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CHRISTIANITY AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

IN entering upon a new cycle of a periodical which, after a long and honourable career, is undergoing that process of transformation which is the law of all things earthly, those who contribute to it can only be understood to agree in a general sense with each other, or with the basis of the publication; and hence the present writer, to whom an unusually arduous and hazardous place has been assigned, must be regarded as speaking entirely for himself, when, perhaps with more courage than wisdom, he undertakes, in a necessarily general way, to sum up the present reach and drift of the great Christian movement, which has been the grandest feature in the history of well-nigh nineteen centuries.

This topic might be handled statistically, touching on the leading Christian nations in turn, with contrasts between any past condition and the present, or between them and the non-Christian races. But it seems better to handle it dynamically, dwelling on the forces of thought and life that are most in the ascendant, with their counter-weights and drawbacks; and as there is hardly time to discuss the latter separately, it would appear most safe to treat the light and the shade together, and as it were to balance them, so as to bring out whatever of progress and hopefulness, after every deduction, may remain. The present writer, whatever he

be, is certainly not a pessimist in regard to the condition and prospects of living Christianity; and if to any he appear too much the opposite, there is depression enough in many, and in himself also, to keep the pitch reasonably low.

Beginning with the nominally Christian world, in its widest extent, we encounter the well-known boundaries that separate the Greek, the Roman, and the Protestant communions. The first has here to fall aside, as lying for centuries out of the track of fresh and earnest thought, and as affected more by the natural increase of population, and changes of a political kind, than by inward struggle or religious propagandism. No doubt the Greek Church, and especially in relation to Mohammedanism, has grown in the last century in strength and aspiration. But its interaction upon the other Christian communions has been so feeble and limited, that, save for its growth in numbers, it might almost be left unexamined.

Very different has been the reciprocal attitude of the other two great branches of the nominally Christian family. From the period of the Reformation their relation has been that of ever-renewed struggle; and the end of the nineteenth century sees them still in unresolved conflict. It is hardly possible to doubt that the great blow inflicted by the Reformation upon the older communion has been, in the lapse of centuries, not only not repaired but even aggravated. Macaulay might draw half a century ago, in his review of *Ranke's History of the Popes*, a bright picture of the stability and eternal youth of a system which had "seen the lions bound in the Flavian amphitheatre." But the course of subsequent events has falsified these anticipations, which even at the time Protestants repelled. The Church of Rome, by its Syllabus and proclamation of Infallibility, has arrested any tendency to its own revival after the great defeat entailed on it by the first French Revolution; and, what is worse than a fresh breach with the thought and liberty of Europe, has weakened the springs of independent conviction within its own pale. It has thus received no sympathy, even from Romish peoples, in the loss of its

temporal power ; and the possible rise of its spiritual energy, as a counterpoise, which many Protestants feared, has been effectually hindered. The creation of a united Germany has annulled the Papal weight of France, and partially alienated Austria ; and though the rash and ill-advised collision of the military German Empire with the Papacy has ended in repulse, the Papacy, as a dogmatic system, has gained nothing, and has concentrated opposition to its spiritual claims along the whole Protestant line. It is not easy to name a time in which all educated German thought, orthodox and rationalist alike, was more inaccessible to distinctively Romish doctrine ; and though the political necessities have prompted Bismarck to repair, with awkward surgery, his own previous rough handling, the style of the new Emperor's recent visit to the imprisoned Pope, with a united and unsympathetic Italy looking on, has provoked in the Continental organs a comment upon the altered days since emperors held the Papal stirrup, and did penance to regain its most stinted absolution. The fall of Rome, all the more conspicuous for its unregarded thunders against its spoilers, and abortive demands of infallibility, is not redeemed by any bright conquest over the wide field of its warfare. Some will point to England, and to its accessions there, both by direct proselytism and by a wide-spread diffusion of a Romanised type of doctrine and ritual in regions beyond—due to the Tractarian movement. But while this fact is to be deplored, and estimated at its true gravity, it cannot be looked upon as more than an eddy upon the world-wide stream. A few men of genius and devotion, Cardinal Newman pre-eminent among them, have gone over to the Romish faith. They have added little to its distinctive theology, or shown any power to arrest its European decay ; in fact, have risen to their highest greatness in what is not Romish, but common to universal Christianity. Proselytes like these were not easy to find ; and the succession has long stopped. The subsequent influence, proceeding not so much from them as from others who more or less sympathised with them but halted at an earlier point, has no doubt been wide and visible, but it may be exaggerated. Not a few who are

set down as secret Romanists would stop rather with Old Catholicism. Those who would go farther have been and are vigorously, though still too feebly, resisted. The Romanising movement has already developed a twofold recoil, partly to unbelief and partly towards a more earnest anti-Romish faith. It has wholly failed of impression beyond the Anglican Church. And the great mass of the laity, even there, have looked upon it in its more visibly Rome-ward features, with wonder, dislike or indifference, rather than with sympathy.

Equally unfounded is the idea that in America the progress of Rome compensates for its European failure. No doubt it is a serious fact that in the United States probably about seven millions acknowledge its sway. But they are only an eighth of the population, in which, as many of the highest authorities have testified, they ought by birth to have formed a far larger proportion. Nor is their allegiance to the central authority very close, as recent events have shown. Capable of affecting largely their own domestic politics, and even of taking aggressive action against American ideas of national education and similar questions, they have never been capable of entering into a world-wide Papal League, or of rallying to the far distant power by which they are professedly governed. The Ultramontane and mediæval spirit droops in an uncongenial atmosphere. Nor is there an American Romish literature (not to say theology) as there is a German; and the vast incoherent mass, made up of discordant nationalities, and unfused into any common type, is weak in proportion to its numbers, and even its material resources. Already at every point American Protestant theology is a great help to the older world, but the professed Catholic Church is here almost wholly dumb.

When we turn to the other half of the nominally Christian world, a scene of wonderful activity, both of thought and life, is opened up, which reduces the Romish field, vast as it outwardly is, to inertness and stagnation. Not that there is much controversy with Rome on the part of Protestants, or much direct effort at conversion of any kind. Controversy has even abated, since the Infallibility dogma seemed to bar

more than ever all right to enquiry; and the Protestant Church has also learned to conduct any missions which it has here in the quietest and most noiseless manner. It is in the relation of Protestantism to other parties and topics that the astonishing activity, which has more and more marked its career, is to be found. This may be briefly surveyed under the three questions to which everything affecting Christianity itself as a religion may be referred. These are—What are its *evidences*, or *apologetics*? what is its *interpretation*, or *exegesis* and *dogmatics*? and what its application to life and work, or *Christian ethics*? It will be seen, I think, that the most vital, typical, and normal side of Christianity, the Protestant, at the end of the nineteenth century, though not without difficulties, as it is not without sins and faults, is also not without great victories in the past and hopes for the future.

Beginning with *apologetics*, there has been a great concession to Christianity, since the rough and supercilious strain of last century. The style of Woolston and Paine, and even of Voltaire, is only found in the lowest regions of unbelief. Whatever aspires to permanent literature or general recognition admits the grandeur of Christ's life and work, and its importance for the world. Strauss treats the Sermon on the Mount, before his own fall into atheism, as a true utterance of the Fatherhood of God. Rénan regards Christianity as so great a system that it almost necessarily, according to the laws of the universe, created false miracles, which were not ill bestowed in achieving its reception. Baur labours as a reconstructor of Christianity about which, after the death of Christ, its secondary founders disagreed. These writers had all to grapple with the problem of the supernatural, and account for the origin and success of Christianity without it. The failure of such men has added to the strength of Christianity. The mythical theory of Strauss, on which he laboured for a quarter of a century, was virtually abandoned by himself, with none to claim it. The necessary illusion scheme of Rénan has faded into the dimness of his already decaying *Origins of Christianity*. The position of Baur also has been weakened by the wide non-

acceptance of his datum as to successive formations and tendencies in Christianity, and not less by his confession that the Resurrection is an unsolved mystery. Thus the most strenuous effort which the anti-supernaturalist school has ever made remains behind us, the basis of Christianity unshaken, and the weapons of attack either broken or flung away. It is not denied that the criticism of the Gospels, and the construction of early Christian history, have profited by these combats, but it is with the defenders that these lessons remain, while those who are unhappily "of the contrary part" see their materials built into the very structure which they laboured to overthrow. Some of these results are, the general admission of early dates for the Gospels, and the uncontested place of so many of the Pauline Epistles and of the Apocalypse. Works like Greg's *Creed of Christendom* and *Supernatural Religion* could hardly be written over again, if they were still to begin.

Much more could be said in regard to the apologetics of Christianity proper, which has strengthened itself in other fields ; but a word may be added as to the state of the conflict on a ground even deeper than that of Christianity,—the apologetics of Theism. The French Revolution did not produce in wide circles so shattering an effect upon faith in God as upon faith in Christ, even some of the movement party clinging to Theism ; and with the revival of Christianity, Theism naturally gained till Atheism had largely dropped out of sight. The critical philosophy of Kant also, though unjust to the speculative argument for Theism, had left it on its moral side credible and even necessary, and had thus, amidst the declension of his successors towards Pantheism, encouraged, with other influences, a Theistic belief. Partly through the failure of Theism to go on to Christianity, partly through the recoil from Pantheism, when it broke down into its opposite in Materialism, and partly from the congeniality of Materialism itself to human nature, which makes it an ever-recurrent element in science and philosophy, we find during the last fifty years a wide return to a sensationalist scheme of things, with matter as original and supreme, to the exclusion of God. Of these tendencies, favoured by the march of physical science, the Comtist or Posi-

tive philosophy, poorly redeemed by a fantastic religion of humanity at the summit, is the outgrowth, with other types containing perhaps less knowledge and equal dogmatism. This dogmatism however does not hinder Materialism in some of its forms from denying any knowledge of the infinite in itself, and being reinforced by the idealism that is unwilling to wrap up its fortunes with Pantheism—the united body, with a contingent from scepticism, take refuge in Agnosticism. Here, however, there is no real halting ground against the Theistic conclusion. The sceptical element is not entitled to affirm a doctrinal creed, which Agnosticism really is. The idealist has already granted knowledge above sense, and can only inconsistently exclude this special part of it, which connects with God. Nor can the materialist, who goes back to eternal force or matter (whichever of the two), to inexplicable motion, and to a process involving stupendous mystery, deny that as much may be known of God, however unfathomable, as of matter. By arguments like these, with others, our Theism has, as before, fully kept its ground, nor has anything been gained for the opposite side by an illogical endeavour to ally the more recent hypothesis of Evolution with Atheism. If Evolution be limited to Biology, it no more excludes final causes than the ordinary argument from design, for it becomes only a path by which design is worked out. If, as by Herbert Spencer, Evolution be made the formula of a universal cosmic philosophy, there returns, with an Unknowable in the far distance, a virtual *prima materia*, unable by the dreary clank of an endless motion to evolve the universe, as we phenomenally know it, up to man. Thus Theism still remains to us, barring the paradox in science, that what requires mind to explore required no mind to originate, satisfying alike the need of worship, and the hope of immortality, and preparing for the re-assertion and re-enforcement of Theism in a revelation, which expands all the lessons of nature, and adds on others too wonderful to have been invented, but in harmony with the claim, “ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”

When we turn to the *exegetical* and *dogmatic* side of

Christian theology, we find much that, amidst apparent doubt and hesitation, confirms the impression made by apologetics. The very multiplication, beyond any former example, of exegetical literature, often of a high order for learning and hermeneutical skill, is a perpetual homage to the text ; and not infrequently the Rationalist frankly grants that the received faith of the Christian world is nearer to the documents than his own. Of the same family with this immense mass of commentary are the products of the recently created science of Biblical Theology, which isolates the teaching of individual Bible writers, examines it in detail, and sums it up with any notices of real or alleged development. Here also those who do not stand upon any strict theory of inspiration, or even of general Christian faith, have taken part ; and thus it is seen how the authors of Scripture reduced in authority, even to the level of Plato, have taught (speaking roundly) the distinctive Christian tenets associated with their names. The luminousness, the homogeneity, the self-asserting power of the Scripture writers has thus been of new verified ; and while changes of date and authorship have been suggested and are under debate, it is remarkable how time here tends to be conservative rather than the opposite, and that, tested by internal evidence, not one book of Scripture would be held by the prevailing consensus of the Christian world to fall below the level of canonical literature.

