

cannot justly be spoken of as if they were deserters who had lost the knowledge of Christ. The common Christian conception of Christ may have been comparatively imperfect; but it did not consist of erroneous ideas that should be renounced for new views of His character and teaching. With some theologians "coming back to Christ" seems to imply a questioning of the authority and trustworthiness of prophets and apostles, under the pretext of exalting the Master, who said, "He that despiseth you despiseth me."

DISPARAGING AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.

There is probably nothing so characteristic of the theological trend of the times as the rejection of authority in religion, including that of the Holy Scriptures. We do not mean merely the rejection of the inerrancy of Scripture or of any particular theory of inspiration, but the denial of the trustworthiness and authority of the Bible. This drift of current speculative thought towards the rejection of authority as a ground of belief is fruitful in practical results. There is a widespread restiveness under definite statements of doctrine and duty, and a strong desire for greater latitude in the rejection of old beliefs and rules of conduct. There is an undue exaltation of the human element in the Scriptures, and a corresponding ignoring of the divine, till the latter is largely left out of sight. Nay, more, in some cases it has come to this, that prominent teachers within the Christian Churches hold that whether the Scripture records, including what the Gospels tell us about the Lord Jesus Christ, are facts or fictions is a matter of minor importance, that need not affect Christian faith or piety.

This is as much as to say that those who reject the historic Jesus Christ of the Gospels may still claim to be His disciples. The poet Coleridge counted nothing in the Bible inspired, except what "found him." Some modern teachers appear to hold that nothing in the Bible has any authority for them but what they choose to endorse. They regard the Scriptures merely as the thoughts and lessons which good men of former times addressed to the people of their day. Many claim that divine inspiration was not peculiar to the sacred writers; but that it is possessed by all devout Christians, in proportion to their piety. Individual opinions are exalted to the level of the teaching of the prophets and apostles, in a way that would make every Christian an oracle to himself.

But it should not be forgotten that, as Christianity is an historic religion, its foundation facts must be received on the evidence of testimony. The rejection of the testimony by which these truths are attested is perilous to Christian faith. As the mariner who discards chart and compass and guiding stars is sure to be swept by adverse winds and waves out of the true course, so Christian preachers and teachers who disparage the truth and authority of the Bible, and speak not according to the words of "the law and the testimony," are sure to be found "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The theology, whether old or "new," which undermines the authority of the Holy Scriptures, or divests our Lord Jesus Christ of those divine attributes which make Him an all-sufficient Saviour, is misleading and dangerous, no matter what its claims to superior liberality may be.

CRUSADERS.

With leaping steeds and shrilling trumpet-blast,
 Glitter of spears and wind-blown banners blest
 A cloud of dreams of deathless deed and hest
 In domes and deserts where the East was vast,
 Rode the Crusaders. Far they rode and fast
 From heathen hands the Sepulchre to wrest;
 And kingdoms shook before their mighty quest,
 The bounds of empire changed as they swept past.

To-day, where sound of sorrow has enticed,
 Fearless, afoot, through mire of field and fen,
 Armed only with the mail of love unpriced,
 Where hosts flame wide or darkness makes its den,
 The glad knights seek the Sepulchre of Christ
 Within the bodies and the souls of men!

—*The Outlook.*