in Christ is the sole means of salvation from sin, of stable peace here and unclouded felicity hereafter, how are these benefits to be made available? Only through that inspired record of God's purposes in Christ which we call the Bible, that collection of Holy Writings which not only contain, but **are** the very words of God. Rationalists tell us—it is a familiar taunt—that the world is full of "bibles"; that the Vedas and Puranas, the Zenda-vesta, Grunth, Kuran, are all bibles, and are honoured as the word of God by thousands of the human race. Nor need we quarrel with the statement. The same claims have, indeed, been advanced for Mormon Smith's farrago of profanities; for Madame Blavatsky's occult Isis books; and even for the rambling verbosity of Mrs. Eddy. Dreary reading indeed do these vaunted revelations make: but whether dull or bright in the literary sense, in no case do they contain the key that admits into the vestibule of true knowledge—the knowledge of God. They lead nowhere; bring no certitude; are merely men's opinions, dogmas, thoughts: although, where a deeper wisdom sometimes lurks, the source may lie deeper too. Deeper, not higher, for when their witness is least of man it is also least divine: by which we mean that the source may be Satanic.

The Christian Bible is of quite another order. It stands alone—without a peer—unique in its divine majesty—the Book. It is the only Book of which it may be said—This is a living Document, informed with truth—truth without admixture of error or adornment of rhetoric, and bearing the stamp of its divine origin on every page. Confucius raised a question in his day which many eager hearts must have raised before him, and many,

doubtless, have repeated since: Does Heaven speak? The seasons fulfil their course, and Nature everywhere and evermore is working, spending; bringing forth to life, and, in the self-same process, producing death—Does Heaven say anything? This is the crucial matter. Has God revealed Himself? Is there appeal from man's uncertainty to a certainty that has its springs in God? Is He—the God we vaguely talk about—to be known? or are we, as rationalists in effect affirm, shut up to philosophy? to the discussion of cold principles and theories—right and wrong, the internal and external affections of the mind, data of ethics, moral postulates and the like? And assuming that the knowledge of God is our purposed bliss, must heaven be scaled or God reveal Himself?

Human speculations are useless in such an inquiry. Even conscience is no sure guide. It was conscience that led Saul of Tarsus to oppress the saints of God: and in later times how much evil has been justified on the plea of conscience! how much cruelty practised under cover of the name! For conscience may be blinded by passions, or clouded by ignorance, or misled by education; and far from its being always a reliable guide it may even deceive a man to his own undoing. How needful, therefore, to possess the mind of God! How needful to possess a witness that is at once stable and infallible; a witness that is not at the mercy of a vogue, nor needs revision like the views of men, nor gives to learned or unlearned folly room for doubt! This witness found, there is an end to speculation, and one may treat as waste and profitless man's ponderous disquisitions upon the way in which God should reveal Himself. For man, baffled in his fruitless gropings after God, has attempted even this! Intent to solve the problem, he has not shrunk from offering—yea, even dictating ways and means to the Supreme Dictator; meantime flinging wide the pulsing doors of his heart to every lie that masquerades as Truth; and, in the end, has laughed in the bitter mockery of despair—laughed at himself!

Yet, thank God, there are some in whom the yearning for this divine knowledge is an inextinguishable yearning. Only to know Him!—or, at least, to know that knowing may be possible: that some seekers have found Him—or themselves been found! They feel like men groping with feverish zest in a dark room for something which others affirm is there; but which they, though seeking eagerly, cannot find; whilst out from the gloom a voice—the voice of Divine Inspiration—is continually crying to them: “Turn here for light!—here—here! The message which I bring is light. Here are glad tidings—words of deliverance. Read and ponder them. Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of Me—the Christ.” The wish to believe is present with such, but how to gratify the wish they know not. They find, indeed, that wishing and belief are as distant from one another as pole from pole. The story of the Christ-life stirs their blood, commands their reason, captivates their hearts, and they would fain believe the story true—a faultless record of a faultless life; a revelation of the heart of God to their own needy hearts; but they stand perplexed on the threshold, not knowing **how** to believe. The simple historical facts—which, indeed, offer proofs abundant and irresistible to minds that know the worth of evidence—these are not challenged: yet conviction based on logic is not faith, nor is assent of mind assent of heart; and of this they are painfully aware. The proofs which lift the soul to the empyrean heights, where all is blue and where no fog-wreaths form or gather, proofs which come to us soul-wise, morally—these they do not grasp at once. They do not realise that the evidence for which they wait is of a subjective character, that the Word of God approves itself to be the Word of God—not to the intellect merely, for that would be placing a premium upon human cleverness, but—to the conscience; to the conscience, and this in a way that no other book does. Incidentally, this is why the natural heart fears the Bible, and regards it with aversion. Was there ever a book so hated? or assailed with such virulence of passion? We

do not treat the Bible of Mahomet in this way, or the sayings of Buddha, or the Magi's Zend. The Christian Revelation angers man because it strips him naked to himself; dwarfs his greatness, blows upon his pride, and speaks with uncompromising sternness of his defection from the Right.

But my word is to the earnest inquirer, the seeker who would fain believe, and cannot. Tossed to and fro upon a troubled sea of doubt, what is he to do? The difficulties seem to grow upon him the more he considers them. Sometimes he thinks that he can hear a voice which must be God's speaking to him out of the visible creation. In Nature's restful moods, when form and sound and colour seem to blend, and outward harmony brings an inward peace, he hears it—feels it—listening with a hungry longing. But, anon, his soul is affrighted with the dissonance of wrong, with the evidence of abounding evil, pain and wretchedness. He hears above the harmonies of Nature the brutal yarr and yap of lawless strength; the tocsin of war; the shout of the oppressor, and thereupon all his sickening doubts come back.

No thoughtful mind has passed this way unscathed. To say that God is just and pure and good, and that, being God, He will one day vindicate Himself by bringing glory to Himself out of human perverseness, so that even the wrath of man shall praise Him (Psa. lxxvi. 10)—this, though true, is not sufficing. There remains the weighty and disturbing fact that evil is here, and violence, and pain: that wealth and unprincipled might too often dominate the world, and that Goodness and patient Worth as often stand as beggars at the gate. On this men build a terrible indictment; asking piteously or defiantly, according to mood and temperament, how such conditions can be the ordinance of God. No intuitions of the mind, however profound—no investigations of the complex workings of Nature, however searching—can solve this mystery. By one means, and only one, can solution be reached, and

that is by the teaching of God Himself—the definite communication of His own mind to man. Only in Holy Scripture can we find a complete and worthy answer to this great enigma: and let us not forget that the profoundest thinkers in all ages have humbly and gratefully received this answer and found it all-sufficing.

The teaching in its broadest lines is well known. By one man's disobedience sin gained an entrance into the world, bringing pain and death in its train; and so death passed upon all; brute-kind and man being involved together. The Old Creation, which had been pronounced "very good," was thus irretrievably spoilt. Then God intervened; and, willing man's recovery, He inaugurated a more wonderful New Creation; setting apart for it His own Son—the sole Builder and Sustainer of the Old. He, when the fulness of time was come, laid aside His glory and assumed the likeness of sinful flesh; and being found in fashion as a man, He stooped yet lower, taking a bondman's place. The inspired record is, "He made Himself of no reputation" (Phil. ii. 7). One step yet remained ere Mercy and Truth could meet together, ere Righteousness and Peace could salute each other—one only—in amaze of which the sun was darkened, and the very foundations of the earth were troubled—the lowest step of all—the stoop of death. "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. ii. 8). Surely the conceptive greatness of such a work is worthy of God! How worthy of acceptance, then, the Gospel which is based upon it! The servants of God may be poor preachers, but verily they have a great message. The light of heaven may shine through muddied windows, and as Paul reminds us, we carry this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. But what a treasure it is!

Does any ask, How are these glad tidings to be made available to present pressure? How am I to obtain an

interest in them? There is but one answer—Faith: there is but one way—the way of Faith. To as many as receive Him—for receiving Christ is this act of faith—to them is given power to become the sons of God; and any and every such recipient, believing on His Name, is registered, if one may so say, as born of God; born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but sovereignly, of God. I quote the testimony of St. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned on the Lord's bosom, and received direct from His sacred lips the words of life (John i. 12, 13).