The state of Christian doctrine is too large a subject to be taken up at the close of a paper. But here too there are, amidst tokens of *malaise* and insecurity, movements in a visibly positive direction. No one can doubt that, taken widely, the dogmatic theology of the Continent is more confessional than it was forty or fifty years ago. The work of Julius Müller on *Sin* has had a wide and deep influence. Dorner's views on the Trinity, in his *Scheme of Christian Doctrine*, 1879, are not easily distinguishable from those of Waterland or Liddon. Martensen and Van Oosterzee on the *Atonement* are as far beyond the moral theory as Dale. The outburst of the Luther jubilee brought numberless tributes to the doctrine of justification. It is in the region of Eschatology

that in Germany as elsewhere most uncertainty, when tried by a former standard, still remains. Yet here a light and confident Universalism no longer reigns. Müller regards this as excluded by the doom of the sin against the Holy Ghost ; and Luthardt, in a passage of great solemnity, records his adhesion to the ancient doctrine which, however slowly, is yet returning.

In no department perhaps more than in *Christian ethics* have the life and earnestness of a revived and truly progressive Christianity been conspicuous. Here the word "Christian ethics" must be taken in its widest sense. The mission of Christianity to reach, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, a higher type of sanctification for the individual than mere morality has been asserted, and in many quarters a higher Christian life has been urged. The adaptation of Christianity to the family, and the religious education of the young in the home and in the Sabbath-school, has been exhibited as never before in Christian history. While Socialism on its theoretic side has found no entrance, the obligation of the Christian Church to grapple with its problems—economic, moral and spiritual—has been acknowledged and dealt with, and the great work of building up a Christian civilisation, untainted by selfishness, jealousy, waste, and luxury, however imperfectly, has been amidst difficulty, reproach, and defeat, really carried forward. Temperance has been organised, legalised vice has been assailed and put to shame ; and, in the commonwealth of nations, slavery has been more and more excommunicated ; and war, though still spreading its terrible menace and burden, has been shorn of its glory and limited in its danger. Amidst such remedial agencies, stretching beyond the widest meaning of the word "home missions," these also in the narrower sense have been taken up, and prosecuted with an energy, a perseverance, and a success beyond all former precedent, and while they have not been sustained by those who have loved them most, for temporal ends, but for the salvation of souls, it has turned out that in their healing influence they have done for fallen masses unspeakably more than all the resources of law or of earth-born philanthropy. Equally beneficent,

and for various reasons still more striking, have been the results of foreign missions in the largest field of applied Christianity in the whole world. It is only indeed as applied Christianity, as the effort of Christian love, feeling direct obligation to Christ and speaking His words in reliance upon His name,—so as, while including, to transcend all the appliances of civilisation, education and moral example, that these missions have succeeded, and constituted perhaps the greatest triumph of the Gospel in the nineteenth century. No one could attend the Centenary Missionary Conference in London in June last without seeing that here was the finger of God! What a contrast from the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in Kettering in 1792, when the collection amounted to £13, 2s. 6d., and Carey had to go out in a Danish vessel! Here were the ends of the earth now come together, representing almost all Protestant churches, with their converts numbered by millions, with the Bible translated into 230 languages, the whole world opened up, and another century, with the same noiseless stream, ready to carry the wonder proportionately farther. In that remarkable assembly—the uncrowned heroes of the Christian faith—no one spoke of exhortation, but only of how better work could be done; or of unity, but only exemplified it even in a symbolic way, by using only the same English tongue. Here for once in the history of the world was something which made apologetics look superfluous, the task of criticism over-anxious, and the reconstruction of creeds a labour that could afford to wait. In secular changes through the century, God had spoken by whirlwind and earthquake and fire; but the world, though shaken, had remained much the same, as the blast does not metamorphose the rock that it rends, or turn the salt water of the sea into fresh. Here was the still, small voice to be heard with “fear and great joy.” In this spirit may every Christian work of this century—and this Journal also—be begun and ended, and may writers and readers alike “go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord!”

JOHN CAIRNS.

WHAT IS THE SUPERNATURAL?

THE Supernatural, in its mystery and wonderfulness, has always been interesting as a subject for investigation, disputed as a reality, feared by unbelievers, and revered by the devout. Advanced scientific investigations prove that things strangest and most improbable—the impossibles of our age—are the ordinary events of another; and that the real includes all, or more than all, the most romantic can imagine.

Some confound belief in the Supernatural with that weak credulity to which all sorts of superstition concerning wonder-works, dreams, and unnatural things, are attracted.

A few scientists state: "Nature means neither more nor less than that which is; the sum of phenomena presented to our experience; the totality of events, past, present, and to come." This seems good, but really is bad. It says there is no supernatural at all: an assertion wholly incapable of proof.

God exists, but God is not nature. To speak of nature as including the cause of nature is like saying the builder of the house is the house. When accurate men talk of phenomena, they mean those appearances which represent things that in themselves do not appear; visibles shadowing forth the invisible; phenomena evidencing the unseen; things that are not of nature showing themselves by nature.

Nature is very much more than "the sum of phenomena presented to our experience." A man's experience is small indeed, and the experience of all men is but little more in comparison with the infinity of things not experienced.

The Professor's definition, meant to exclude the Supernatural, is not adequate. Nature is much more than all the mind can imagine, than all that the senses are able to experience. The definition, indeed, by the use of the word "phenomena," indicates that every natural thing, without exception, is the mask or guise of some other thing, which is the real, the supernatural. This Supernatural is the cause of

all that is, pervades all that is—the essence, moving, and maintaining power. It crosses nature in every part, always and everywhere. This has been proved by many processes of reasoning, and thousands of facts in our work, *The Supernatural in Nature*.

A sort of bird's-eye view shall now exhibit the Supernatural, not as a rarely entertained guest in the household of nature, but as the ever-abiding host and proprietor—the essence of all matter, of all force, of all motion.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN MATTER.

The elements or constituents of matter at present known are about seventy. The various forms of matter consist of these elements in definite proportions. What it is, or what they are, no one is able to say further than this—they are vehicles of force. Matter is not known apart from force, nor force apart from matter; but there are experiments which warrant the assertion that matter in its ultimate form is a real being—a carriage of which, so to speak, force is the driver.

Some forms of matter, though made of the same constituents, and in the self-same proportions, are greatly different in their physical and chemical properties. Arrangement of the particles in one way produces deadly poison. The same sort of particles, and identical proportions otherwise disposed, tend to life. There are special conditions, for the likeness of daisy to bee, and of bee to bee. There is evidence of a continual going forth from the unseen to the seen, from the supernatural to the natural, which renders the universe an enchanted valley. The known forms of matter are a mere condition of energy or force *in loco*; all material causes are acknowledged as the outcome and differentiation of energy; and whether matter takes the shape of solid, or liquid or gas, is a question of temperature and pressure.

Every sort of matter, and all its forms, even when apparently most quiescent, is moving on itself and in itself by molecular activity. The average distance between the several particles of a gas, at the ordinary temperature, is something about the six-millionth part of an inch and the ten-millionth.

The number of particles in a cubic inch of air is about the number three with twenty cyphers after it, that is, 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. In a mass of hydrogen, at ordinary temperature and pressure, every particle averages 71,700,000,000 collisions the second, with other particles. Its course is deflected 17,700,000,000 times, and it moves at the rate of seventy miles in the minute. When rude voices say, "The Lord never passes by; not in the wind, not in the earthquake, not in the still, small voice;" we cannot but marvel that the mystic maze in which these tiny atoms run, with their occult powers, giving form to the worldly structure, and raising it storey above storey, with chambers of every dimension, furniture and embellishment, does not fill men with reverential awe of that Eternal Power, acknowledged by every accurate and comprehensive man of science, as the cause of these wonderful phenomena. We recognise a vast, an incomprehensible mingling of forces and substances to accomplish some great teleological purpose, by which the universe is a house of discipline to prepare sojourners for the eternal future. Splendour, from galaxies of stars afar off, arrives at the earth in widely separated intervals. It brings life and strength to our frames, it quickens and gladdens our minds. It comes from other worlds, other natures, as a symbol and promise of knowledge concerning wonders beyond the veil. We read it as an assurance that when the grass withers and earthly flowers fail there is another light, another life, another glory.

Probably, matter in all its varieties, and its molecules in all their mysteries, are due to one substance; simpler, yet so comprehensive that its potentialities were the sign and assurance of worlds to come. Differentiation of this substance would give birth to the so-called elements—dense invisible units. The grouping of these complex units—particles of specific weight, size, elasticity, affinity, differences of quality, with chronometric vibrations—account for the suns, the stars, and all that in them is. These many worlds, and all they contain, far from exhausting the forms, combinations, and conditions of force which the elements are capable of—only use a few: silicon, aluminium, iron, magnesium, sodium, chlorine,

potassium, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, are in chief request. The possibilities of use, as to those now little used, are illimitable. Materials for innumerable surprises are around us. We know not what will be, nor what we ourselves may be, in the indicated coming enlargement and beautifying of nature. At present only a few and rudimentary stages have been passed. The charming music has been wrought by the impinging of unseen influences on a few notes of the minor scale. The Eternal Power, whose Person combines Will, Wisdom, and Might, will awake ravishing melodies when He touches all the chords. Our mental eye now discerns the Supernatural in everything; but when the physical eye has received that improvement of which we know it to be capable, we shall, having been made like God, see Him as He is (I John iii. 2).

THE SUPERNATURAL IN FORCE.

Force embraces the universe, is in every atom, and pierces every point in space. Force, though invisible, is the great revealer. Becoming concrete or materialised in the primal substance, it was then differentiated in or into the atoms. These atoms, pregnant every one with its own force or forces, are that almost infinitesimal manifestation of the Almighty and Infinite, of which matter and space are capable. They are microscopic manifestation of the Supernatural, of whom nature, as a whole, is the vastest known revelation.

We know certainly as to differentiation of forces, diversity separating the minutest from the greatest, by means of these atoms; and we not less surely know concerning the unity of forces, by the comprehensiveness and similarity binding all lives into one life, and all worlds into one universe. Eternal Energy, differentiating into variety, gives spontaneity to every natural process; and Eternal Energy, gathering every process into subservience to one rule, fills all parts with that supernaturalness which is perfectly natural. Every step we take in investigation enlarges our admiration of the beauty of the adaptation and the harmony of all action. In this beauty we recognise the wisdom and power of the Eternal.

It is sufficiently accurate to say energy is the power to do work, and is of two kinds; that of position; and that of motion, force exerted through space. Energy of position means that a body is placed where the force is potential, as in a raised weight, a head of water, gunpowder, food. Energy of motion is force expressing the rate or speed at which any change takes place in matter. There is good reason to believe that all the various energies of nature, light, heat, electricity, magnetism, etc., are derived from different kinds of molecular motion. These motions are not self-existent nor essential properties of matter. Every one is natural, not, so far as we know, a product of unaided nature, but a sign of the Eternal Power—the Supernatural.

