

inspiration; also that a large number of men were inspired, men who lived thousands of years ago, and of whose very names, in most instances, we are ignorant; and that certain writings were assuredly the work of those inspired men; we should never reach the stage of believing in Christ. On the other hand, if we believe in the "self-evidencing" Christ, on His own authority, we shall find it easy to believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, without any fine-spun theory, and without any proof but this convincing one; that they are the "Sufficient Witnesses" who have revealed to us the "self-evidencing" Christ. It is faith in Himself as Himself, and that alone, that Christ demands. He constantly says: "Believe in Me." When with Peter we have looked full on the "self-evidencing" Christ, we have no thought of other so-called evidences or certification for Him, but say at once with intensest conviction: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And in this simple direct faith there is unspeakable peace and joy and power.

THE UNVEILING OF CHRIST.

The momentous transition from the Rabbinical view that the Scriptures are a "Verbally inspired Code of Rules" to Christ's view that they are His "Sufficient Witnesses," brings enormous gain to the Christian Faith. One almost regrets the loss of the Verbal Theory. It was *totus, res, atque rotundus*: it was complete, perfect, satisfying—if it only had been true! But it is gone, and its loss is great gain. For it has been the ally, the vantage ground and the trenchant weapon of the infidel. It has banned enquiry, and "loved darkness rather than light." It has narrowed, perverted and bewildered theology. It has cramped the energies of the Church, checked her development and growth, and made the faith of many only a wretched half-faith. It has turned many to indifference or to unbelief, who but for it would have believed and followed Christ. The greatest gain from the disappearance of the "Verbal Code of Rules" Theory is that Christ is thereby restored to His proper place and authority. Strange it is, that Christ has been hidden from men during all the ages, and is hidden still. Among Romanists the Pope has taken His seat of authority, and Christ is only the Bambino. Among Anglicans His authority has been given to the Officers of the Church and to the Fathers. Among Protestants a tradition of the Scribes has robbed Him of His due. It is a marvel to think that Christian men, Fathers and Reformers, orthodox theologians and evangelical Churches, have been, and are, humble followers of the Scribes and Pharisees whom Christ denounced and renounced,—the very Scribes and Pharisees who crucified the Son of God. The 19th century has been fertile in discoveries and inventions, almost miraculous. But its chief discovery, that which will make it an epoch in the world's history, is the discovery of Christ, the real Christ, whom men are beginning to perceive face to face and to know better than ever before, better than He was known in the Council of Nicea, or in the Diet of Augsburg or in the Assembly at Westminster. In the Providence of God the agents in this discovery, which is like a Second Advent of Christ, have been Historical Criticism, which has torn away the veil of Rabbinical tradition that obscured His glorious person, and the Historical Imagination, whose function it is, and will through the ages be, quickened and enlightened by His Holy Spirit, to study with ever clearer and deeper insight His environment, His words, His life and Himself, and to develop into greater sharpness of outline and truth of coloring His great figure before the adoring eyes of mankind. The Verbal Theory not only obscured Christ, but it degraded Him by putting His words on a dead level of authority with the words of men, of even a man who made proverbs, Agur, the Son of Jakoh (Prov. 30). The "Code" notion thrusts Him from His place of authority, and the Book, the sole function of which is to be His "Sufficient Witness," has been made his substitute. To it His very name has been appropriated, for He alone is truly the Word of God (Jo. 1). From Christ to His "Witness" the characteristics which He expressly claims as His own have been transferred. "I am the Truth," "I am the Way," "I am the Life," "I am the Light," are His claims. I and no other! In the consciousness of the "self-evidencing" Christ there is the highest position: *the inspiration, the one inspiration we need and are sure of, and the one that requires no proof.* He said, "I and the Father are one" (Jo. x:30); He it is that makes a Divine revelation to men; "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent Me" (Jo. xiv:24). He Himself in Himself is that Revelation. To know Him is to know God. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (Jo. xiv:9). We take Christ at His own valuation. If He be not inspired of God, there is no inspiration in prophet or apostle. His inspiration guarantees theirs, not theirs His. If He be not a Revelation from God, there is no Revelation. If God has not spoken in Christ, He has not spoken by any man. The Bible is not a written certificate stating with independent authority the facts that Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of men. It is simply His "Sufficient Witness," making the "self-evidencing" Divine Christ known to men. Christ is His own certificate. We believe that He is the Son of God and the Saviour on His own testimony, the highest we can have, and the only testimony we need care about. Whosoever has really perceived Christ can no more help believing in Him than a seeing man can help believing in the sun of a cloudless noon. Christ is therefore the sole authority. He is the one Teacher, the one Lord, and the one Master (Mt. xxii:8-10, and Jo. xiii:13). The Confession of Faith rightly states that the Scriptures are "the rule of faith and life"; and they are so, not because they contain statements of truth and rules of conduct, otherwise undiscoverable by man, but because they contain and reveal to us Christ, who Himself is the sole "rule of faith and life." He is the one "rule of faith," for He alone teaches with authority. "Believe Me!" (Jo. xiv:11) He ever says. And when He tells of

Divine things, He speaks that He knows, and bears witness of that He has seen (Jo. iii:11). Christ is the one "rule of life." "Follow Me!" is His command, and that is enough. They that have Christ for a rule need no other, and by following Him they will fulfil all righteousness.

