

faith as Greek culture understood it and justified it to itself." In other words it is an amalgam of the original teachings of Jesus with Greek metaphysics made by the church binding into a belief binding on all men on pain of eternal loss.

In passing from the sermon on the Mount to the Nicene Creed we leave behind us "a world of Syrian peasants," and enter "a world of Greek philosophers." All this raises questions of the gravest import that are still debated in the schools. But the point here emphasized is that if Harnack's conception of dogma be valid, then we have in it not the pure expression of the Christian faith, not truth springing immediately out of the inner essence of the religion of Christ, but rather, as his colleague Dr. Pleiderer says, "a progressive obscuration of the truth, a progress of disease in the church produced by the sudden irruption of Hellenic philosophy and other secularising influences." If dogma did not come to the birth till the fourth century, and met its death in the sixteenth, then it is not of the essence of the Gospel; on the contrary, it is a derivative and secondary phenomenon, and its history becomes a strange and puzzling interlude in the career of Christianity, a period of eclipse during which for some inscrutable purpose God had withdrawn Himself from the intellectual life of the church. Such a hiatus in the world's spiritual history seems incredible, and if dogma takes its origin thence, it may retain an antiquarian or academic interest, but it remains foreign alike to the practical and intellectual interests of the Christian thinker.

What then is genuine religious dogma? An analysis of the idea in the light of Theological development will give these elements—truth to be believed, the reasoned form or articulated expression of the truth, and the authority with which the truth meets belief. Now in the sense of truths to be believed, it is clear that all thinking men, whether they call themselves dogmatists or anti-dogmatists, have dogmas. "Dogmas are everywhere; Comte needs them no less than John Knox; physical science no less than theology." Emerson and Carlyle are the bitter foes of theological dogma, yet the

calm and lofty optimism of the one, the troubled and turbulent pessimism of the other, rest in dogmas, backed up by the most awful sanctions. Is not Carlyle indeed our greatest preacher, arrayed in the garb of a German philosopher, dragooning us into the true faith by the weapons of denunciation, expostulation, sarcasm and scorn, and forever threatening us with the dire fate of "shooting Niagara," if we turn a deaf ear to his interpretation of the universe? Not here, then, is the quarrel with religion. Nor should there be much dispute about the second point. All genuine Christian dogma can lay no claim to infallibility because it is not the absolute and unadulterated truth of God: it is the truth refracted and coloured by the human media of reflection and reasoning through which it passes. Nay, we are bound to go further and say that in all relations of the finite and the infinite, there is an element which no dialectical process, however subtle, can disclose, and which, therefore, in the present order of existence, is forever inaccessible to the human intellect. In all dogma there is, as Coleridge says, something "transcendant" hidden in the inscrutable recesses of the Divine mind which refuses to be imprisoned within the categories of the logical understanding. Every act in the drama of God's revealing and redemptive working for the restoration of humanity to sonship and eternal life has an unknowable side—the point, as it were, of transition from the realm of divine ideas to that of historical actualities. From the nature of the case dogma must be imperfect, fallible, fragmentary and relative. But we come upon the real *cause* of the dispute when we raise the question of authority. Do not most men feel that dogma is differentiated from all other kinds of truth in that it appeals not to reason (in a philosophical sense) but to authority for its credentials. It must be confessed that theologians have often spoken as if dogma had a right to over-ride reason and conscience, the Roman Catholic appealing to the Church, the high Anglican to the Bible and the early fathers, the Evangelical to the *ifssissima verba* of the sacred writings. Underlying all these theories may be detected a subtle scepticism, a disbelief