Physical science, speaking humanly, says the matter and forces of the universe are permanent and eternal. We do not find any essential cause in nature which can either create or annihilate matter and force. Causation is the will, creation is the act of God. Science, philosophy, religion, unite in declaring that all matter, every force, changes moment by moment, and enters other states, other places; and worlds die as individuals die. These, becoming as though they were not, do not actually cease; they take new shapes and relationships in other surroundings. The worlds waxing, waning, dying, are used again in new creations. The seen is always passing into the unseen, and the unseen enters the seen. There is a sort of border land, or transitive condition, between nature and that which is not nature, between the natural and the supernatural. In one sense, as Solomon said, "There is nothing new under the sun;" but, beneath the apparent immutability, incessant transference and conversion, by differentiation of the one primeval energy, give infinite variety of appearance. The sum of energies is constant; but the line of direction, as to every force, changes every moment. The total may be said never to vary, it is summed up in God. The differentiations, the applications, the display of phenomena, the manifestations of life, are ever varying modulations of eternal rhythm. The Eternal Energy gives all things to nature, and from this gift we cannot take anything away.

No force can be proved to be merely mechanical, yet take a purely mechanical view. Nature is a chain of cause and effect, in which there is no missing link. Gravitation proves that the hosts of heaven and the things of earth are parts of one great complex arrangement. Our mind sufficiently expanded, would be able to follow natural processes from beginning to end. Given a grain of wheat, an acorn, an infant, and their surroundings, we could prognosticate the whole process of growth in terms of matter and force. Even on these purely mechanical principles, we have greatly to obliterate the strongly-marked mechanical, chemical, and other differences, which we thought were variously exemplified in a rock, a crystal, a tree, a cow. Sometimes it is a matter of doubt whether a given organism is a vegetable or an animal; and, in one case at least, the same organism is both animal and vegetable at different periods of its history. Every phenomenon, therefore, as to its essence, is something more than merely mechanical, or chemical, or vital, as so thought; but the manifestation of a Power including all, and more than all. Thus we are led to the conception of an all-present, all-prevalent energy, working all things—the Supernatural in nature.

How the inscrutable, the not-to-be-looked-at, is made plain, so as to be seen, yet not seen, is a mystery. What of that? Mysteries are everywhere. Men know, and do not know at the same time. The finite only knows in part, and does not know in greater part. In one yet manifold sense, the Cause of all made all, but makes nothing now; seems, as J. S. Mill said, "a non-cause." In other senses He is the doer of all, by that sustaining influence which is new creation every moment. "The trees do not sweep the stars down," the plants creep sunward, the atoms are endowed with a finite minimum of the Infinite in the infinitesimal. He who will not know this, who refuses to retain God in his knowledge, professing to be wise, becomes a fool (Rom. i. 21, 22). The gods curse deluders for wilfully telling others the wrong road.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN MOTION.

Nature, as a whole, is made up of individual natures; and there is a process by which some attain a higher nature. Nature exceeds nature; there are many supernatures. Movement of this kind is like, yet unlike ordinary motion. Ordinary motions may be studied in the transactions of daily life, and the best science primers are sufficiently exact for our guidance. Supernatural motion is that in which the Eternal, the Absolute, the Infinite, brought Himself into relation with time, finite existence, and space. The further differentiating manifestations of the Eternal Energy, are those natural but incomprehensible forces by which we have mechanical, chemical, vital, sentient, intellectual, volitional processes.

Movements in the air rise above mere noise into musical notes, which gladden and exalt us while we listen to sacred melodies and sublime anthems. Motions in the ether, impinging on our retina, convey other motions to the brain, and impart the sense of light. Our other senses, acted on by various motions, awake our consciousness. The material eye and ear give work to the mental eye and ear—these influence the volitional and moral. The body, in itself, would be sensual only, if not elevated by the soul and spirit. Flesh, formed and informed by the soul, receives spirit—is man. Flesh, soul, spirit, are separable elements; the separableness being rather of condition and power than of space. Man is not three persons, but one person; he has not three lives, but one life; his three natures form one individual. To this fact, apart from Holy Scripture, we attribute human consciousness of God: as Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity.

Suppose you have power to reduce the earth to something like its original nothingness. Imagine that you separate a space, to be as a kind of box, from the surrounding infinitude. At one end of the space make a hole, and affix over it a tightly stretched compact cloud. On the floor of your space sprinkle a strong solution of ammonia, and then convey within the space some common salt as in a dish. Over the salt pour sulphuric acid of commerce. The ammoniacal gas

and muriatic gas combine to form sal-ammoniac ; the particles become visible, and hang like smoke. Now, remove the cloud, give a smart sudden blow to the opposite end of the box : the blow causes the contents to issue as a circular vortex ring, which moves about like an independent solid. If the infinitude around your space were perfectly without friction, that vortex-ring would move about for ever ; and the portion of fluid containing the smoke would remain for ever the same set of particles.

In fancies of this kind men of science, helped by experiments, obtain conceptions as to the framing of worlds. Sir William Thomson supposes that the universe is full of a perfect fluid, something not like matter, yet really matter ; and that the property of rotation may be the basis of whatever appeals to our senses as matter. Does this mechanical theory afford a natural explanation of the origin and continuance of things apart from the supernatural ? Certainly not. As in experiment there must be will and power, so in creation. The equilibrium of a perfect fluid, if there was one, could not be self-disturbed. The power imparting the energy of motion came from without, acting as a supernatural within. Apart from it could be no motion of any kind, no vortex-ring.

Science warrants our belief that existing worlds are not the first nor the last. Probably, also, there are other and more wonderful worlds than we know. Our view of things extends but a hand's-breadth. No part of nature was complete in itself : it rested on something infinitely beyond. Present nature is not complete in itself : it came from an immeasurable past, it enters an illimitable future. The whole of existing nature is inadequate to explain any, even the smallest part of it. The smallest part, fully explained, would account for the whole. Every material thing and state is passing into other states and different forms. Language cannot express those plans of the worlds which science and thought reveal. The seen is only a small and temporary phase of immeasurable changes. Innumerable changes, wrought by energy from the Supernatural, are a prelude to more glorious manifestations. Every moment of time represents the work of Eternity in an

instantaneous aspect of infinite extension. Every point of space contains an infinitesimal miniature of Him, whose own consciousness alone knows His Infinitude. If we unrobe ourselves of the body, but with the same human heart and spirit depart, as in company with an angel, into endless space, manifold will be our experience. Sometimes we pass through realms of darkness separated by wildernesses of death from worlds of life. Sometimes we are where the influence of God begins great works of light and life. We feel rather than see, and imagine rather than think. Traversing distances immeasurable, with speed swifter than light, realms come to us rather than we go to them. The rushings of planets, the whirls of suns, are left behind for eternities of twilight revealing, but not revealed. We scale heights where constellations are as gates with archways and architraves very wonderful. Substances possess self-rule, will is the gravitating power. Depth is canopied by height insurmountable, beneath all height is depth unfathomable. Our thought goes from infinity to infinity: systems more mysterious, worlds more billowy, heights and depths more magnificent, are near at hand, but in the ecstasy of wonder and joy we weep. Human spirit fails: of the eternity, the infinity, the majesty, the glory, there is no end. End and beginning are both in God: apart from Him is nothing, in Him is all. The natural and the supernatural are both one. Angel nor archangel can separate either from the other. Nature is the reflex of a supernature, in both God is revealed as over all, blessed for ever.

THE SUPERNATURAL IN MAN.

The sort of thing given by shallow materialism is that originally men crept out of the earth, a dumb and filthy herd, who imperceptibly rising above the brutal state, attained after immeasurable time nobleness of mind. Before and during the transition they were not men, nor spiritual, nor immortal; differing from other creatures only as one brute from another brute. Even now they lie down with a dog-twist; they laugh as the hyenas, sing as the mocking-bird, weep as the crocodile, and their speech is taken from animal cries.

Really, some clever men are making fun of us ; and a great many simpletons take the joke in earnest, and begin to behave as were they not much better than monkeys. Now suppose this folly to be wisdom, it is clear that human nature surpassed and surpasses every other nature, worked miracles in comparison with what other creatures wrought, is supernatural as to these naturals. Every human excellence is opposed to brutality, and could not come from the brute. Courage mounting to heroism, modesty, self-control, knowledge and worship of God, are not a brutal offspring.

No teacher, no system of culture, raised, or ever will raise, a differentiated brute into equality with man ; though some men make themselves brutish. No facts plant a paradise on brutality, many show that a paradise may be turned into a wilderness. There is no reliable evidence that any inferior animal grew, or could be made to grow, into a superior creature. Time does not transform a plant into an animal, and then elevate the animal into a man. Physical organs of speech did not create language ; but as life makes the organism, the special potentialities of human life fashioned organs which gave utterance to thoughts that poured themselves forth in speech. Man was man when he first spoke, as lion is lion when he begins to roar. Animals most like men do not speak at all ; only those creatures, such as parrots, in whose vocal organs it is not easy to trace the cause of the faculty. An ancient statue of Chephra, the Phra or Pharaoh of the fourth dynasty, is of features not less refined and intellectual than those of any modern European. The king lived 4200 B.C. There are no signs of brutal ancestry. Advanced science, investigation pushed furthest, warrant the theory and practice of physicians that in dealing wisely with their patients, all notions however plausible, and theories, no matter how clever, which reduce man to a level with the beast, must be put away.

Vast time is not required for effecting wonders. The caterpillar becomes a chrysalis, a moth—every change is a marvel ; no man is able to explain the manifold development, in a very little time, of this one tiny creature. Take man—

there is the dead inorganic substance made organic; there is life given by precedent life, the growth of the fœtus, the birth of a perfect child. In less than a year inorganic substance becomes organic—the dead is made to live, the unconscious becomes sentient, the miniature frame is a perfect likeness, and in the little man are the potential powers of one who may move the world. Were not this well known, we could not believe it. We do not require infinite time for the work of great processes. The history of all the past is re-written every moment. The natural partakes of the supernatural in every part. By expenditure of the same heat, phosphorus, blood, different results are produced in the brains of Marat, of Howard, of Napoleon, of Milton. The differences are as light and darkness, of good and evil.

Practical men know that brutes never did, and never will, acquire the creative power of genius; the peculiar insight which characterises the discoverer, a poet, an artist. Shakespeare's genius is not by reflex action of canine cleverness. The physical frame does not represent, approximately, man's essential nature. Human mind is both meeting place and condition of the material and spiritual, in which men form conceptions of both and correlate their energies. The faculties of this mind are not the product of somewhat peculiar in the organism, they represent that transcendental influence by which they and the organism are peculiar. Genius is not the sum total of material definite tendencies, like the sweetness of sugar. It is due to a potentiality not found in any brute, of what becomes cognitive, responsible, moral, religious, in high degree. By inner and outer means and uses, relations, obscure to physical sense, are detected; the supra-sensible being got at analytically by analysis of analysis. We have something natural, a scale of stairs, by which we ascend to the Supernatural.

FIRST STEP OF THE STAIRS.

The tree of knowledge which tried our parents grows now for our probation. We have not only progressive and improvable reason, but that higher consciousness of which soul is the place, and our whole man the learner. Soul is the

external aspect of the spirit, spirit is the internal aspect of the soul; or, as the body is to soul, so is soul to spirit. In use of the divinity in us, we have a sense of nearness to the Master Intellect, the Oversoul, the Father of our spirit. By neglect we become wicked. Growth of wickedness projects horrible wretchedness into the present, and fearfully darkens the future. Moral and spiritual laws are not less real and certain than the physical. Their effects may be likened to thrills of the earth, seen and measured in a magnetic mirror. We may be holy like the apostles, or be as demons. We may take all our tone and movement from God, be new creations; or bring ourselves into that chaotic state which represents dark turmoil, tempest tossed by viewless winds.