'The words of life!' that is a momentous phrase. Evermore the pulsing thoughts of man hark back to that full theme. From the great charnel-house of the world the heart peers piteously in quest of life—a life that lives through all; and the mist which hides the face of the Hereafter is terrible till faith has pierced it. Nature cannot look behind that veil. The spirit in its awakened yearnings reaches out, indeed, beyond the natural, but the spirit is a prisoner still. From Nature may be gleaned some broken intimations of the How, but nothing of life's purpose—the far goal of man's existence—nothing of that great question of questions which, with ever growing urgency, comes beating down the ages—Why? Why? Why?—the enigma which neither sphinx nor oracle, nor sage, nor poet,—how much less the letter-bound rationalist—has ever solved.

There is but one key, and that is held by Faith. "Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1). It is a master-key that fits many locks. By faith we understand the birth of worlds; the genesis and fall of man; the present tanglement and anarchy in morals; and, above all, the means reserved by Highest Wisdom to re-establish order out of chaos, and to inaugurate, for hearts transformed by Love, a Reign of Peace. By faith—and remember, it is faith in a Divine Revelation—we learn how man's



desolate cry has been heard out of the darkness by One who seeks his deliverance and is able to effect it. This, indeed, is faith's starting-point. The best things of God—the cream and marrow of the Gospel—lie some distance on the road; albeit to touch but the border of Christ's garment is to touch potentially all blessing. Every good belongs in title to him who has turned in whatever measure of faith to the Chief Good, although a cumulative joy is the reward of continued exploration in the wide domain of blessing. Each day reveals new vistas of delight; and the Christian's pleasure lies, not in pursuit of any theoretic good, but in the nearer view of good possessed.

And what **is** the Gospel—this message of Glad Tidings to the weary sons of men? The inquiry is one that rejoices the heart of the true servant, whatever his sense of inadequacy in essaying the answer.

The Gospel? It is the heart of God poured out on His revolted creatures. It is the expression of Love—infinite, holy, pardoning Love—to man, the rebel. Man has sinned, and God is holy—it must start with that. And yet the holy God is also Love; and Love must have companions. Thus we are confronted by two needs—a great and a greater—God's and ours: and God, the Lover, finds in poor blind errant man an object—think of it! The Revelation which we call the Bible, teaches that the blessing of man had been the thought of God even from before Creation. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, Wisdom's delights were with the sons of men (Prov. viii. 31). Not with angels, but with men. Then, also, how to bless had been resolved in council—the Triune Council of the Eternal—at which time the Fall, foreseen but not foreplanned, had loomed, barrier-like, across the path of Love. How a holy God, Who loved the sinner yet could not, being holy, wink at sin, might freely and righteously bless the object of His Love—this was the dark riddle to be solved. Sin must be dealt with, and man, the sinner, cleared before love

could freely act. Yet the judgment of sin (God being infinite, and all His ways partaking of His infinitude) involves, if each sinner must answer for himself to Heaven, the utter and irremediable ruin of the Race; because no mere man, however set for good, could even meet the penalty of his own defection—how much less stand surety for another! A wrath that is infinite can only spend itself on what is infinite. The Judge—conceive the necessity!—must also be the Victim. The Sinned-against must find in Himself a substitute for him that did the sinning. Nor this only. God is a Spirit; sin is in the flesh, and in the flesh, therefore, it must be condemned. Under this dire necessity the Son of God became a man, and in His human body bore, as the sinner's Substitute, the wrath of God and all that it involved—the darkness, the hiding of God's face, the waves and billows of divine judgment; so that in the felt horror of it there was wrung from His sacred lips that agonising cry: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani!" the blessed response to which is found in man's bright welcome to the Father's house.

Thus we see how that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them"; making that sinless, suffering One to be sin for us, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 19, 21). Thus we see, also, how that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4).

Moses describes a righteousness which is of the law, an active righteousness which man must work out for himself, so that "the man which doeth those things shall live by them" and the penalty for failure in so doing was to be the penalty of death. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, For with the heart man believeth unto righte-

ousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation'' (Rom. x. 6, 9, 10). Thus, we repeat, Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believes; and it is significant that the faith here predicated ''comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God'' (x. 4. 17) See from this how God Himself honours the Scriptures of Truth!

Now the Glad Tidings set forth in this brief and imperfect epitome constitute that Gospel of Salvation which has been the common heritage of the Church of God and the subject of her testimony from apostolic times. This is the message which has come down to us through the centuries as Heaven's best vintage, the red wine of Truth; and in defence of which men have gladly suffered loss, endured hardships, and even gone to prison and to death. The message centres, as we have seen, in the mystery that Highest God was manifest in flesh; the true Divine becoming Man, and entering as Man into the lowliest conditions of man's nature, and afterwards yielding up His life in atonement: the efficacy of which supreme act, as satisfying all the righteous requirements of God, was fully and gloriously certified when the Holy One was raised from among the dead and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. That was God's answer to the Cross. In the mighty results of this incomparable work we participate, ''if,'' as the apostle says, ''we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.'' He ''was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,'' and thus became the sure ground of our peace with God, as well as the means of access into the grace which has since flowed without stint towards us (Rom. iv. 24, 25, v. 1, 2). ''He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'' (Rom. viii. 32).

What has Rationalism, with its ''ifs'' and ''peradventures'' and dreams of loveless pantheism, to say to these things? How paltry its little systems appear—par-

ticularly its religious systems—beside the Revelation of the Risen Christ! No **ism** of to-day is so irrational as Rationalism, none so utterly inadequate to meet the deeper needs of the human soul. At its highest valuation it is but negation; a denial on the part of those who lack the divinely given faculty of discernment of what is avowedly a mystery; things known only by revelation and communicated to none but the initiated—that is, to those who have “an unction from the Holy One” (1 John ii. 20). “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. ii. 14). Anyone approaching these deep mysteries must recognise how fitting is the method employed by God for communicating His mind to man. He addresses the heart, not the intellect; and faith, not human reasoning, is the means whereby man attains a knowledge of divine realities. Man’s mind may explore the things of Nature, but the things of God can only be understood through the medium of faith, which supposes a divine work in the soul. The Greek with all his wisdom never reached the hidden wisdom which is crystallised in the Cross. It was foolishness to him. The Jew, also, whose elaborate ritual spoke eloquently in type and figure of Christ, only stumbled at the Cross. Still clinging to shadows when the Substance had been revealed, he made Legality the god that saves, and the washing of cups and platters more than life. Alas! in Christendom to-day we find the same phenomena. On the one side is the Modernist—Fundamentalist—Neologist—(call him by what name you please)—resolutely breaking down the ancient landmarks in order to exalt the human intellect, or his own bookbound conceptions; and on the other side, the Judaist, tradition’s hardworked slave, who rests upon a system of sacerdotalism which crushes with its burdens those whom Christ would make free.

God forbid that I should speak a word that would weaken in the least degree the Scriptural teaching on the

subject of works. While insisting upon the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, we must not forget the doctrine of James, "that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James ii. 24). There is no antagonism here. What we see is but the obverse and the reverse of the same medal. The faith proclaimed by Paul justifies a man before the Throne, where the springs of his being are tested; the works insisted on by James justify a man before his fellows, who know nothing of those hidden springs and can only form their estimates upon outward manifestations—"the things which a man doeth."

Moreover, it may be well to remember that—not workless faith alone, but—faithless works are dead; for in these gross material days even Christians may be found exalting material good above the larger issues of the soul; yea, actually seeking support for such practice in the Gospel narrative. It is a practice full of peril to souls, and cannot be too strongly deprecated. What! shall we use the record of those healing benefactions of the perfect Master which marked His brief service on earth, precious and memorable though they are, to neutralise the healing virtues of His risen life? He who, in the days of His flesh, healed the sick, and gave sight and hearing to the blind and deaf; who made the lame leap for joy and dumb lips to speak His praise; who gave strength to the paralytic, and raised the dead by His word—does He not now by the same power, but with transfigured meaning, and moving upon a higher spiritual plane, perform yet greater offices for such as come to Him in confession of their need? Indeed He does. Dead souls are raised in the power of an endless life: the blind are gifted with new spiritual vision; and the deaf thrill to the sound of Wisdom's pleasant voice. Dumb, brooding hearts become vocal with the praises of God; and weary, halting ones, finding a plain path through this thorny wilderness, learn how to walk with God.

