

EPILOGUE

I.—TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ON the whole, the Lady Ecclesia has, throughout her history, been more evilly entreated in the house of her friends than in that of her enemies ; and in these latter days certain of her most devoted servants have done her the ill-service of enticing her into the sterile by-paths of apocalyptic guesswork. Human nature has in it an incorrigible eschatological strain ; and in times of crisis and momentous happening this bias is apt to run amuck with the whole man. Apocalyptic is nothing other than Micawberism turned tragic ; and it does us the infinite harm of habiting the true God in the unreal vestments of a *deus ex machina*

Let us acknowledge gratefully the elements of good in the apocalyptic temper. Essentially it is the retort of a religious faith to political pessimism ; and it is good that we should be reminded at such a time as this, when the schemes of men have gone so tragically "agley," that the last word is still with God. But the man who supposes that God has violent designs upon the historical order is living in a fool's paradise. It is true that He is not tied down to the slow processes of history ; and by His grace it is on due occasion given to man to hustle history. But the divine order is not appointed to drop ready-made from the clouds.

The essential truth for us in the apocalyptic hope is that the Son of Man is always ready to come into the world with the grace of renewal and uplifting,