THE SECOND STEP.

Physical science detects in nature certain signs which indicate that the Eternal Power is working by that determinate causation which is the root of definite and teleological order. No chance, no accident, no fate, disturbs the actions of intelligibly arranged forces and distributions of matter. Science finds law everywhere. Law, in a scientific sense, means the order with which certain series of phenomena succeed one another. Laws, when we speak of the universe, mean the general way in which the Supreme Ruler acts. We are thankful that, understanding these laws, we think the thoughts of God, or know the mode in which He governs. The human mind is accurate, though limited, in its verified convictions. Its processes of mathematical deduction formulate the activities of forces; the distribution and redistribution of matter; the arrangements for origin, maintenance, development, and transfer of life; not omitting the more complex actions of free intelligence. So true is human intelligence, so accurate is law, that every man of exact science, Christian or unbeliever, agrees in regarding the totality of events as a revelation of the eternal unknown. Natural phenomena are a representation of the Supernatural.

THE THIRD STEP.

The Eternal, the Absolute, bringing Himself into relation with time, space, things, is not imprisoned therein. He blends all existence into one grand unity—the greatest known revelation to intelligent beings. There are processes, fine and intermittent, ordinary and extraordinary, natural, yet surpassing common nature, which only the most experienced and wise can grasp and formulate. Men, thus experienced, discern some of the operations by which the invisible becomes visible; by which the fabric of the stellar systems had their origins and locations in time and space; by which there are new things; by which the earth, never precisely the same day by day, passed from chaos to cosmos; from death to life,—ever growing wider in range, until the physical was dominated by man's intelligence, and intelligence by moral law. These, greater and greatest men, are the heroes of science, of mental and moral effort, of insight and prevision, of constructive imagination, and creative genius. Sometimes in the twinkling of an eye long processes of thought, whole ages of experience and ideas, pass into one grand discovery. Realisations of the Eternal's power, love, wisdom, are so delighted in that Heaven seems to open. The vastest material catastrophes are explainable; so are the sudden risings and manifestations in one individual of surpassing genius. All is natural, with a Supernatural touch. There is not a particle of matter, not one point in space, that does not give an epitome of the Supernatural in ordinary and extraordinary guise. That perfection of character, that surpassing mental energy, that spotless purity, that Divinity of Person constituting Jesus Christ; the hinge of the earth's destiny, the explanation, the saving, the regeneration of the world, was divinely natural and divinely Supernatural. In Him our flesh, our soul, our spirit, know God—bodily, as our loving Father. The vast revelation of the Almighty, at which we wonder in the universe, is made personal, loving, most intimate in the Saviour. Flesh of our flesh, Bone of our bone, Spirit of our spirit, He is God in us—God over all, blessed for ever; that natural exhibition of the Supernatural in which we most delight.

JOSEPH W. REYNOLDS.

SCEPTICAL NOVELS BY WOMEN.

No. I.

ROBERT ELSMERE.

PART I.

IT is not often that a novel gives rise to articles in such periodicals as the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Contemporary*. Still less frequently does the title of a novel become the text in many pulpits. Yet *Robert Elsmere* has obtained this double distinction.

Clearly it has some claim to be considered with matters of grave and solemn import. This indeed is true of some other romances which have appeared of late years, as *Les Misérables*, *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*, *Donovan*, *We Two*, and *John Inglesant*; though I do not remember that any of these gained equal attention from the religious world. Nor is the reason far to seek. *Robert Elsmere* sets forth in an extremely attractive form, and with great mental and moral energy, views which are either entertained by many thoughtful men and thoughtful *women*, or cause them much anxiety and many searchings of heart.

I say "thoughtful men and thoughtful *women*." This novel is written by a woman, Mrs. Humphry Ward, and though I had no such intention in selecting them, one cannot help noting that out of the six romances just named no less than four issued from the pens of the gentler sex. This feminine handling of difficult topics is, indeed, one of the most marked features of the age, and demands the very gravest consideration. I have long reflected on it, but cannot deal now with all the conclusions which should, I fancy, be drawn from so striking a mental phenomenon.

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This much, however, may be said: there is no reason to be alarmed by this new symptom of seething thought. Surely Christianity has in no way suffered from what "George Eliot" or "Edna Lyall" have written. That one writer was *not* a Christian, and that the other *is*, does not affect what I think few would care to deny—that the works of both have, somehow or other, on the whole, made, independently of the special intentions of the authoress, for that righteousness which seems to be found only in Christian lands.

And this is at least equally true of Mrs. Humphry Ward. I regard *Robert Elsmere* as really a witness to Christ. I do not in the least overlook that the main object of the authoress is to set forth her belief that orthodox Christianity is untenable, and that the sooner the fact is recognised the better. Yet, as it seems to me, she has in the end, though quite unconsciously, blessed it altogether—unwittingly indeed, but not the less effectually. This will, I hope, appear more and more clearly as we proceed with our exposition of the tone and the argument.

But as to the general position, why should we be surprised? Such women as we are speaking of live in an atmosphere profoundly charged with Christianity. Hence much which is called infidelity is, in its real essence, Christian truth, which the fortunate possessor has, in unfortunate haste, wrongly labelled. Consider the position in such cases—a woman of high culture, of refined mind, of noble aspirations, of tender love, of ready sympathy. Can we be surprised if, in the strife of tongues, philosophical, scientific, critical, theological, she should go intellectually astray? Can we wonder if, in a sensitive allegiance to what she deems to be the voice of truth; if in generous fellow-feeling for those who, from misfortune mingled with fault, have gone to the wall; if in quick sensibility to note the sufferings, the injustice, the discordant cries of this most mysterious world, she sometimes relaxes her intellectual hold on the Cross of the Redeemer. But she writes out of a full heart, and while we condemn her logic and reject her theological inferences as most inconclusive, we may venture to hope that she is true to Christ in her inner soul.

Considerable exception has been taken by many to Apologetics being discussed at all in the pages of a novel. To some minds there is only one fit medium for these discussions, viz., solid and learned treatises, every sentence of which is capable of being thrown into the form of a syllogism. I altogether dissent from that view. Indeed I cannot with any consistency do otherwise, as the leading conception of evidential methods which I have already set forth in two series of *Boyle Lectures* in 1887-1888 (and which I hope to still further enforce and illustrate in the concluding course this year), is utterly opposed to that which deals with them on a purely logical basis.

Christianity is a matter concerning *man as man*, and man's intellect is not the whole, nor even the chief element in human nature—not to add that syllogisms express but a small part of that part.

Christianity appeals, or it would be a failure as far as man is concerned, to *every* part of human nature; to man's intellect it is true, but not less to his affections and his will, and much more to his conscience.

Each of these has a right to speak, and, as a matter of fact, does speak, the conscience being the foreman in the jury of human nature; and the verdict that will prevail is the united verdict of all the elements which, combined, make man to be man. The more purely intellectual our view of Christianity is, the less forcible and the more partial *must* the decision be, whether for or against; the more inclusively human our view, the more weighty and adequate will be the conclusion.

And from this I draw the inference that, if we can find a medium for dealing with evidences which shall be as vitally and inclusively human as possible, that will be the best medium; and strange as it may sound, I am inclined to hold that, second only to history and biography, which set before us, on a large and on a small scale, human nature as it is, there is no better medium for Apologetics than a really good novel, which honestly desires to hold the mirror up to nature.

Mr. Andrew Lang's *Theological Romances* in the *Contem-*

porary Review of June 1888, was an able article, crammed full of thought, and, if a trifle irreverent in outward expression, was pregnant with faith in the power of religion and in the future of Christianity. It was fully as keen a criticism of *Robert Elsmere* as Mr. Gladstone's more celebrated article in the *Nineteenth Century* of May 1888. Well Mr. Lang wrote, "But mixed up with flirtations, thought-reading, social questions, scenery, tea-parties, and other materials of fiction, theology seems hardly in its proper place. Yet, as a matter of fact, people's lives are made up of all these and other 'factors,' as the author of *Robert Elsmere* likes to call them, and there is therefore warrant enough for combining them in a novel" (p. 815).

I am glad to quote these words of a very able man, confirming my view as to the appropriateness of a romance as a medium for Religion and Apologetics. I ought to say that the Rev. Spencer Jones, in a late number of *Church Bells* (November 9, 1888), has written very thoughtfully in an opposite direction. And I may add that, while I still adhere to this view of theological romances, which I have held for some time, I am very well aware of the objections which may be raised—objections which, when urged upon me by friends whom I greatly esteem, have been accompanied by statements of the distress and trouble *Robert Elsmere* is known to have caused in many cases.

I write, therefore, with a due, nay, an increasing sense of my responsibility in this matter. Many of my readers will naturally say, "Is there not a danger in approaching these great problems, when we bring other faculties than keen logic and cold criticism? Is there not a liability of the reader being carried away by his interest in the characters, which puts him off his guard? Is there not some fear of our being misled by our kindled and stirred emotions?"

Indeed there is. *But then human life itself is all through in just the same position.* And yet our Heavenly Father has in His wisdom been pleased to make us men, not intellectual machines grinding out logical processes.

For my own part, I feel sure it is in exact proportion

as we bring much or little of our human nature to Christ. I of course suppose that, whether we bring much or little, we do so in a humble and reverent spirit, that we shall fully, or only partially, be drawn in living faith to Him.

It may be observed in passing, though the thought deserves more than passing notice, that the Bible itself is much more after the pattern of a romance than after that of a manual of logic, or a tome of theology.

But whatever may be the final conclusions of wise and thoughtful men on a view, which can hardly escape severe criticism, the fact remains that evidential questions *are* discussed in the pages of novels, and that for every one person who peruses the manual of logic or the tome of theology, one hundred at least devour the romance.

Months ago I was told, on good authority, that the leading London library had some 1500 copies of *Robert Elsmere* in circulation; and while I do not vouch for the exact numerical accuracy of the statement, it is most significant and striking. And at this very time there are two other stories, viz., *The Story of an African Farm*, and *John Ward, Preacher*, which would be at least equally dangerous and forcible as indictments against Christianity, were they equally read. Both of these also have been written by women.

What sort of a novel is *Robert Elsmere*? Certainly one of a very noble type, and possessing rare merit in its portraiture and description of natural scenery. It is somewhat heavy; it contains too much food for thought, too much of the inner workings of great souls to be light reading; it is perhaps too heavily freighted to fulfil the conception of what an ideal novel should be.

On one particular aspect of *Robert Elsmere*, as a novel, Mr. Gladstone has commented adversely. He regards the introduction of Rose, the semi-heathen sister of the profoundly religious Catherine, as over-weighting the story. "The reader of these volumes," he says, "may be apt to say that in working two such lives, as those of Catherine and Rose, through so many stages, the authoress has departed from previous example, and has loaded her ship, though a gallant one,

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with more cargo than it will bear."—*Nineteenth Century*, May 1888, p. 771. With all respect, I venture to differ from the criticism of the ex-premier. I consider the introduction of Rose a piece of rare art on the part of the authoress. I regard it as something like—only it seems to be so very rude to a charming young beauty to say so—something like the introduction of the gravediggers in *Hamlet*. Were it not for Rose, for the immense relief from mental and moral strain thus afforded by turning away from the struggles of conscience in Robert and his wife, to one's half-amused, half-indignant consideration of a fair survival of Paganism—were it not for this, I doubt whether the good ship would not founder before it reached port.