One sometimes hears it said that "we must strive to be a Christ"; but the phrase expresses a serious misconception. No man can be a Christ. The best of us but follows afar off. They that speak thus do not consider sufficiently His greatness; or else their estimate of man is preposterously high. Poor human pride, centred and circumscribed by self, is too ready to make philanthropy the highest praise of Christ, and to measure those deeds of mercy performed during His earthly ministry by its own small vessel of service. We need a larger outlook, brethren. The Gospel of Jesus Christ does not leave us on the earth, engaged with loaves and fishes. Even His acts of mercy to men's bodies entered less into His glorious mission than the **words** of mercy, of which indeed they were the fruit rather than the source. He spake with authority, not as the scribes; and people wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. They were words out of heaven—life-giving words; the words of One who ever dwelt (on earth no less than in heaven) in the bosom of the Father; words that made known the throbbings of that bosom—all its depths! Words that were winged with hope for a despairing world, offering rest to the weary and comfort to the comfortless. Philanthropy? Perish the thought! The mission of the Crucified was not to bring material good to the world by humanitarianism, or any similar methods, whatever modern teachers may suppose. Christianity came in, not to teach humanitarianism, but to make an end of the First Man altogether—his works and his notions—his goodness as well as his badness—and to bring in the Second Man, the Lord from Heaven.

We need, I repeat, to consider the greatness of Christ—who He is, and what He has done. Man, whom rationalists exalt, tarnished the bright glory of God by the Fall. Christ restored it. Man was sunk in the lethargy of spiritual death, so that the world was like a vast sepulchre; Christ came with His Evangel out of heaven, and Life and Incorruptibility were brought to light, yea, left

in dower, if the term may be permitted, for all who seek His aid, He being that Life. Man's vaunted search for Truth—what is it? They that have come to Christ, accepting Him by faith, have the Truth—Truth personate. Wisdom is theirs also, for Christ is the Wisdom of God, the living Fount of knowledge, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Prov. viii.; Col. ii. 9). "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus," wrote the apostle to the Corinthian saints, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. i. 30, 31).

Man dreams of a world improving, in which philosophy and science are to play a prominent and beneficent part; but the Word of God, as I have sought to show, tells no such flattering tale. St. Paul, like St. John, predicts a "falling away" (apostasia—2 Thess. ii. 3)—a giving up of the Truth on an unprecedented scale, and the Lord Himself has left this challenge for His people, a challenge full of solemn suggestiveness: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). Clearly the Age of Faith is not returning; and with faith's decline is emphasised the menace of that sterner evil, the apostasy of which I have spoken. That that unparalleled consummation is close upon us, I do not doubt: in a sense, indeed, the falling away has already begun; a fact of which many thoughtful Christians are fully persuaded. On every hand is found not merely the reluctance to believe the Gospel, but resolute abandonment of God. A peeping, prying spirit is abroad, in the presence of which nothing is sacred—unless, indeed, man, whose "essential dignity," to use an expression of the Comtist, Frederic Harrison, is to be asserted. . . . Matter, and Man, the crown of matter, are coming to their own again; this is the popular conception. Even the very words of love are parodied to signalise the change. "Glory to man in the highest," blasphemously

sings a modern poet\*, for this is the Age of progress and achievement, and "man is the master of things." God is not wanted in His own world. "The kingdom of man is at hand," wrote the late Leslie Stephen; and Professor Clifford spoke of "the shame and suffering of a Christian heaven and hell" as "unspeakable profanities," from which he hoped "the memories of great and worthy men may be finally relieved." The Press of this country, both by magazine and news-sheet, has sedulously and widely disseminated these utterances—and wilder utterances than these—so that the spirit of revolt from God has spread with alarming rapidity, like the fire which Samson's foxes lit.

All the foundations of the earth seem out of course (Psa. lxxxii. 5) and the heart of the afflicted saint may be disposed to cry with one of old, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psa. xi. 3). The sublime and reassuring answer is, "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men" (x. 4). "For ever, O Lord," says the same sweet singer, "thy word is settled in heaven" (cxix. 89); and though the kings of the earth and men in high places "take counsel together against Jehovah and against His anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us" (Psa. ii. 2, 3), the immutable decrees of heaven concerning Him shall yet be brought to pass. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (ii. 4). How important then for all men is the submonition, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the Way, when His wrath is kindled but a little!" How stimulating for faith the added word, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psa. ii. 12).

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\*Swinburne.



## THE ETHICS OF MAKE-BELIEVE.

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### THOUGHTS ON SOME LATTER-DAY EXPERIMENTS IN BIBLE-PRUNING.

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Ignorance. Why, to be short, I think I must believe in Christ for justification.

Christian. How think thou must believe in Christ when thou seest not thy need of Him? Thou neither seest thy original nor actual infirmities; but hast such an opinion of thyself, and of what thou dost, as plainly renders thee to be one that did never see a necessity of Christ . . . to justify thee before God. How then, dost thou say, I believe in Christ?

Ignorance. I believe well enough for all that.

Christian. How dost thou believe?

JOHN BUNYAN.

WE are all out for happiness. A very large part of the world's wealth—to say nothing of its learning and ingenuity—is expended in pursuit of it; but how few of us attain the thing sought for! How few men and women are really happy! Between cheerfulness and the will to be cheerful how great may be the gulf! It is the difference between the substance and the shadow, between the bone in the fable (Æsop's fable of the Dog and his Shadow) and the reflection of the bone. For cheerfulness is based on reality; on the substance which lies at the root of all true happiness; whereas the will to be cheerful is too often based upon some false estimate of life or **un**reality; some phantom of the brain that seems an Allah's garden of all things beautiful, but is only a mirage.

In divine philosophy the happy man is the forgiven man. Joy is the first experience of forgiveness. "O the blessedness of him who is forgiven! O the blessedness of the man unto whom Jehovah will not impute iniquity!" (Psa. xxxii. 1, 2)—so exults the Psalmist. The secret of perpetuating this happiness is fellowship with God; a fellowship of love; and as we know this fellowship, life functions, sin ceases to have dominion, and heaven's bells are set ringing in the soul (1 John i. 3, 4, ii. 1). The youngest believer knows this, and knows it experimentally. Modernist misbelievers will tell us that this sort of thing is emotionalism. What then? Emotionalism is quite all right provided there is a sufficient buttress of truth to keep it steady. The man who has inherited a substantial legacy is clearly entitled to his feast of thrills. Don't let us make a bugbear of emotionalism, or be bluffed into glumness because the Dean of St. Paul's tells us that long faces suit best a decadent and democratic age. David danced before the ark. "Glad tidings of great joy" furnish a reasonable warrant for emotional heat-waves; and those whose "names are written in heaven" have good cause to "make merry." The cheap sneer about emotionalism should be reserved for such as turn from the blessings of the Gospel to disport themselves in a fools-paradise of Make-believe.

