

If ever there was a time when the Church of God should boldly and emphatically proclaim the truth—if ever educational institutions such as this were called upon to give their students definite and dogmatic teaching, it is the present hour when so many are departing from the faith and grasping at theories which first mislead and then subvert the soul.

In opposition therefore to all agnosticism which denies that we can know either God or the things of God, I wish emphatically to state that there are certain sublime and transcendent revelations of God, given to us by the Divine word which we can most positively teach our youth in order that they may find a safe anchorage amid the restless billows of this troubled life, and find that glorious peace the world is so utterly unable to bestow.

*First then we can know God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

Christ was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person. In speaking to Philip, He said: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, shew us the Father?" Irrespective of all revelation, irrespective I mean, of those Holy Scriptures in which the life, death and character of our blessed Lord are portrayed, what evidence have we of His historical being; of Him whom we delight to serve as both our Saviour and our King? The most overwhelming proof of the Christian religion must be Christ himself, and as the late Canon Cook of Exeter has said:—"If we bring a blind man out at midday and bid him look straight at the sun when it is blazing in the zenith, and if he can see no light it will be useless to bring him out at midnight to shew him Sirius or Vega. Christ is the sun Himself and the whole earth shall be full of His glory."

If Christ then did not even exist as an historical Person, one fact is admitted even by infidels themselves and that is, that the ideal Christ, the Christ of the Gospels was created and described with all His wondrous sayings, His tragic death, His stupendous resurrection and His mysterious appearances at the very time when we believers know Him to have lived and died and rose again. But this admission involves a difficulty which no unbelief, however learned or subtle, has ever been able to solve. The difficulty is this: If no historical Christ ever lived, from whose brain ever sprang the conception of the glorious Christ so vividly described in the Gospels. The most thoughtful of infidels have admitted that the humble fishermen from the placid waters of Galilee were utterly unable to produce such a conception. The Christ they looked for was a temporal ruler, the Christ of the Gospel is, according to this theory, made to say, "My kingdom is not of this world." Indeed, not only is the Christ of the Gospels a totally different Being from that which the disciples looked for, but His whole teaching, was diametrically opposed to all the ideas and aspirations of the nation at large. If then the ideal Christ was not a Jewish conception, whose were the hands which painted a picture so infinite and sublime? Certainly no artist from the Greek or Roman worlds sunk as they were in darkness, superstition and sin. "In the Palestine of the Year One," asks Chadwick, "what is there to explain Christ? Did this eagle with sun-sustaining eyes emerge from the slums of the age of Tiberius, the basest age in history? Natural causes, the struggle to exist, the race which is for the swift, and the battle, to the strong, did these teach a Jew to pray upon His cross for those who nailed Him there? And whence is the trumpet, and whose is the breath in it, which has blown that dying supplication round the world and down the ages to become for centuries and races the blast of a spiritual resurrection? Who built the throne from which he stretches a rod of iron across the world?—and where has ever human being found the colors and the brush to paint across the wildest

storm-clouds of existence this never-fading Rainbow," which spans the vast circuit of all measurable time.

Such is the glorious and infinite Being; to whom now we can triumphantly point our youth as the one supreme object of their love, the Redeemer of their souls and the Guide of their future path. On this point let our teachings be clear, definite and comprehensive, and as the world needs Christ more than midnight needs the sun let us with all our power, emphasize and enforce this fact. Let us teach them that as the sun blanches every star and will admit no competitor in the field, so before this peerless, solitary Christ—King of all kings and Lord of all lords—all human learning shrinks to ignorance and all human strength to want. Under the magnificent span of the *Arc de Triomphe* in France, where France records the triumphs of her arms, no less than eight broad and splendid avenues meet; so that standing beneath the intersections of the Arch, and looking first outwardly and then inwardly we find that all lines here centre, and from this they all radiate. So too in this Arch of eternal Triumph—Jesus Christ our Lord, all the broad avenues of time converge, and from Him they issue forth into eternity. In Him time and eternity meet. How paramount, then, how transcendent the importance of knowing him—the mystery of His incarnation, the holiness of His life, the atoning value of His propitiatory death, His resurrection, His ascension and His coming again. These are the themes on which angels linger, and this is the knowledge which in the rush and antagonism of life will make our young men, not the sport and prey of every wayward wind that sweeps across their path, but strong and vigorous, able to witness a good confession and push the fierce battle to the gate.

*Secondly.*—Against all Agnosticism which affirms that nothing is knowable of God, we know the truth; God's word is truth.

In any war that may be waged, to seize the capital of the enemy is to overthrow his power, and to make ourself supreme master of his land. But more than capital to the mightiest empire on earth, more than air to the lungs, or heart to the body is the volume of the Holy Scriptures to the Church of the living God. It is the one sacred and inviolable deposit committed to her care; the inspired instrument of all her chartered rights; the infallible history of her origin and progress in the past, and the foundation of all her hope in the future, but above all this, it is God's one stupendous revelation to man whose authority is attested by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and whose inspiration is manifest from the fact that it was written by the fingers of God.

Against such a volume as this—the very citadel of our faith, as might be expected—all the powers of darkness and of sin are to-day combined. Headed by Satan, they are beleaguering this stronghold of the Truth, knowing full well that if only faith in the Word of God can be overthrown, Christianity as a power is practically lost, and the era of infidelity and atheism begun. Hence, hydra-headed monsters are rising everywhere to do, if possible, their share in the great work of demolition. So-called men of science who claim they are familiar with every geological event from the time this earth was only vapour till the alluvial deposits were formed in the changes of the Neozoic age, some, I am thankful to say, not all of them, affirm that Moses is unscientific and his statements unworthy of their credence. Destructive critics, each with his axe and spade, trying to overturn the faith of centuries and by wild theories to drape the sunlight of the world. Clergymen in their pulpits, professors in their chairs, a great complex host, whose teeth are spears and arrows and their tongue a sharp sword.

In answer to all adverse criticism with respect to the Word of God, I wish to advance three propositions.