Mr. Gladstone suggests that the overcrowding of the canvas may be due to the desire to represent "the main-springs of action which mark the life of the period" (pp. 771, 2). I should not venture to question this, because there is much that makes for that explanation. But there is this against it. There is a tendency in these days to make Art and Philosophy rank as equal factors with Morality in human life; at anyrate, to regard art and philosophy as independent of morality. To use Goethe's phrase, we can deal with "the beautiful, the whole, and the good." (See *Through Nature to Christ*, pp. 299 and 327, and *Natural Religion*.) I hardly like to quote the statement, it was so wild, but a clergyman the other day said to me that he thought Rose as much a Christian as Catherine. I need hardly add that he is a man of the most extreme views on such matters; still the fact remains that the statement was made, and made in all good faith.

Now, I must confess that when I read the first volume of *Robert Elsmere*, knowing that the novel was distinctly unorthodox, I formed the conception that the authoress would so work out the plot that the artistic yearnings of Rose would seem to have as much claim for room to develop in human life as the spiritual aspirations of Catherine. The second and third volumes by no means justified the expectation. It would be absurd for any one to compare the fortunes

of Rose and Langham and Roger Wendover with those of Catherine and Robert. We may therefore account for the introduction of Rose by one of two reasons animating the writer. Either, as Mr. Gladstone supposes, she wished to omit none of the features of modern society; or, as I have suggested, she adopted a wise artifice to save the vessel from foundering. There is, however, a third explanation, more akin to Mr. Gladstone's view than mine, that she would have made attractive "the New Paganism" (to use a fine phrase of the Primate, in a Church Congress sermon, preached when he was still Bishop of Truro), if she could, but that she failed because all the forces within her were working against Goethe's theory, and for the Christian theory; and that, in spite of her philosophical conception of the Whole, the Beautiful, and the Good—the Beautiful, as set forth in Rose, the Whole in Langham and "the Squire," and the Good in Catherine and Robert—she was compelled by every higher feeling to exalt the Good far and away above the Beautiful and the Whole.

But in what way soever all this may have come about, it is much to be noted, and is a cause for devout thankfulness, that Mrs. Ward has made us see how infinitely lower are the pursuit of the Beautiful and the search for the Whole, than strivings after the Good. We can only admit Rose into our regard when we find her drawn more and more to what is noble—when we find her sense of the Beautiful visibly subordinated to the claims of the Good.

Then how miserably vain is the purely intellectual aspect of culture in poor Langham. He is a satire on a mere search for an all-inclusive philosophy. His humanity is so limp and so bloodless that he seems a veritable ghost as he flits across the path of the other actors in the drama.

Indeed, I think Mrs. Ward has been too severe on the effects of philosophising, for she herself was the translator of a deeply interesting book, the *Journal Intime* of Henri Frederic Amiel, between whom and Langham there is a great likeness, so great that I cannot doubt that Mrs. Ward had Amiel in her mind when she was depicting Langham; yet Amiel was a man of true nobility, while Langham was a mere shadow.

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Was this due to the fact that Amiel, as Mr. Gladstone points out (p. 788), had so keen a sense of the reality and dreadfulness of *sin*? The enormous importance of which—that is, the sense of the sinfulness of sin—the ex-premier enforces in his article on *Robert Elsmere*, as he did years ago in an article on the Prince Consort (see vol. i. of his *Gleanings*) with a fervour and intensity, for which I for one am deeply grateful to him. But Langham, for all his self-distrust and wish to do what was right, is represented as almost destitute of what may be called a Christian conscience.

How very noble is the moral ideal of Mrs. Ward, how naturally she inclines to all that is lovely and of good report, is shown by the extremely unamiable guise in which she depicts the non-Christian characters of her story, if we are right in identifying Christianity and goodness. I have referred to Rose and Langham. I do not know that Madame de Netteville need be reckoned, and I will only say a few words on the strange social intimacy between her and the hero of the story. It seems a blot upon its pages that so noble and really pure-minded a man should have been led into a position, suggesting to an outsider the possibility of a *liaison* with a woman, whose brilliant degradation was that of a Frenchwoman of the most abandoned *salon* type. I do not think that his Irish blood would account for his seemingly inexcusable conduct, accompanied as it was by neglect of Catherine. Rather, that such an episode should have been thought possible implies a sad laxity of conduct, one of the least pleasant aspects of an age which, because it is sceptical, has broken down many moral landmarks.

For our present purpose it is not perhaps amiss to point out that Robert was peculiarly strong on his emotional side, and as weak intellectually in all that has to do with calm judgment. Clever and gifted he was to a degree, but to a great extent also the sport of circumstances—a point which, when we come in a second article to deal with the argument of *Robert Elsmere*, we shall find forced upon us. We cannot save his goodness but by laying stress on his extreme unwisdom. He was only brought to a sense of his folly in making a friend of such an one as Madame de Netteville by a crisis which re-

vealed his nearness to a moral catastrophe; and surely the novel would have been truer to fact if it had shown that Elsmere's decline from orthodoxy was equally due to the lack of intellectual ballast. Anyhow Madame de Netteville leaves a very bad taste in the mouth.

To proceed to a character which must rank very high indeed in the gallery of romance portraiture—a character as vivid and as powerful as Tito de Melema in *Romola*, or Count Fosco in the *Woman in White*—what better thing could be said for Christian belief than “the Squire”? Whether he was suggested by the late Rector of Lincoln College, I do not know; though I am told that many of Roger Wendover's views are identical with those of Mark Pattison. For the credit of the latter one would fain hope not; but if the authoress had striven might and main to make the sight of pure intellect rejecting Christianity so repulsive that we must needs turn from it with loathing, she could hardly have been more successful than with Roger Wendover. And this not the less, because, unlike the soulless man in Lord Lytton's *Strange Story* the Squire had a rudimentary conscience. He was, after all, not quite inhuman; one cannot aver that he could not have lived, and therein lies the tragedy of such an aspect of humanity. There was in the old scholar just that will-force, the absence of which makes Langham seem so shadowy; but his “grit,” plus his intellect, were almost a worse failure; and one is led to wonder whether, if he had had a warm heart and sensitive conscience, his creed might not have been something higher and better, as certainly he would have been saved from the wholesale manslaughter, of which, by his wicked and cruel neglect, he was directly guilty.

But then perhaps it may be said, “What of Grey? He was not an orthodox Christian, yet was he not a right noble man?” That is most true, though Mr. Lang is doubtful whether the late Professor Green is accurately portrayed. Mr. Lang (note to page 822) writes—“The reviewer (*i.e.*, himself) happened to be at Oxford, when a tutor, one of the best men who ever lived, occasionally preached lay sermons to his pupils. As a hearer of his ordinary lectures, and a reader of his writings, I thought his influence was all on the

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side of a liberal orthodoxy, that his endeavour was to find a way in which old beliefs might still be credible. His metaphysics were certainly full of Biblical terminology; but this is not the place to discuss the man nor his work."

I am not myself sufficiently acquainted with Professor Green's writings to presume to say what his exact creed really was: the little I have read would incline me to think that Mrs. Ward was not far out. But, for my present purpose, I take "Grey" as she has depicted him, and I must affirm that he seems to me to stand so very near Christianity—to have his face so lighted by its sun—that he is, as I said, speaking in general in the earlier part of this article, a witness to the Son of God. If I may use a musical illustration, he is like the "leading note" on which you cannot rest, because it suggests and demands the proper "key-note." That Grey and others, in a generation like ours, when all things are being searched out and examined, should not at a particular stage of their intellectual journey have returned to full orthodoxy, is surely far from strange. The wonder to me is, that so many great intellects, fearlessly inquiring, "What is Truth," should find themselves so near to what Revelation tells us is the perfect Truth. We do not see *hearts* so merged in the perfect Love, or *wills* so steeped in the perfect Self-sacrifice, or *consciences* so full of the "Holy, Holy, Holy," that we could expect such a close approach of the *intellect* to Christian dogma as we actually observe. For it is amazing how many master minds, who have dared to enter the valley of the shadow of death in their quest for truth, are staunch in their faith. Tennyson, Browning, Hutton, Church, and Westcott, are merely samples of a much larger number.

But leaving "Mr. Grey," I ask, where can we find a nobler figure than Catherine; and, making due allowance for the intellectual defects, and overlooking that one deplorable episode (deeply bewailed by himself), which I have already briefly referred to, than Robert Elsmere; or where a more ideal picture of an English home, spreading blessing in every direction, than that at Murewell? True it is, that after the husband's 'version—I will not say conversion or perversion—to that peculiar form of Theism, which is, I suppose, the creed of the

authoress, he lived a grandly heroic life, and was, *in the story*, successful beyond measure in his influence for good.

But this is just where, so far as we have any knowledge of history, we are forced to demur. For where *are* the real prototypes of the "New Christian Brotherhood?" I have many friends working in East London and in South London, but I have not yet heard from any of them that Mrs. Ward's ideal is, or ever has been real. Nor do I think that Mr. Voysey would be able to set us right.

But Catherine, and Robert Elsmere as an orthodox Christian—I have *known* such women, I have known such men. They are not only beautiful ideals, but in the sunlight of this Christian land they are real also. I have only to recall the parish next to that in which I was born—a parish in which I myself afterwards worked as curate—to see such a woman as even Catherine might have desired to emulate. Alas! she has departed this life, but only the other day I learnt that, in a distant country living to which her husband had moved, she was called "The Mother of the Parish."

Again, the Rector of that parish where I was born, the clergyman who baptised me and prepared me for confirmation, was, as many who owed to him their own souls still gladly testify, almost a perfect man, singularly like Robert Elsmere in his charm of manner, his freedom from narrowness, his love of science, not to speak of his holiness, but unlike him in being quite free from all appearance of evil.

Many other very good men and women I have known, whose goodness has been so bound up with their Christian belief, that we cannot venture to say how much was due to natural gift, how much to Divine grace, but one and all, like Robert and Catherine Elsmere, have been witnesses to the power of Christianity; and with such witnesses to Christ, it must needs take a great deal of rebutting evidence before one can entertain the thought that such a change in creed as Robert Elsmere made can be justified by *facts*.

In a second and concluding article we shall enquire into the intellectual force of the argument which seems to have so deeply impressed Mrs. Humphry Ward. We shall, I think, find that real argument there is none. C. LLOYD ENGSTRÖM.

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AMERICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO ENGLISH HYMNODY.

PART I.

GREAT as is the past of English literature, its future is likely to be still greater, both on account of the increase of the English-speaking race, and the variety of lands in which its lot is now cast. Thus there will be not only a greater number of contributors to the stores of English literature, but the variety of climate, condition, and scenery will probably give rise to new types both of thought and expression. At present America is the only English-speaking offshoot from the mother country which has existed long enough to develop a literature of its own. Australia is budding into letters, especially of a poetic kind, but, although the promise is great, the time of *fruit* is not yet. In the case of America, however, there has been sufficient time for the bud, the blossom, the slowly-forming fruit, and now we are at the harvest, if not the full one, yet the first ingatherings of what bids fair to rival that of the old country.

My concern in the present paper is only with one small part of this harvest, which some would exclude as altogether unworthy of a place therein, and not altogether without good reason, since a very large number of the hymns of the past have been so destitute of literary grace or poetic inspiration as to be quite unworthy of a place in literature. Dr. Johnson said of Dr. Watts, that he had succeeded in doing better than others, what no one had succeeded in doing well. There was, at that time, a measure of truth in that saying. But before Dr. Watts there had been writers who had written fine hymns, even judged from a literary standpoint, so that even then materials existed for a *good*, if not a *large*, collection of English hymns, which, from a variety of causes, had been strangely

overlooked and neglected; whilst among Dr. Watts' six hundred hymns, many of which are most inferior, there are a few grand hymns; and since his time many writers have produced hymns which an unprejudiced judgment would include among the *literary* treasures of the English-speaking race. Amongst such, the hymns of our friends across the Atlantic hold no small or undistinguished place. Indeed, some of the finest work of this kind of recent times has had to travel across the ocean which separates us from that great country.