For emotionalism of the right sort is among "the things of the Spirit," and these are the things which really are; and let us not forget that they are only spiritually discerned (1 Cor. ii. 14). What can the natural man know of such things? Whether the normal habit of his mind incline to philosophy or pleasure, he can have neither aptitude nor inclination for "the wisdom that is from above," the hidden wisdom which has links with God (Jas. iii. 17). There is no room in his system of things for holiness, and he does not want to be reminded of **sin**. The very thought of **sin** is excluded from his philosophy, and he would gladly erase the word from his memory if he could. The prejudice is remarkable, and assumes in

certain cases a very determined form. Some indeed would persuade themselves that sin is not an offence that "smells to heaven"; an infraction of divine law for which man is accountable to the God that made him. They fondly imagine, and would like to convince others, that it is an affair of therapeutics; a physiological something to be treated by a doctor. Persons of this way of thinking will affirm oracularly that crime—even crime of the vilest sort—is only a form of insanity; showing physical incompetence, no doubt, but nothing of graver consequence. Logically, therefore (and the folly is openly avowed) the greatest criminals should be confined to hospitals for the insane, not hanged or sent to prison. They recognise only two classes in the world, the useful and the useless. The useful (admirable Tartuffes!) are those who only occasionally "make mistakes" and profit by their mistakes; the useless, those who never learn, but do the same wrong things over and over again. "Only the strong man is honest; only the healthy tell the truth; a lie is a disease of the will; hypocrisy is a symptom"; such are some of their poisonous maxims, so soothing to the ear, so congenial to the natural heart. "Nature, in her wise provision," says another of these soul-doctors, "has desired that all punishment shall be automatic." "Has desired" is good; though if Nature herself is only the blind evolution-driven impersonal force which these gentlemen postulate, one is tempted to enquire how she can desire anything. If, on the other hand, there is a discriminating power in or behind Nature, a power endowed with feeling and desires, that power is Omniscient Mind, and Omniscient Mind spells **God**.

But God is another inconvenient grouping of letters in the terminology of these solemn triflers. It speaks of **law**, law both in nature and human affairs—a third triad, shall we say?—and law in human affairs supposes responsibility Godward, as well as possibilities of defection, with eventualities that may be tragic. This brings us to a pause; "an issue that asks questions," as good old Bishop

Latimer would say; though it must be confessed that our new teachers are not seriously perturbed thereby. Whatever conception of retributive justice they may choose to recognise is confined to the old Greek notion of Nemesis; or rather, to a Modernist perversion of that ancient myth; and so they seek to soothe the conscience and allay the guilty fears of the human heart by the comfortable doctrine that "we are punished **by** our sins, not **for** them." In other words, the stern, unequivocal, authoritative announcement, "after death the judgment," is coolly brushed aside; the Gospel of pardoning love, which lifts the soul right out of the judgment zone, is declared to be a "gospel of the shambles," and the blood of the everlasting covenant poured out in expiation for sins, is accounted an unholy thing.

Such infidel theorizing on the solemn facts of revelation (proudly broad-casted to-day as the last word in cultured thought and philosophy) carries the soul by easy stages as far as the borders of the Great Beyond; but unfortunately—a rather serious curtailment—leaves it there. "A clean white bed to die in; a simple linen pall; a grass-green grave to lie in; and—that is all!" this is the screed in lyrical setting; or, if the grey bird essays a somewhat wider flight, the teaching offers the neologian's highly nebulous alternative of living on as a sort of fragrant memory—dead, indeed, beyond resuscitation, yet—immortal by virtue of great deeds done, which leave indelible footprints on Time's recording sands. George Eliot's pathetic threnody: "O may I join the choir invisible for those immortal dead who live again in minds made better by their presence!" gives the thought, and a mournful thought it is.

Here then is the falsity we were speaking of; the **will** to be cheerful—or rather, a pretence of cheerfulness—mistaken for the thing itself; an assumption of contentment whose foundation is the merest moon-shine of theory; a sentimental fancy, without substance or reality,

tricked out in tinsel of brave words. Philosophers of that ilk are like consumptive people, who carry all their colour in their cheeks; or like the poet, who, in lines that certainly do not lack energy, rompingly advises us that he **hopes** he is gay!

“When buds are budding,  
And clouds are scudding,  
(And picks are thudding  
Down London way)  
I take my lute, and  
I seize my flute, and  
I twang and toot, and  
**I hope I'm gay!”**

Closely allied with this weird conception of life's purpose and destiny, though served up to us with a garnishing rather more Christian, are the latitudinarian speculations of the newest New Theology, expounded by Doctors Glover, Fosdick, and others connected with the **Christian Student Movement**; as well as by Modernists of tougher grain like Dean Inge, Bishops Barnes and Hensley Henson, and that vigorous castigator of public men and morals, the “Gentleman with a Duster.” Each of the persons specified has his own peculiar method of propaganda, and on many points they are by no means in agreement; each, also, has his prescribed range of influence: but all are agreed that the Christianity of Divine revelation is an effete tradition, and that the world's salvation lies in setting up a Christ of our own; a sort of fin de siècle Ideal Man, compounded of Plotinus, Bergsen, a Unitarian pseudo-Christ and—Mr. Coué! In fact, an entirely paganized Christianity, though with a terminology borrowed largely from orthodox theology, is taking the place of the pure Christianity of the Bible; and, as a direct consequence, the life of the nation which in other days “laid the foundations both of English character and English greatness” is fast losing all its moral earnestness, and passing over into inconceivable lightness and folly. If

we are minded to look farther afield, we find that the noble work of Christian Missions, which has proved so regenerating a force in heathen countries in the past, is being undermined and discredited by these Modernist interlopers, to the scornful wonderment of intelligent pagans and the dismay of hapless converts in the infected regions. Brotherly concord in those parts has given way to strife, and a religion of the flesh to the gracious teaching and operations of the Spirit.

Do we wonder at the change? Can less than this be expected when the veriest hotch-potch of Socinianism, auto-suggestion and philosophy is smugly offered as a substitute for the grace and greatness of a Christ who saves, and a Gospel which converts and elevates whoever receives it? Moral apothegms and metaphysical subtleties, based upon Neoplatonism and a Bible which is four-fifths apocryphal, are dry husks to the really hungry; and if these are all the Church has to offer, people may indeed listen curiously for a brief season, but they will soon weary of the meagre fare, and in process of time will go back to their old lusts—alas, with appetites made keener by deprivation. The philosophy of Plotinus may amuse for a longer time an intellectual egoist like the Dean of St. Paul's, but it remains just Greek to the unlettered man of the street, whose deep and pressing need is not the word-mazes of metaphysical abstractions which leave him in the clouds, but the Bread of God which gives life unto the world (John vi. 50, 51).

In a book by Dr. Glover called "The Jesus of History" we meet with the new teaching in its most insidious form. It is a very plausibly written book, through which the unsuspecting reader might plod for many pages without receiving conscious harm; and there is a glowing Introduction to the book by the Archbishop of Canterbury, which is almost as valuable for circulation purposes as a letter from the Pope. The author professes to deal with the Lord's childhood, youth and ministry on earth; His rela-

tions with man, His teaching upon sin, and His choice of the Cross; but, strange to say, though the book runs to nearly 250 crown octavo pages, the name "Lord" is only once applied to Him, and then with the express purpose of withdrawing it (vide p. 43). Why is this? St. Paul tells us that "no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). Perhaps the answer lies there. In any case, by thus tacitly ignoring the Lordship of Christ, Dr. Glover has followed faithfully the unwritten traditions of Unitarianism.

In the same way, I find that pronouns which refer to Christ—He, Him, His, Whom, etc.—are always printed without capitals in Dr. Glover's book—another Unitarian practice. On reading the book one is hardly surprised, therefore, to find that the Jesus of the writer's conception is not the Jesus of the Gospel, Immanuel, God with us, the Eternal Word, the Creator and Sustainer of all things; but a man of distinguished goodness and attainments—a Superman, if you will, for he tells us that "Jesus, Buddha and Mohammed stand on a very different footing from Krishna and Athena"—but ever and always just a man. Nowhere do we meet with the glad confession of His Lordship; nowhere is there any recognition of His Oneness with the Father (John x. 30): the ground, I repeat, is the ground that any Unitarian might consistently adopt. The miracles are deliberately passed over—they have no connection with the Jesus of Dr. Glover's prejudiced reading—and outstanding events like the Virgin birth, the angelic appearance to the Shepherds, the testimony of heaven at the Lord's baptism, the glory-scene on the holy mount, and the rending of the temple vail at the Crucifixion, are equally ignored. The Resurrection is mentioned, indeed; but at once a doubt is thrust in: "the Resurrection is, to a historian, not very clear in its details" (p. 188): though in some after-words Dr. Glover admits that something of a revolutionary character must have happened.