RESULTS OF SEEING CHRIST.

The restoration of Christ to the place of authority which is rightly and solely His, carries with it vast consequences. A wonderful vision of that which shall be passes rapidly before my mind, and must be as rapidly sketched. Christian scholars will have freedom to seek the truth without fear and without suspicion, for their criticism cannot touch the inherent authority of the "self-evidencing" Christ, and can only result in making surer and clearer the testimony borne to Him by His already "sufficient witnesses." There will come a change in the methods of Missions, and the work will be more rapid and sure. Instead of trying to show the inferiority of Hindu metaphysics to the metaphysics got by Christianity from Greece, instead of trying to indoctrinate savages with the complex and perplexing dogmas of scholastic theology, alike to learned pundit and to untaught savage the Gospel preached will be simply the "holding forth of the Word of Life," the simple presentation of Christ Himself. The heathen world will soon feel the spell of the fascination that is in Him, and will crowd to touch the hem of His garment and be made whole. Already the hoary religions of the East are front to front with Christianity. When once Christianity has learned how to show Christ Himself to the peoples, the victory will be won. When once the sun of Christ's unique personality rises above the horizon of the East, those brilliant stars of the night, the Ancient Sages, Zarathushtra, Gautama, Lao-tze, and K'ung Fu tze, will pale and wane and be lost in His glory. All Churches and religious institutions will be tested by being brought face to face with Christ. Whatever doctrine, ceremony, practice or polity is alien from Him, must go. Walls of separation between the Churches have been by the pride and folly of men built up—of fragments of Judaism and Paganism, such as the sacerdotal superstition,—of traditions and notions of men, such as apostolic succession,—of things made essential about which Christ showed no interest, such as rite and ritual and forms of polity. When once the Church indeed sees Christ and acknowledges His sole authority, these woful divisions will melt away like mists in the sunshine, and Christ's prayer will be fulfilled, "that they may be one" (Jo. xvii:22). To every nation of the world and to every human custom, law and institution, without exception, the question must be put "What think ye of the Christ?" (Mt. xxii:42). The more plainly Christ is shown to the world, the more disposed will the world be to acknowledge Him as the King of men, to seek to know His will in all its affairs, private and public, and to enact His laws as the laws of the State. Already Christ is a moral and political force such as He never has been before, and we can see this hopeful sign of the times: all sorts of men, even those who hate the Church that bears Christ's name, speak with profoundest respect of Him and try to show that He is on their side. When the world really sees Him, its King, He will reign not only in the hearts and lives of individual men, but also in society and in the State. His will be "a dominion such as no Caesar ever exercised, and a throne such as no monarch ever filled." The earth will be full of the glory of Christ, the King of Men.

THE NEW THEOLOGY.

The most immediate consequence of the recognition of Christ's sole authority will be its effect on practical Religion and on Theology. When once a Christian sees in Christ Himself the sole "rule of life," he will no longer limp along laden with innumerable legal fetters, which gall him at every limp. He will be a free man, gladly following Christ. His one aim will be Christlikeness, and growth in Christlikeness will be his spiritual history. And when once Christ is acknowledged as the sole "rule of faith," and His consciousness as the one authoritative source of the knowledge of Divine things, it will be seen that theology must be re-stated, and the Creed of the Church re-written, from this new point of view. That is the work of reconstruction that lies before Christ's Church for many a year to come. The theology of the future will not be systematic and rationalised, as at present. It will be Biblical in a historical setting, and will be based on a thorough criticism of the Scripture books. But the centre round which all its parts must be grouped, and to which they must all conform, is Christ's infallible intuition of the Fatherhood of God. For the theology which has been shaped by philosophers and scholastics, and which has had incorporated into it diverse elements of Hebrew ideals, Rabbinical traditions, Greek speculations and Roman jurisprudence and polity, there must be substituted the Theology of Christ, who alone is the pure fountain-head of Divine truth. The present orthodox theology has for its root-idea the Sovereignty of God, and from this it logically grows and spreads. It was elaborated by Calvin, but was fashioned by Augustine, whose mind was dominated by the image of Imperial Rome, which was reflected in his conception of the "City of God." The primary ideas are.—God is an autocrat. Man is a subject, a rebel and a criminal. All the relations of God and man are stated in forensic terms borrowed from the jurists. Suffering is penal and is inflicted in the interests of "law and order." On the other hand the root-idea of the theology of Christ is the Fatherhood of God. The Sovereignty of God is also fully recognised. It is, however, the sovereignty, not of an absolute despot who rules by irresistible might, but of a Father who rules by love. In the consciousness of Christ God is a Father. Man is a son, disobedient indeed, but capable of being reconciled. And suffering is chastisement inflicted for the reformation and good of the sufferer. The real attitude of God to sinful men is indicated, not in