The excellence of much American hymn-work is due to certain causes which do not prevail in England. One of these is the absence of any Established Church, with its venerable and greatly-loved Liturgy, which leaves less space for hymn-singing than do the Churches which rely on extemporaneous utterance in their devotional services. Of course there is an Episcopal Church in America, which, like its elder sister in this country, retains, in an altered form, the Book of Common Prayer in its worship, but it is neither the dominant, nor the most influential; nor the most numerous Church of that land. The great majority of the American Churches rely, either altogether or in part, on extemporaneous utterance in their devotional services, and so a larger place is left open for the singing of hymns, than in Churches whose services are wholly liturgical.

Another reason for the excellence of much American hymn-writing is to be found in the custom which prevails of inviting those with poetic power to contribute verses for the great occasions in their history—social, national, ecclesiastical. This has drawn into the ranks of the hymnists, some of their most notable writers. Scarcely an American poet of any eminence could be named who has not thus been led to consecrate his genius to hymn-production. Some of the finest hymns by American authors have thus been called into being. In England, the names of our greater poets are conspicuous by their absence from the roll of the hymnists. They have either, not thought of hymns as a form for the expression of their genius, or have deemed them unworthy of their powers. And our national customs have

done nothing to call out their genius in that direction, save occasionally by asking for an ode, or poem, or song, for some great celebration. What glorious additions to our hymnals might have been made if Lord Tennyson, or Robert Browning, or Lewis Morris, had been asked to compose hymns for great occasions, as Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Greenleaf Whittier, and others, have been in America.

It should also be noted that the American poets have been more deeply affected by religious feeling than their brothers in England, so that their poetry is more devotional in tone and feeling. This has made it possible to extract verses from their poems, which, though not written as hymns, have been eminently suited for use in worship.

All these causes combined have conspired to produce a mass of verses which, for the time to which they are confined, are very remarkable.

Hymn-writing in America began with the present century. Before that time only metrical versions of the Psalms were used; the first collection having been the celebrated Bay Psalm Book, or New England version, published in 1640, of which it is said that no less than 70 editions were printed in Boston, London, and Edinburgh. This was revised in 1757 by Thomas Prince, but was soon superseded by Tate and Brady's version. Rather later (1750-1780) editions of Tate and Brady were issued, and a supplement of hymns, chiefly from Dr. Watts. At the end of the 18th century many editions of Dr. Watts' Psalms and Hymns were published, in some of which the Psalms were amended, by Joel Barlow in 1785, and by Timothy Dwight in 1800. After this time the Metrical Psalms were issued, with hymns appended; in the Episcopal Church—the version of Tate and Brady—and in the Presbyterian and Congregational, Watts' version being used. But as time went on, the Psalms fell more and more into the background, and hymns became more prominent.

The hymns used in America have been chiefly drawn from English sources, only about a seventh part being of native origin. In many collections the proportion of American hymns is much smaller—in the *Methodist Episcopal*

Hymn Book of 1849, only 50 out of a total of 1148 are American; in the *Baptist Service of Song*, there are 100 out of a total of 1129; so that though the store of American hymns is by no means small, and is constantly increasing, yet, as was to be expected from a new community, it is insignificant compared with the store of English hymns, which through many centuries has been gradually accumulating. But in spite of this, America is destined, I believe, to contribute an even larger proportion of hymns, and to exert an immense influence on our English Hymnody.

A large number of American hymnists are quite unknown and entirely unrepresented in our English collections. My concern in the present paper is only with those whose hymns have found a place in our own Hymnals, and these represent the freshest and most vigorous writers of the new country. I will group them under the various Churches to which they belong.

From the Protestant Episcopal Church, hymns by about ten writers have been included in English collections.

HENRY USTIC ONDERDONK, D.D. (1789-1858), second Bishop of Pennsylvania, who is best known by the hymn of Invitation, which begins, "The Spirit in our hearts."

WILLIAM AUGUSTUS MUHLENBERG, D.D. (1796-1879), the great-grandson of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the founder of the German Lutheran Church in America, whose Baptismal hymn, "Saviour, who Thy flock art feeding," has deservedly become popular.

GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, D.D. (1799-1859), Bishop of New Jersey, was the author of the well-known hymn, "Thou art the way: to Thee alone;" and the Missionary hymn quoted below, a very striking and poetic utterance.

FLING out the banner! let it float
 Skyward and seaward, high and wide;
 The sun shall light its shining folds,
 The Cross on which the Saviour died.
 Fling out the banner! angels bend
 In anxious silence o'er the sign;
 And vainly seek to comprehend
 The wonder of the Love Divine.
 Fling out the banner! heathen lands
 Shall see from far the glorious sight,
 And nations, crowding to be born,
 Baptise their spirits in its light.

Fling out the banner! sin-sick souls
That sink and perish in the strife,
Shall touch in faith its radiant hem,
And spring immortal into life.

Fling out the banner! let it float
Skyward and seaward, high and wide,
Our glory, only in the Cross;
Our only hope, the Crucified!

Fling out the banner! wide and high,
Seaward and skyward, let it shine:
Nor skill, nor might, nor merit ours;
We conquer only in that Sign.

CHARLES WILLIAM EVEREST, M.A. (1814-1877), for thirty-one years Rector of Hampden, near New-Haven, Conn., to whom we owe a fine hymn which has been so wretchedly mangled, especially in the third verse, in nearly every English collection, that I quote it in its proper form.

TAKE up thy cross, the Saviour said,
If thou wouldst My disciple be;
Take up thy cross with willing heart,
And humbly follow after Me.

Take up thy cross; let not its weight
Fill thy weak soul with vain alarm;
His strength shall bear thy spirit up,
And brace thy heart, and nerve thy arm.

Take up thy cross, nor heed the shame,
And let thy foolish pride be still;
The Lord refused not e'en to die
Upon a cross, on Calvary's hill.

Take up thy cross, then, in His strength,
And calmly sin's wild deluge brave;
'Twill guide thee to a better home,
And point to glory o'er the grave.

Take up thy cross, and follow on,
Nor think till death to lay it down;
For only he who bears the cross
May hope to wear the glorious crown.

In nearly every English hymnal, save my own, the third verse is made to read thus—

Take up thy cross, nor heed the shame;
Nor let thy foolish pride rebel;
The Lord for thee the cross endured,
To save thy soul from death and hell.

A more shameless attempt to force dogma into a hymn, singularly free from it, I do not remember.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE (born 1812), known all over the world as the authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the sister of Henry Ward Beecher, of whom, after hearing in London most of the chief preachers, she exclaimed, "Oh for half-an-hour of my brother Henry," is the authoress of hymns that are greatly prized in churches which do not regard poetry in hymns as a fatal disqualification to their use in public worship. The best known, and they are very beautiful, are the following:—"When winds are raging o'er the upper ocean;" "Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh;" and the hymn on "Abide with Me."

THAT mystic word of Thine, O sovereign Lord,
Is all too pure, too high, too deep for me;
Weary of striving, and with longing faint,
I breathe it back again in prayer to Thee!

Abide in me, I pray, and I in Thee!
From this good hour, O leave me never more!
Then shall the discord cease, the wound be healed,
The life-long bleeding of the soul be o'er.

Abide in me; o'ershadow by Thy love
Each half-formed purpose, and dark thought of sin;
Quench, ere it rise, each selfish, low desire,
And keep my soul, as Thine, calm and divine.

As some rare perfume in a vase of clay
Pervades it with a fragrance not its own,
So, when Thou dwellest in a mortal soul,
All heaven's own sweetness seems around it thrown.

Abide in me: there have been moments blest
When I have heard Thy voice and felt Thy power,
Then evil lost its grasp, and passion hushed,
Owned the divine enchantment of the hour.

These were but seasons, beautiful and rare;
Abide in me, and they shall ever be;
Fulfil at once Thy precept and my prayer—
Come, and abide in me, and I in Thee!

ARTHUR CLEVELAND COXE, D.D. (born 1818), Bishop of Western New York, is known by three hymns, all of which are of great merit. "How beautiful were the marks divine!" "Saviour, sprinkle many nations!" (one of the finest of our Missionary hymns), and the very fine verse usually set to a part song—"Now pray we for our country."

He is also the author of another hymn of no little merit, but lacking the unity of thought and compactness of expression of those we have named, "Breath of the Lord, O Spirit blest."

ELIZA SCUDDER (born 1821), possesses a poetic gift equal to that of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, with a greater mastery of hymn forms, which renders her productions more available for public worship. Her tiny little volume of only fifty pages, "Hymns and Sonnets," by E. S., is more worthy of retention than many a portly volume of hymns. In my judgment, two of her hymns, especially, are amongst the very finest of modern times—there is strength, tenderness, melody,—every quality needful to a good hymn to be found in them. This is high praise, but my readers shall judge for themselves by the following. The first she calls "Truth"—

THOU long disowned, reviled, oppressed,
 Strange Friend of human kind,
 Seeking through weary years a rest
 Within our hearts to find ;—

How late Thy bright and awful brow
 Breaks through these clouds of sin :
 Hail, Truth Divine ! we know Thee *now*,
 Angel of God, come in !

Come, though with purifying fire
 And swift-dividing sword,
 Thou of all nations the desire,
 Earth waits Thy cleansing word.

Struck by the lightning of Thy glance,
 Let old oppressions die :
 Before Thy cloudless countenance
 Let fear and falsehood fly.

Anoint our eyes with healing grace,
 To see, as not before,
 Our Father in our brother's face,
 Our Maker in His poor.

Flood our dark life with golden day :
 Convince, subdue, enthral ;
 Then to a mightier yield Thy sway,
 And Love be all in all.

The second is on "The Love of God"—

THOU Grace divine, encircling all,
 A shoreless, boundless sea,
 Wherein at last our souls must fall ;
 O Love of God most free.

When over dizzy heights we go,
A soft hand blinds our eyes,
And we are guided safe and slow ;
O Love of God most wise.
And though we turn us from Thy face,
And wander wide and long,
Thou hold'st us still in kind embrace ;
O Love of God most strong.
The saddened heart, the restless soul,
The toil-worn frame and mind,
Alike confess Thy sweet control,
O Love of God most kind.
But not alone Thy care we claim,
Our wayward steps to win ;
We know Thee by a dearer name ;
O Love of God within.
And filled and quickened by Thy breath,
Our souls are strong and free,
To rise o'er sin and fear and death ;
O Love of God! to Thee.

Her hymn on, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy Spirit?" which she calls "The Quest," is lovely, but a little too subtle for public worship. Her "Vesper Hymn" and "Collect for Ascension Day" are both admirable.

When the Church frees herself from a blind clinging to old hymns, simply because they are old, and becomes free to receive whatever is worthy, for her worship-song, Miss Scudder will be more largely represented in our hymnals. I shall be glad if my reference to her should direct any future editors to a consideration of her exquisite hymns.

Turning to the Presbyterian section of the Church in America, there is little to detain us. She has no Bonar in her ranks. All her writers are more or less echoes.

SAMUEL DAVIES (1723-1761), the successor of Jonathan Edwards as President of Princeton College, is remembered as the author of the striking hymn, "Great God of wonders all Thy ways," which used to be popular, but is somewhat fading in popularity on account of its very strong expressions concerning sinners.