His references to the childhood of our Lord have nothing of the unction which one looks for in a man who has pondered eternal verities with a spiritual mind. He pictures the Lord playing with His school-fellows, some of whom are sulky and won't join in the games (p. 36); and finds in Luke iv. 22, where witness is borne to "the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth," that the words of grace ("charitas") evidenced the gaiety and playfulness that lighted up His lessons!" Gaiety and playfulness! Is this the character of teaching which goes on under the ægis of "The Student Christian Movement?" Is this the conception of the Man of Sorrows, the Incarnate Son of God, which Modernist doctors are seeking to implant in young minds? Need we wonder that a female disciple of the same school, in a book which emanates from the S.C.M. press, goes a step farther, and assures her readers that some of us would learn a better style of jokes if we always shared them with God. Besides," I am still quoting—"He is such a wonderful Comrade to tell them to. I don't believe anyone sees the funny side of things as He does! Try Him and see" ("The Path of Discipleship," p. 38). To such depths of degradation would these League-lights drag us.

Dr. Glover may not offend in quite the same blatant fashion, nor does he go to the extreme lengths of ultra-Modernism in his published utterances. Learning, and perhaps his official position as President of the Baptist Union, would suggest a certain caution; and one notices throughout his book an evident desire not to offend; an anxiety to speak wherever possible in terms of implied orthodoxy: but underlying all is the soul-withering teaching which neutralizes "the truth as it is in Jesus," the cloying sentiment which obscures issues that are vital, the heresy that subverts and destroys.

Take for illustration his very guarded allusions to the doctrine of Atonement. Dr. Glover does not tell us in plain language that we are deceiving ourselves when



we believe that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22); or that God has lied when He says, "It is the blood which maketh an atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11): but he does talk with studied obscurity about "the great **theories** of Redemption," of "the **theory** of Sacrifice," and of "the god that was **supposed** to be alienated" by man's sin; thus sowing by innuendo the seeds of doubt in unestablished souls on foundation truths of momentous importance. He does not deny in explicit terms that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7); that believers "have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. i. 7); but he does say that "our current explanations of the work of Christ in Redemption have in them too large an element of metaphor and simile"; that "Christian people are reluctant to discard any of them," being "intimidated by the terminology" (p. 233, 234); and he evidently looks forward to the time when the "tribal" idea of sacrifice shall be quite abandoned, and a man "with a heart such as the human heart is" shall yet come to God "in Jesus, because of Jesus, through Jesus," though evidently on other grounds than the shed blood. "When," says Dr. Glover, "we come upon such descriptions of Jesus as 'Christ our Passover,' we must not let our own preconceptions as to the value of the theories implied by the use of such language, nor again our existing views of what is orthodox, determine our conclusions, but—" In fact, those "theories" and "descriptions" are very probably all wrong in Dr. Glover's opinion; just the sort of blunders which a child of two or three makes when he sees the flying snowflakes and calls them "little birds." (pp. 228, 229).

The expression "Logos," as applied to the Lord, is one of these assumed blunders; or, at most, is "an antiquated conception," quite unintelligible to us to-day without a commentary (pp. 229, 230). "No one can sing"—he is quoting with approval another of our super-wise doctors—"How sweet the name of Logos sounds"

. . . most human beings prefer, etc.” The humour is doubtless as subtle as the argument; but frankly it leaves us unimpressed. And what of the argument? The suggested substitution of “Logos” for “Jesus” in the familiar line is just nonsense—a flippant violation of poetic propriety which would have been equally foolish in its author’s day as now. But the doctrine is absolutely unimpaired by such a change. Of course, Dr. Glover knows this very well, but he wants to discredit a vital truth which pulverizes his Unitarian notions, and so he resorts to this paltry forensic trick. Moreover—a matter of real importance—Christians do still sing:

“Thou art the Everlasting **Word\***  
 The Father’s only Son;  
 God manifest, God seen and heard,  
 The heaven’s beloved One.”

And I would like to ask Dr. Glover, quietly, but with all the earnestness in my power, whether he could repeat those lines with a glad and grateful heart? or whether he regards them as “Christological theories” merely, useful in the twilight of past ages for throwing dust in people’s eyes, but with which the Student Christian Movement of to-day is quite too wise to be identified? Eternal issues for Dr. Glover, as for all the young people he is deceiving to their ruin, rest upon the answer.

But enough of Dr. Glover. A far more gifted trifler than he in this devil’s game of Make-belief is Dr. Inge, the iconoclast Dean of St. Paul’s. Dr. Inge (the name rhymes with “sting” not “hinge”) is a close observer of present-day social and political life, and no man is better qualified than he to uncover its sores, expose its hypocrisies, and pour lightning scorn upon its fetishes and traditions. On the other hand, none is less able to propose a remedy for the evils, or to point the way to something higher. If he has found the world to be dust and

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\*Logos is Greek for “Word.”

ashes—and his writings have earned for him the sobriquet of “dismal Dean,”—no wider horizon has as yet opened to his gloomy vision, and he still sits among the ashes, a rather pathetic figure—not exactly scraping himself with potsherds like ancient Job, but—hurling sherds at other people with uncommon vigour. He is the Jeremiah of Modernism, yet a Jeremiah with no message to relieve the gloom, with no “Branch of Righteousness” (unless himself) to which to rally a distracted nation (Jer. xxxiii.).

Dr. Inge is genealogically of the line of Bishop Colenso and the authors of the “Essays and Reviews”; the men who violated their consecration vows by teaching infidelity in the last century, and who wrought such mischief by unsettling the gracious work of their predecessors and contemporaries; and he characterizes as “fools, liars and bigots” those who still have the courage to stand by the faith of their fathers, the spiritual descendants of the men who sought to deal with the evil at its fount (“Outspoken Essays,” p. 121). We have grown more lenient since then, and the Dean of St. Paul’s, as everybody knows, is a highly popular figure in public life, a Society show-lion who gets invitations to lecture in America, who writes for “The Morning Post,” and defies the Bishop of London from his comfortable seclusion in Dean’s Court. Doleing out his diatribes in weekly or bi-weekly instalments in the daily press, he stands before us in a strangely pallid light; a prophet of gloom; a pathetic finger-post pointing the way to Ruin, but with no power to arrest the shepherdless crowd of onrushers, and with no spiritual message of faith and hope for such as realize the danger and desire to avoid it.

The stimulating hope of the Lord’s Return, and the fact that a day of retribution has been fixed in the decrees of Heaven (Acts iii. 21) have no place in Dr. Inge’s philosophy: doubtless the reason for his helplessness may be sought here. These things are as so much superstition

to him; the kind of stuff that amuses nursemaids and children. In the Thessalonian Epistles, he tells us with a sneer, "we have the naive picture of Messiah coming on the clouds" (p. 224); perhaps forgetting the solemn warning to scoffers who should come "in the last days . . . saying 'Where is the promise of His coming?'" (2 Pet. iii. 3). The study of Plotinus and the Neo-platonists has emancipated Dr. Inge from fancies like these—"apocalyptic dreams of the future," as he calls them—and "the 'Parousia' is now only the end of the existing world-order (p. 225). All his reasoning on this subject is gloomiest rationalism, unrelieved by any gleam of spiritual light. The human intellect—Dr. Inge's intellect—is to measure all and to decide all. Any teaching from without, that is, from God, is not to be thought of. Indeed, his attitude towards Scripture generally is that of a literary philosopher, with a disposition to patronize St. Paul, to lower Christianity to the level of the Platonic Dialectics, and to make the pantheistic mysticism of the Alexandrian School a substitute for the Johannine Gospel and Epistles.

His obsession on this subject has even betrayed him into the madcap fancy that St. Paul "was willing to take the first step, and a long one, towards the Paganizing of Christianity!" (p. 228). "The apostle does not seem to have seen," says Dr. Inge, "any danger in allowing his Hellenistic churches to assimilate the worship of Christ to the honours paid to the gods of the mysteries, and to set their whole religion in this framework!" (ibid). This from the Dean of the chief Cathedral Church of England seems rather "loud thinking." Such a pronouncement prepares us, however, for the further statement that St. Paul, though a gifted missionary, was also something of a dreamer—subject perhaps to epileptic seizures—and that "there is no evidence that he ever thought of adding to the Canon of Scripture by his correspondence" (p. 207). Furthermore, "the Pastoral Epistles are probably not genuine" (ibid) and the Dean discusses the rejection of

this and that epistle as though he were sorting maggot-ridden apples from a market-basket. St. Paul's conversion was a rather doubtful incident, too—a vision which came to him in the desert, "where men see visions and hear voices to this day. They were very common in the desert of Gobi when Marco Polo traversed it" (p. 218).

So one might go on, but probably the reader is as wearied with these offensive puerilities as we are. Truth to tell—and great plainness of speech becomes us where the souls of men are in question—there is no evidence in Dr. Inge's writings of a mind seriously affected by the Truth—I mean the Truth as a revelation from God and commanding the conscience. One is even warranted in asking: What of the Dean's own status in regard to eternal issues? He is Dean of St. Paul's and a gifted litterateur, but is he a converted man? Would we could think it! Probably he would regard the question as an impertinence. He talks of "the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome and **the squalid slatterny of fanatic conventicles;**" and the second phrase betrays an attitude of mind which explains much ("Painted Windows," p. 45). One has heard of the noble lady who, in the pride of her heart, objected to be saved in the same way as her footman; and Dean Inge, who belongs unmistakably to the aristocracy of intellect, seems to have shut himself off in proud aloofness from the poor in spirit, for whom the Kingdom is reserved (Matt. v. 3), and, trusting to his own understanding, has in effect renounced his birth-right. Like the elder brother in the parable, he **will not come in.** He loiters moodily in the Court of the Gentiles, a critical onlooker, undecided between Plotinus and Christ,\* while the Sanctuary where the Shekinah dwells, whose approach is "by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. x. 19), remains closed and sealed to him.

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\*"A friend of mine once asked him, 'Are you a Christian or a Neoplatonist?' He smiled; 'It would be difficult to say,' he replied." ("Painted Windows." p. 40.)

Perhaps enough has now been said to put the Christian reader on his guard. If here and there too personal a note has been struck, I would urge that the cause of truth requires it. The faith once delivered to the saints (most precious deposit ever committed to the sons of men) is being assailed on all hands; and there are signs of a great marshaling of the foe in unexpected quarters. In a sense, the outer trenches have been already carried, and it is not too much to say that treachery within the camp is largely responsible for these conditions. The conflict today is, for the most part, with men who call themselves Christians and who utter glibly the shibboleths of the faith, while with great subtlety and assurance they carry on their deadly propaganda under shelter of the Name they besmirch. That they are making eager bids for the young through the "Student Christian Movement" no one who has examined the literature of the movement can deny. It is the most sinister feature in the whole sad business. Their aim is to discredit the Gospel, and to substitute for it the pernicious Make-believes which I have sought to expose. Professing to own and honour Christ as a Teacher, they refuse to recognise Him as a Saviour. Exalting the natural goodness of man, they ignore the necessity of atonement and trample under foot the Son of God Who died to effect it (Heb. x. 29). Their teaching is radically anti-Christian. It is paganism grimacing behind a mask of Christianity—the very condition of things which, as the apostle warns us, will prepare the way for Antichrist. When the Bread of Life is thus snatched from the hands of the perishing, and souls are being cheated with the chalk and alum and siccant chaff of 3rd century heretical speculations, reinforced by the ephemeral follies of modern infidelity, it is time to speak out.

Faced by so grave a menace, a little enquiry into the credentials of those who thrive upon these highbrow macaronics is not altogether out of place. The moral standards of many of them cannot be very high, and this

fact should be carefully noted. Fulsome adulations of one another in books and newspapers, or from Christian pulpits, where their voices have a fraudulent ring, are familiar enough; but no praises of confederates, however eloquent, can extenuate acts of faithlessness and usurpation. Many of these Modernist professors are in holy orders. Their position as priests of the Anglican communion is simply an affront to Christianity; a shameless hypocrisy which cries loudly to heaven. Think of drawing inspiration or comfort from such tainted sources! I know what I am saying, and neither Dr. Inge, nor Bishops Barnes and Henson, nor all the Philistine champions of clerical free-thought, can remove the stigma or the shame. No cleverness of crooked argument will ever convince an honest man that persons who take solemn oaths before God at ordination, and deliberately break faith directly the emoluments of their office are assured to them, are fit to minister in holy things, or to lead others in times of moral and religious upheaval. A gentleman with a duster may seek to rub the soil off such betrayers and betrayals, and doubtless will approve himself a very able lustrator, but!—Well, there is something graver to be reckoned with when we come to take the longer view. By which I mean that issues of a more intimate sort begin to count when we weigh the tainted mass of modern destructive criticism in the balance of the Sanctuary, and consider its authors and abettors in the light of Christ's own words, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6). Solemn is the warning to those who, after "having tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come," thus fall away from light and truth. The apostle tells us that "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame" (Heb. vi. 5, 6). **Crucify to themselves afresh.** Let us place those words beside the message of another apostle, the venerable Seer of

Patmos, Rev. i. 7: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, **and they also which pierced Him**; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen." The **piercing** may be the literal crucifixion of the 1st Century, or it may be a **crucifying afresh** by the Modernist apostles of Make-believe: it will be all one as to result by-and-by: for **all** shall see Him, and it is as Sovereign Judge He will be seen.

Is this pessimism? The charge is easily made, and it is a favourite one with Modernists. That Christians are pessimists as regards many of the forces which are at work to-day,—the religious, social and political forces which control the present world-system—we frankly admit. Our warrant for such an attitude is the Word of God and, incidentally, the dark array of facts which confronts us. As we look wistfully abroad, what do we find? Do we find an improving world? Increasing reverence for the Name of God? Increasing subjection to the Word of God? Growing spirituality in the churches? Would that we could think it! Humbling as the admission must be, we seek in vain for such evidences. Our pulpits (Shame on the idol-shepherds who are betraying us!) teem with infidelity. Current theology is steeped in it. Even among many from whom better things might be expected, a vague uneasy feeling seems to lurk, a feeling that somewhere in Christianity exists a sort of Bluebeard's chamber, locked and grim, in which to pry too closely were death—the very syncope of faith. Unrest prevails. Men's hearts are failing them, as with the sense of some grave crisis impending; and all the while the voice of Rationalism in the churches waxes louder and louder. Yet these infidel professors of the faith, who use the name of God to cast off God, seem to forget that simple minds, the toilers and the poor, live for realities, and that they know (the rough faculty of common sense informing them, no doubt) how to choose between abstractions which lead them nowhere, and the living Truth. "A stream of tendencies which makes for good"



means nothing to them; cannot supply the place of a concrete goodness wrought by Divine power, the power of a personal God who may be known and loved. Rob them of that and you have taken their all. These false teachers would do well to ponder such a fact; for—a very solemn thought—when the masses fail of God, the State, that is Society, must be involved also, and Anarchy will be knocking at her doors.

Is there nothing, then, that is sure?—nothing stable? Yes; one thing. In spite of all, **the work that is of God goes forward.** What He builds is never overthrown; sustains no hurt. “There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand” (Prov. xix. 21). Traditions, superstitions, systems of philosophy, new theologies,—whatever has been brought in through fear, or pride, or earthly-mindedness,—these must fall; in many cases are tottering even now: but God’s work abides, and shall abide. The Age of Faith may have passed, but Faith remains. What **characterizes** the close of the Christian Age, this present moment of crisis and upheaval, is unbelief: yet God has not left Himself without a witness, and, as is clear from Scripture, never will. Even in Israel’s darkest days there was a little remnant “that feared Jehovah . . . and that thought upon His Name” (Mal. iii. 16). And when the Lord comes from heaven, be sure He will find amid the great mass of profession—thanks to His sheltering grace—many who, albeit with “little strength” to their account, have kept His Word and have not denied His Name (Rev. iii. 8). May the writer of these lines and every reader of them be of that number!