JAMES WADDELL ALEXANDER, D.D. (1804-1859), is remembered as the translator of the best version of Paul Gerhardt's noble hymn, "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden," which begins, "O Sacred Head now wounded," and of a version of the "Stabat Mater" by Jacopone da Tode.

THOMAS MACKELLAR (born 1812) is the author of many hymns,

which have a certain popularity in America, but I have not been able, though I have examined them carefully, to discern a single one distinctive enough to be worthy of importation into England.

GEORGE DUFFIELD, M.A. (born 1818), and successively pastor of Presbyterian Churches in Brooklyn, Bloomfield, Philadelphia, and the West, is the author of one of the best known and most popular of American hymns. As no other hymn from his pen has the force of "Stand up! stand up for Jesus!" it is natural to conclude that this hymn owes much to the affecting circumstances under which it was written. In 1858 the Rev. Dudley A. Tyng had been engaged in a remarkable mission in Philadelphia, and on the Sunday before his death had preached in Jaynes Hall one of the most stirring sermons of modern times, so that out of the five thousand present at the delivery, at least a thousand are believed to have been converted. On the following Wednesday he left his study for a moment, and went to a barn where a mule was at work on a horse-power, shelling corn. Patting him on the neck, the sleeve of his silk study gown caught in the cogs of the wheel, and his arm was torn out by the roots, and in a few hours he died. Just before his death he sent the message, "Stand up for Jesus!" to those assembled at the Young Men's Christian Association prayer-meeting,—a message which suggested this hymn, and formed the concluding exhortation of the funeral sermon for Mr. Tyng, which was preached from Eph. vi. 14 by its author. It was printed as a fly-leaf for the Sunday-school scholars by the superintendent; thence it found its way into a Baptist newspaper, and afterwards passed, either in its English or in translated forms, all over the world. It was the favourite song of the Christian soldiers in the army of the James in the American War. The original contains two more verses than are usually now printed in most hymnals.

To THOMAS HASTINGS, Mus. Doc. (1784-1872), we owe three hymns, "Now be the gospel banner!" "Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning!" and "Return, O wanderer, to thy home!" which is an appeal rather than, in the truest sense, a hymn. It was suggested by the closing words of a sermon to which Dr. Hastings listened in 1830—"Sinner, come home! come home! come home!"

Of the other hymn-writers of this section of the Church, about twenty in number, there is no need to speak, as their hymns are little known in this country. Of those belonging to other sections of the American Church, I shall speak in succeeding articles.

W. GARRETT HORDER.

CAN WE POPULARIZE THE EPISTLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT?

SEVERAL reasons lead to the conclusion that a new version of the epistolary portions of the New Testament, aiming at a popular standard of diction, may be acceptable both to the clerical profession and to the general public, so far as it can be said to share the interest of the subject.

All the accredited versions of the New Testament, or of portions of it, so far as I know, aim at incorporating the maximum possible of the Authorized Version of 1611, which clung in its turn with similar fidelity to an older version or versions; and although vast energy and industry, with many higher gifts, are conspicuous in the Revised Version of a few years ago, it cannot be said to have achieved much on the side of popular diction. Nor, indeed, is this any reproach to the committees of that revision, since their commission "straitly charged" them to retain as aforesaid the maximum possible of the Authorized Version. Without this large measure of conservatism in phrase and style secured, it is probable that no such large measure of ecclesiastical consent as was in fact obtained would have been possible. The obvious consequence is that the writers of the Bible address the English-speaking people of the late nineteenth century in the phraseology and style of the early seventeenth.

If indeed we were restricted to the use of one version only there would be a great deal more to be urged in favour of this tradition of retention than can be said now. But obviously that is not the case. There exist as wholes the Authorized Version and the Revised side by side, besides a large number of portions of the Sacred Text edited by various highly gifted men, many of which include a translation of the part so edited. But as far as I know them, their rule is the same:

to keep as close to existing standards as their own view of the inspired meaning will allow them.

The purely narrative portions of the New Testament, for of that only I will now speak, do not appreciably suffer from this treatment. But with the epistolary portions the case is very different. They have, I think, suffered all along, since their earliest presentation in English, from the translators clinging too closely to the idioms of the Greek; and if in the year 1611, by reason of this tenacity of the letter, they were somewhat obscure, in the present day have probably become much more so.

For an epistle after all is a letter, a communication from A to B, and therefore essentially subjective, whereas a narrative is essentially objective. Nor does the case appreciably differ, whether B be an individual or a numerous community. So far as the faults, questionings, and human weaknesses of our people at present agree and fall in with those of the Apostolic Churches, that people stand in the place of the first recipients of these letters; while the eternal principles of faith, practice, sacraments, worship, etc., which they embody, are addressed to Christians of every age. But since they were written, ancient society has passed through mediæval into modern. The laws of thought remain the same, but the whole apparatus of expression has been influenced by change. From east to west, from old to new, from the now dead Levantine Greek of the Christian era, to the living English vernacular, spread more or less over two-thirds of the habitable globe, and spreading wider every day—all this measures the vastness of the interval which interpretation has now to span. Further, the epistolary style is necessarily a familiar one, stamped with features of time, place, and circumstance, transparently perspicuous once, and for that very reason liable the more to obscurity now. The literary atmosphere which prevailed from Alexandria to Tarsus more than eighteen centuries ago is decomposed, and for us recomposed into one generated by more than four centuries of print, and more than two of newspapers. Arts and sciences, manners, customs, and conventions have suffered

and are suffering expansion, development, and transmutation at a rate of speed perpetually accelerating.

With all these adverse conditions dead against the perspicuity of an epistle from a writer of the old world to a reader of the new, is it not desirable, nay imperative, that no needless weight of difficulty should be added; that, on the contrary, all that can be done should be done to minimize by the utmost transparency of adequate phrase employed, such difficulties as are inherent and inevitable?

Take the somewhat, although inadequately parallel case, of the greater Greek Prose Classic Authors. Of all these translations exist in which, where need arises, the letter is sacrificed to the spirit of the original. In our Authorized, and therefore in our Revised Version of the New Testament Epistles, where, for the above reasons, the demand for that sacrifice is mostly greater, the opposite principle prevails, and the spirit is too often sacrificed to the letter. Here only men mostly translate as if they were afraid of the idioms of their own language;—only here, where lucidity is most important, and, especially in the argumentative, doctrinal and emotional passages, obscurity is most fatal, are they content to “serve in the oldness of the letter” still?

No doubt this has arisen from a sense of scrupulous fidelity, combined occasionally, as in the Revisers, with a zeal for scholarly exactness. Nor is it wise or reverent to withhold homage from either of these principles as such. But in their application “the half” is often “greater than the whole,” and it is plainly possible to carry them, when combined at a high power, to a point at which common sense is puzzled and simple faith bewildered. And here it seems worth while to notice how little testimony Holy Scripture itself offers in favour of rigorous exactness, or rather how ample is often the divergence between the Hebrew and the LXX. which it sanctions. For the LXX. was, it must never be forgotten, the current form of the Old Testament in the hands of the inspired penmen of the New. As recorded by them, our Divine Master cites the former in, I believe, thirty-seven places; of these thirty-three agree nearly verbatim with the LXX. as we have

it, while two only differ from it, and agree with the Hebrew. There remains one which differs from both, and one which partially agrees with both. Moreover, out of the whole thirty-seven, only six can be said to agree exactly with the Hebrew. "What saith the Scripture?" is St. Paul's repeated question; his answer to which is a citation from the LXX. In short, there are in the entire New Testament about 350 such citations, not a few of several verses in length, of which not above fifty can fairly be reckoned as advisedly deviating from the LXX. text. This bulk is nearly that of the entire Epistle to the Hebrews; and that document itself is to the extent of about four-fifths of its volume made up of such citations. There is a tradition that it first existed in Hebrew (*i.e.*, Syro-Chaldee), and that what we have is a translation. However that may be, the fact of its being addressed apparently to Palestinian Jews makes its large adoption of, and predominant agreement with, the LXX. a still more remarkable fact. At the same time it may be noticed that the New Testament writers often cite the LXX. with a freedom and laxity which I fear would scandalize a committee of modern revisers. Now here we have a double measure of inexactness—the LXX., which often inexactly represents the Hebrew, is itself inexactly cited by an inspired apostle. After the above momentous tributes to its authority, it is comparatively of light weight to urge that (if we except Origen, and that not often) it is the unquestioned representative of the Old Testament to the universal Church of the Fathers down to Jerome, and is so to the Eastern Church in unbroken continuity to this day. And yet it is an elementary fact of Biblical scholarship, that from it you may copiously illustrate (and that in places where the Hebrew text was as we have it) every fault short of studied infidelity which a translation can easily have, from the most servile literalism in some, to the loosest paraphrase in others. I think I have made out a plea for abatement in the punctilious and sometimes pedantic preciseness, which, on the whole, governs the domain of modern Biblical translation.

Thus far the question is purely general. But when we come to the individuality of the New Testament Epistles, the

difficulties which time interposes between writer and student are in the greater number, those, viz., which we ascribe to St. Paul, enormously magnified by his personal characteristics. Leaving inspiration for a moment aside, he is, except perhaps Cicero, the greatest letter-writer of the ancient world of whom an adequate quantity remains. His letters are true to their epistolary kind—the product of the occasion and circumstances, written with a lively sense of the immediate, quivering and flashing with the personality of the writer. In these respects, as also in quick power of seizing the argumentative point of view, in vivid keenness of emotion, and many-sided human sympathy, Cicero, the most amiable of all the great ancients of whom we know as much, and far away the foremost of their letter-writers, may be compared with St. Paul. And here one may perhaps notice, that to attempt a translation of the letters *ad Atticum* in the style of faithfulness to the outward form of expression which governs the great school of our New Testament translators, would be little else than to present the great Roman's lively sallies flat and dead. But in all those qualities which from the moral sphere reflect themselves in the intellectual, St. Paul, and indeed all the literary Apostolate (setting inspiration wholly apart) leave Cicero dwarfed and distanced. These are specially the power derived from earnestness, and in St. Paul's case the fervour and fulness, the intense urgency, the beseeching persuasiveness, derived from that abundant sympathy radiated on a sin-sunken world. But in him both inner temperament and outward circumstance cause special difficulties of style. I can only give a few points here in illustration of what I say.

1. His readiness in seizing and incorporating secondary thoughts before the primary have been fully dealt with. These latter thus open out into real or seeming parentheses, which are sometimes left pending, sometimes reabsorbed by the main thought. This latter is, however, reinforced and furthered by them. Thus his style rather resembles a cellular tissue in which what seem excrescences become accretions, and which may advance by growth on many sides, rather than a clear and compact logical vertebration.

2. Abrupt reference to the great principles on which his mind seems always dwelling and working. Even when fullest of practical detail, he is never too full to find room for a reference to these. They start forth suddenly like the cones on a volcano, from the upthrust of the heat-force working deep below. In the discussion of some question, perhaps of tertiary importance or lower, propounded by his correspondents, we are thus met by some grand outcrop of primary principle. A similarly abrupt use of quotations, express or allusive, is a parallel and secondary development of the same mental bye-law, working in the literary sphere.

3. A certain cumulateness of style, in which there is a *crescendo* movement through the whole, culminating in a grand finale of enthusiasm, and in which the successive thoughts, sometimes in an alliterative or antithetical setting, follow meanwhile a law of association merely. In this he seems to me to resemble closely the Prophet Isaiah¹—that typical exponent of the Semitic mind—whose grand evangelic outlooks into the future of a heathen "people of God," were as closely reflected in his own thoughts as they were exemplified and realized in his own life and labours. The Esaian manner is also prominent in the frequent use of plays upon language, in which, however, the selected terms have each a relevance, and form so many advancing points along a progressive line.