Yes; the Church remains—**His** Church—the faithful in every land who have believed the Gospel, and in that way have set to their seal that God is true. These are the living stones which Christ is building up into a spiritual house—the only structure that shall outlast the wreck of Time (1 Pet. ii. 5). Rough-hewn from Nature’s

quarry, and scattered at the present moment among men's little systems, they shall yet be brought together in unity and love; and displayed before the universe a glorious Church, complete, unblamable, admired by all, andauteous in the beauty of her Lord (Eph. v. 27; 1 John iii. 2).

The Church's path is upward, and the day that marks the consummation of her hopes has yet to dawn; **but it is coming:** and along that path she moves adoring, her pilgrim staff in hand, the eyes of her soul upon the heavenly Bridegroom and in her heart the treasure of His love. Her time of witnessing and work is now: the rest-time is before her: "There remaineth a sabbatism to the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9). Be it ours, in the little while that remains, to Watch, to Work, to Wait. "The end of all things is at hand," says the apostle, "be ye therefore sober and **watch** unto prayer" (1 Pet. iv. 7). "**Work,**" says the perfect Master, "while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John ix. 4). **Wait!** is the message of the Spirit by the apostle James. "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman **waiteth** for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (Jas. v. 7, 8).

"Christ is coming! We are waiting  
 'Mid the shadows dim:  
 Longing till the night's dark pinions  
 Fold their plumes to Him.  
 Waiting by each gate of sorrow,  
 Thinking of the glad to-morrow;  
 Standing 'neath His banner, keeping  
 Watch; while all the world is sleeping.  
 Christ is coming!—Come, Lord, come!"

## SAFE HARBOUR FOR DERELICTS—

### A FRIENDLY TALK WITH DRIFTERS.

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**I**N the eager quest for happiness how many have missed the mark! Material joy has been the object, a visible and tangible something to be held and possessed, and therein has lain failure and disenchantment. For true happiness consists not in what we **have**, but in what we **are**. Wealth cannot buy it; power cannot command it; the efforts of the brightest intellects cannot compass it. The richest men are often notoriously the most wretched; and, on the other hand, some of the happiest people are very poor. The one class may be miserable in spite of their wealth; the other class, happy in spite of their poverty. Yet riches are not necessarily an evil, nor is poverty necessarily a good. True happiness is dependent upon neither.

One of the most enlightened and self-denying missionary workers of modern times, a man who literally surrendered all—wealth, comforts, brilliant prospects, cherished companions, intellectual refinements, everything which ministers to the pride and complacency of the natural heart—that he might live a life of self-effacing service for others, this devoted servant of Christ once remarked to a friend: “With the grace of God in my heart I could be happy with a broom and a crossing.”

Now under the present World-system, with its glaring social inequalities, its blighted hopes, its broken fortunes, its appalling miseries, and, on the other side, its phenomenal progress, prosperity, material efficiency and

the countless other fruits of our much-vaunted civilisation, there is something peculiarly arresting in these words; particularly for such as find themselves the **victims** of this great system. A whisper of hope is in the words—the hope of retrieval; of happier adjustments, *somewhen, somewhere*. **God is behind the hope.** “The grace of God” was the compensation our missionary friend hinted of, and whatever comes from God must be like Himself, partaking of His mightiness and love. A child can understand that. So this grace is something to be reckoned with—to be taken seriously; something let us even affirm, to be greatly coveted and prayed for.

A facile phrase-maker of the world is responsible for the cynicism: “God is an invention to save us from despair.” The admission is pitiable enough; a pessimist’s confession; it is also a grave misreading of the ways of God to men. Nevertheless, if we substitute the word “reality” for “invention” we are at once on firm ground. The saying becomes a truism, a declaration of profound moment, as suggesting the possibility of help from without—seasonable, serviceable, present help, with who knows what possibilities of blessing beyond? God is a **Reality** to save us from despair.

Can we prove this? Can we show from infallible records that the attitude of God towards mankind, and especially towards those the world takes least account of—the stranded ones, the outcasts and unfortunates, the men of stunted lives and embittered sin-stained pasts—can we show that the attitude of God towards such is one of benevolence, of active urgent benevolence. and that the purpose of this benevolence is not merely to rescue from despair, but to bring the soul, **and to bring it now**, into circumstances of pure, well-defined, unmitigated joy?

**Now.** The world’s cry in respect of its many nostrums and panaceas is—to-morrow. “Wait and see,” that slogan of discredited politicians, is also the unwritten

motto of would-be world-reformers in every age. It is quite otherwise when God speaks. The slogan of Heaven is **Now**. There is no need for us to wait when the Creator of worlds is making known the terms of his benevolence to man. The momentous question is not, "How long have I to wait?" but, "Am I ready to listen and profit—**now?**"

On God's side every needed preparation has been made. In the figure of a well-known parable, He has prepared a marriage feast in honour of His Son; His oxen and fatlings have been killed; all things are declared to be ready; and, wonderful to tell, men and women are invited to become guests at the merry-making (Matt. xxii. 2-4). This is just one of those many precious word-pictures of God's delight in Christ and of His sovereign bounty to man, which we find scattered up and down in the Gospels. He has decreed that "all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John v. 23); and this feast has been spread, and the invitation given, that men may carry out the will of God in a way that shall minister joy to their own hearts **and to His**. He would have them to be partakers in **His** joy.

To whom, then, is the call? To all mankind without distinction, and therefore to **you**. If you are one of the world's hopeless ones—a derelict, may I say, drifting without a purpose on life's great ocean—it is **specially to you**.

When the Lord was on earth, the invitation went out specially to His earthly people the Jews, and the call was unheeded. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not" (John i. 11). They consummated the sin of refusing the King's Son by casting out and murdering Him. Thereupon the King was wroth, and destroyed their city, declaring that they were not worthy. Jerusalem was laid in ruins for their deed of treachery and hate.

And then? The priceless favour having been declined, surely the invitation was cancelled! Not so. The festal arrangements were not even suspended. The King's purpose that the wedding should be furnished with guests was not abrogated even for a moment by the insensate folly of the bidden ones. In the moment of refusal He turned to others.

To others. To whom? It might be supposed that His next call would embrace the great ones of the earth—high-placed Gentiles and men of power, intellectual people, monied people, people of refined aesthetic taste and worldly consequence . . . that, indeed, is how man would reckon; but the ways of God are not man's ways, nor are His thoughts man's thoughts.

To whom, then, does He send? "Then saith He to His servants, 'The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. **Go ye therefore into the highways;** and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage' " (Matt. xxii. 8 and 9).

To the highways? Surely the terms of the message have been misconstrued, and there is some mistake! It is in the highways that the destitute and homeless congregate, and the King would hardly send to those. Some mistake?—ah, no! The King knew and knows His mind, and neither formalist nor Pharisee can contravene His purpose. The banquet is the King's, and the right is His to choose the guests.

These then are His Royal choice—the **folk of the highways**. The call is to the homeless ones; the outcasts; the thriftless and needy ones; those who have accepted defeat in life as a kind of irremediable necessity; the failures and ne'er-do-wells, upon whom the world, in its spry, smug manner, looks dourly and askance. "To the poor the gospel is preached" (Luke vii. 22); and the call of the King's servants, which has been ringing up and down the

highways for nearly two thousands years; is the same pregnant, rousing, trumpet call to-day: Come, ye weary and diffident ones—come ye despairers; the call is for you. All things are ready.”

Beloved reader, how do you stand in relation to this call? Possibly you have lost heart, friends, fortune, social status, and you feel broken, utterly hopeless, a sort of derelict on life's highway—one of the devil's castaways, if that could be. Well, there is nothing fatally deterrent in all this. The devil's castaways are good subjects for the grace of God. The features of your case may seem gloomy to the point of tragedy, but they are really favourable features, instinct with heavenly hope. Look up! A servant of the King is seeking you in this printed message. The call is to **you**. Will you heed it? “Come!” says the message. **Will you come?** We say to you on the highest authority, the authority of God Himself—for the words of the invitation are His words—**that you are the special object of this message. You.**

Perhaps you are conscious of immeasurable unworthiness; the nightmare of a wasted life oppresses you, and you say in extreme bitterness of soul: “Such good news cannot be for me. Some who have failed in life have been beaten down by unavoidable misfortune, and I can understand the invitation reaching out to them, but I—Ah! You do not know,—you do not know!”

Beloved friend, if this is the mournful trend of your reflections, the prospect for you is full of cheer. Note how the parable goes on: “So those servants went into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, **both bad and good**, and the wedding was furnished with guests” (v. 10).

“Both bad and good.” The ordinance is God's, not man's. Nor must that precious touch be missed—**the bad are named first**. The King not only wants the bad

ones, but they are placed before the good! Whether any good ones will find a place when the guests sit down with the Bridegroom upon the bright marriage morning, is at least a moot question; but the bad ones will certainly be there. Not in their badness, of course, though that is hardly the question for the moment. The King's Son has Himself said: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke v. 32). The bad take precedence—that is certain. Courage then, faint heart! The "Come" of the guest-seeking King is primarily and pre-eminently for you.

"But," urges some timid soul, "The King is far off, and your wonderful feast seems unreal, chimerical, almost like a banquet-scene in some Eastern fairy tale. It is easy to say, Come; but how am I to come?" That is a reasonable question.

I see indicated in the parable two ways of coming—a right way, and a wrong way. "When the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment." This disqualified him for the feast altogether. He had come in the wrong way, and what made the wrongness was this: **he came without a wedding garment.** Most necessary of all provisions is a wedding garment, a guest-robe suited to the King's presence. All who would avail themselves of the invitation must be suitably clad. In Revelation iii. we read of lifeless professors who, with much pretension to spiritual affluence and completeness, are declared by the great Searcher of hearts to be "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and **naked**" (v. 17). So naked are they that they are counselled to obtain "white raiment" that they "may be clothed" (v. 18):

**Here, then, you have the wedding garment.** Would that we could make the wholesome doctrine of it plain! White raiment symbolizes the righteousness of God; and when the Lord of Glory, the King's Son, suffered at Calvary, the Just for the unjust, He became by that very act



the expression of God's righteousness to man. Follow closely the thought: salvation, and all the joys of salvation rest upon it. Judgment was poured out and exhausted upon the sinless head of the Substitute, and angels and principalities learnt then, perhaps for the first time, how the holy God could freely justify ungodly sinners without compromising in the slightest degree His own righteousness. Christ thus became a covering for the sinner, a cloak of mercy in which the sinner might be effectually sheltered from the wrath of God. **The wedding-garment is Christ Himself.**

Great and gracious news for the "bad" ones, this! Memorable tidings for thee, sad toiler of the highway—as, indeed, for all who feel the burden and the plague of sin. Though the Law cannot help thee, there is One Who can and will. Don't wait to be good! That perfect Law, though thou shouldst honestly try to walk by it as a rule of life, as so many have vainly tried, could only condemn thee. At the first whisper of failure its pitiless voice would be heard: "Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. ii. 10). "By the deeds of the Law can no flesh be justified before God" (Rom. iii. 20)—the One Who alone can justify speaks thus. If, then, our least failures condemn us; if even (for that is also true) our very righteousnesses are as filthy rags in His sight (Isa. lxiv. 6), we must look elsewhere for a wedding garment.

And this brings us back to the thought of God as the Justifier, and to the means whereby a poor, fallible, sinful man can be set up in righteousness before Him. If the Law cannot bring help, Heaven be praised, the God of all grace can! His own living, life-giving Word shall tell us how.

"But now the righteousness of God without the Law is manifested . . . even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all"—the presen-

tation is world-wide—"and upon all them that believe"—the application is selective—"for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 22 and 23). What a covering for man's moral nakedness is this righteousness—the righteousness of God!

And **faith** is the appointed means. Faith in Jesus Christ secures the blessing, marking off the justified person from the unjustified. How beautifully simple it all is! Believe in Him, distracted soul, and righteousness is yours! You are clothed—you yourself—from the very moment faith acts,—fittingly, completely clothed. The vesture is of the King's own providing, a mantle that meets every requirement, suited in all respects to His Royal presence. Such is the wonderful favour of the giving God; such are the effects of His mighty grace; though—let it never be forgotten—the atoning work of Christ is the one and only foundation of the blessing, the immovable rock on which the favour rests. We are "justified freely" by God's grace: but it is through "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). Sovereign grace is the motive; the work of redemption, the means. God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood—Why?—"that He might be just" (just in forgiving the past sins of Old Testament believers) "and the justifier of him who believes in Jesus"—that is, of him whose faith looks back to the expiation made at Calvary (vv. 25, 26). "Therefore," adds the apostle, "we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law" (v. 28). The burdened sinner bows to the testimony of God, and is accounted righteous. Christ has answered to God in the sinner's stead, and God Himself accounts him righteous. "He has made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

Could anything, I ask again, be clearer? Could anything be more establishing to the soul, more rest-bringing

to the conscience? It is as though the blessed God had laboured to make the meaning of the Cross plain to the dullest comprehension. He would have our spiritual understandings grasp the Divine logic of redemption's mighty plan: He would have us musing upon it till the sense of its perfect adaptability to our deepest necessities is burnt into the soul, bowing us in the dust before Him.

**In Christ.** That, and nothing less than that will satisfy the requirements of Divine Love; that, and nothing less than that will meet the sinner's desperate need. Every believer, figuratively speaking, is in Christ—hidden in Him, Who is thus His Righteousness before God. To be "in Christ" is therefore highest blessing. Paul, the sometime legalist and oppressor of God's people, when afterwards renewed in the spirit of his mind, had ardent longings to be "found **in Him**: not having," as he said, "mine own righteousness but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 9); and the prophet Isaiah, in a glorious chapter, redolent of the good things that accompany salvation, expresses the jubilation of his enfranchised heart in words that probe and thrill: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God: for **He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness**" (Isa. lxi. 10).

So we are brought back again to this—that **Christ is Himself the wedding garment**. In another parable the prodigal was clothed by the Father before he was brought into the house of feasting and merriment. The "best robe" was put upon him; and be sure the heavenly Father's **best** can be none other than His blessed Son. "Of Him" says the apostle, writing to believers, "Are ye **in Christ Jesus**" (again this positional security and blessedness) "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30).

Weary one, sick of a world which you have found to be cold, hard, unresponsive, would it not be something—aye, a very great something—to be able to say with assurance that you are **in Christ**? Of all imaginable benefits could any be greater than this, whether as regards the fact itself or the wealth of blessing flowing from the fact? “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. v. 17). Even the grey life of the present assumes a new significance and colour by reason of the brightness that floods the believing soul. The “man in Christ” can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. i. 8); the very joy of the Lord becomes his strength (Neh. viii. 10). By accepting Christ he is constituted a guest at the Marriage Feast, and the wedding garment is his beyond recall. He is “clothed and in his right mind” (Luke viii. 35); and though his circumstances may still be difficult, and the road rough and lonely, he is no longer uncared for in them. In toil, in sorrow, in privations, in distresses, in sickness, he has one to go to Whom he has learnt to trust; One Whose ear is ever open, Whose sympathy is ever fresh, and Whose power is as limitless as His love.

This power, sympathy, companionship, love, are all for him—aye, and for **you** also, troubled reader, if the will to have them be yours; and though to make them yours the Lord of Glory had to surrender all, paying at last the tremendous price of His Own most precious blood, they are to be had by you—**and had now**—without money and without price. The King would bring you into His banqueting house—longs to have you there. The Gospel supper has been spread; a Father’s welcome and the best robe are waiting for you: all things are ready. Christ Himself wants you. “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” is His heart-winning appeal of love (Matt. xi. 28) “Behold

I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me'' (Rev. iii. 20).

Grace after this fashion is imperative: the attitude of the Blessor is urgent; the love is a love which will **not** brook delay. Be persuaded in time. This is an unique invitation; an appeal of love which, if obeyed, will lead infallibly into the secret of true and abiding happiness. The King invites you: His Son stands ready to welcome you: the guest-hall is filling fast: all things are ready—Come!



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