4. But St. Paul, in his longer Epistles at anyrate, always seems to write under pressure. There occurs in the thoughts a constant tendency to overflow the language, and in the dictation to outrun the amanuensis. The "care of all the Churches" is upon him as he writes to any one. Moreover, his imagination seems often so powerful that he conceives himself in the midst of the Church, or its elders and prophets, bishops and deacons, as gathered about him, and addresses them as if present and listening. A large part of the Epistle to the

¹ For a string of cumulative terms, abstract or concrete, *cf.* Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39; 1 Cor. iii. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 4-8, vii. 11, with Is. iv. 2, 3, vii. 19, xi. 2, xxi. 15, xxii. 12, 13, xxix. 6. For a string of contrasted pairs, *cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 42-44, with Is. xxiv. 2. For a series of terms interrogatively put, *cf.* 1 Cor. i. 20, with Is. xxxiii. 18. For a string of remonstrant questions, *cf.* Rom. ix. 20, 21, with Is. x. 15.

Galatians, and the latter part of 2 Cor., may be taken as specimens of this effacement of distance and absence. Thus we have a combination of intense fervour of spirit with conversational familiarity of style.

All these various characteristics, and they are but a few out of many, import their difficulties; and the total of their drawback is great enough to justify all the economies which language affords. The style of St. John is as completely the opposite to that of St. Paul, as if they had belonged to different centuries and different hemispheres. His solid and simple aphorisms, presented each like a single flower on its own stalk, and his delightful way of briefly circling round the point which fixes his regard, and calmly settling on it again, without discursive or allusive touches, form a style as equable as the balanced soaring of a bird. His only long sentence is the opening one of his first Epistle, and it contains his only parenthesis, which breaks its back, and he resumes.

There is not—and this marks the wholeness and absolute-ness of his handling—a single recognizable quotation in any of these Epistles; while their vocabulary is far less than that wielded in the same space by any writer of the New Testament, probably by any ancient writer at all. A "milkiness of blood," as somebody called it in the last century, seems to pervade the man, and so the style. There is accordingly less to call for a new presentation of the Johannine Epistles than for that of any others. And indeed, whether to pursue this attempt beyond the Pauline and the Epistle to the Hebrews, or even so far as that, is a question, at anyrate as concerns this Review, rather for others than for myself. I suppose that the public will soon make up their own mind on the subject, and that its expression will carry the usual weight.

But such a work as I contemplate is barred by its very conditions from the possibility of being an artistic success. The ancient epistolary forms of salutation and valediction, the benedictions, ascriptions, and doxologies remain mostly fixed in hard crystals of language. The leading terms of all spiritual argument, "justification, sanctification," and the like, resist change, and have often secured a quasi-technical value; so that to attempt to vary them would cause more

obscurity than it would relieve. Further, in simply didactic and hortatory passages the noble simplicity of the Authorized Version is often more effective than anything which modern phrase could substitute. It follows that the work must be a thing of shreds and patches, the old garment continually asserting itself amidst the new material. Such a result must always dissatisfy all critics who have a grain of taste, and disappoint most of all the patch-worker himself. We shall travel on a road which is seamed with the ruts of centuries, broad and deep, and often smooth; and the wheel which runs sometimes in them, and sometimes out of them, can never run easily.

The sole excuse for attempting it is the hope of its usefulness. As regards the clergy, all social influences tend to increase the number of those who have but little, if any, knowledge of Greek, and still slenderer opportunities of study after ordination than before. To such, a presentation of the Apostles' thoughts, not in

English cut on Greek and Latin,
As fustian heretofore on satin,

but in language as near as may be to that of current use, may be valuable. And this, perhaps, may apply to the various Dissenting Bodies, at least as much as to the Church, and to America and the Colonies, as well as to religious communities at home.

On the great body of the laity everywhere the strain and burden of civilization seems likely to increase, if that be possible. The possibilities of sustaining thought, or of thinking twice over any subject not in the routine of their business, become daily fewer. To men so circumstanced all facilities are important economics, and all thoughts especially which do not pack into easy words are repellent. The Authorized Version may be pure gold, or with only so much alloy as to assist its currency; the Revised may be of even a higher standard than the mint. But still, silver and small change, and even baser metal, have their uses too, so long as they carry the true Image and Superscription.

HENRY HAYMAN, D.D.

CHURCH POLITY A PART OF CHRISTIANITY.

SHOULD any of our readers please to affirm that the Bible is a mere human book, and that through it God does not speak to man, we do not stop to enter into controversy with him; it is sufficient to say at present that we do not agree in that opinion. We assume from the first the Christian and Protestant standpoint, that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments reveal the will of God to man. We hold with the Lutherans, that "the only rule according to which all dogmas and all doctors ought to be estimated and judged is no other than the Prophetic and Apostolic writings." We hold with the Presbyterians, that "the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how to glorify God." We hold with the Anglicans, that they "contain all things necessary to salvation," and are the "ultimate rule and standard of faith." In short, we accept the statement of Chillingworth, that "the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants," and sincerely believe that, outside its intimations, we have during our sojourn in this world no other authoritative guide in matters of religion. Everything essential to Christianity is contained in the Bible, either by express statement or by necessary implication.

On a more minute examination of this extraordinary book, we find that the moral and spiritual truths therein revealed are imbedded in a setting of historical matter, which furnishes a test of authenticity and lends them interest, but does not touch to any great extent the faith and life of modern ages. Doubtless we are concerned to know that the historic setting itself is fact, for religious truth would be in some degree tainted even by association on the same page with anything merely traditional or false. But what is of most advantage to

the after ages is to have light and guidance on all that bears directly on the faith and conduct of Christians. On four great subjects in particular—the doctrines to be believed, the duties to be practised, the worship to be offered, and the constitution of that great society known as the Church, we expect to find something in a Divine Revelation, for on these subjects specially we need light and help. On every one of them the Bible has much to say. The business of those who profess to take it as their guide is to read and consider, to ascertain what it actually says on these topics of inquiry, and to receive and act upon its intimations. This is not to be done by reasoning as to what it must contain, prior to investigation; a right result can only be reached by a calm and careful search.

The strange thing is, however, that Christian people not a few, who are quite content to take their doctrine, their morality, and the precedents of worship from Holy Scripture, often refuse to be bound by what it says on the subject of ecclesiastical polity. They tell us, that they do not find any particular system of Church Government laid down in the Bible; and from this, as from an axiom, they infer that “any polity or any agencies which teach best, rule best, and suit best any particular age or race, are most accredited to common sense as providential.”

There is one sense in which the statement from which this inference is derived is quite true. The Bible teaches nothing in the form of a system; it presents neither a system of doctrine, nor a system of ethics, nor a system of worship, nor a system of church government. It is in fact as free of all system as Nature in its primal condition is free of science. In vain you search the earth or the heavens, the rock or the ocean, for a botanical, an astronomical, or a geological system. Neither Nature nor the Bible turns out systems ready made. What Nature does is to present a series of facts and operations which we are to observe carefully; from observed facts we are to discover the laws by which Nature operates, and out of these laws to construct a system. This system, usually called science, will be more or less complete according to the accuracy of our observation, the extent of our induction, and

the soundness of our reasoning. So it is with the Bible. It presents nothing in systematic order. The Decalogue is the only exception, and that is an exception more apparent than real. Its method in general is to throw out a multitude of isolated facts, and precepts and sentiments, which we are to gather and classify and harmonise, in order to reach the general principles or laws out of which a system is constructed. The Bible does not therefore present a system; it only presents the facts or Divine elements out of which the system is made. Some no doubt object to any such attempt being made; but it lies upon them to show that a process of analysis, which has proved so useful in every other department of knowledge, is not to be followed in Theology.

By a diligent investigation of the words of Holy Scripture, conducted in a spirit of humility and prayer, it is possible to reach a series of truths which, when combined into principles, will yield a system of doctrine, or of morality, or of worship, or of church polity, closely approximating, if honestly and fairly done, to what is the revealed will of God on these various topics of inquiry. An approximation is all we venture to claim, for infallibility is not an attribute of man. We are only erring creatures at the best; and however thoroughly an investigation is conducted, we can never be sure that we have not overlooked something, that we have given to every clause of an ancient record its right interpretation, and that we have given its due weight to every word. But on the conditions stated being present, assuming that the Bible is to be understood as any other book in similar circumstances is to be understood, we may be confident that for all practical purposes we have obtained a true conception of what Divine Revelation teaches on any of these subjects.

Take in illustration the subject of Church Polity. From a careful examination of the written Scriptures we can ascertain, with a fair degree of certainty, the nature, the component elements, duties, privileges, and design of the local congregation—that is, the unit of which, multiplied indefinitely, the Church universal consists. From the same source we can ascertain the origin, names, orders, functions, duties, and privi-

leges of the Christian ministry. It is equally possible to discover the Scriptural mode of their appointment, the ordinances which they are to administer, and the nature and extent of that rule which they are to exercise in the Christian community. It may also be clearly known whether church rulers are to act as individuals or in association with each other; whether they are justified in exercising jurisdiction over the churches committed to their care; and if so, the nature, limit, and purpose of that jurisdiction: the relationship in which associated congregations and ministers stand to each other; the financial sources by which church operations are sustained; and the relationship of the Lord Jesus to the whole organisation. These points, once established on the sure foundation of Holy Scripture, and harmonised with each other, fit into an outline or system of church order which, to a devout and humble reader of the Bible, comes with all the authority of the Divine.

We do not say, of course, that the form of Church Polity drawn from the Bible is as important to the individual soul as the doctrine, morality, or worship therein revealed. From the nature of the case it is not so important; so far as we can see, it is not so closely connected with personal salvation; it does not fill so large and prominent a place in the volume of inspiration; it does not, to an equal extent, control the conduct and the thought of men; it does not so much obtrude itself on our daily life. But the presumption is, that if instruction on the subject was not needed, it would not have been revealed; and that it was revealed, not to be undervalued and neglected, but to be studied and used as a guide. If an ecclesiastical system can be drawn with as much probability from the Bible as a system of doctrine, or of duty, or of worship, why should the one be ignored more than the others? Is it not, in all its essential elements, a portion of Divine truth? No doubt, Christians in general are more divided in opinion in regard to Church Polity; but may not that arise from the fact that men often allow present ecclesiastical connections and prejudices unconsciously to warp their judgments, and do not make a vigorous effort to examine

it with an impartial mind? The very fact of so much division is an additional reason for giving more attention to the matter, and after ascertaining the testimony of God, for recognising and submitting to what He says. If a Divine plan of Church government is so very desirable, by what authority do men practically set aside what God has given, and set up something else in its stead?

There are people indeed who, notwithstanding anything the Bible says, imagine that they are free to adopt "any polity or any agencies which teach best, rule best, and suit best any particular age or race," and who affirm that "whatever is good, helpful, and beautiful is divine, whether laid down in the Bible or not." But that is alike a non-Protestant and a non-Christian sentiment. To say so is simply to discard the Bible as a rule of faith and life, and cannot be said consistently by any man who accepts the Holy Scriptures as divine. If a man possessed of a fallen nature knows the good, the useful, and the beautiful without the Bible, it is very manifest that he has no need of the Bible. He who takes up this position should let us know how, apart from a written revelation, we are in this corrupt world to find out the good. A Romanist who believes in a hierarchy, with its roots in every land and a universal bishop at the top, honestly believes that his system is "good, and useful, and beautiful." Other Christians, with a hierarchy not so grand, or perhaps no hierarchy at all, see an equal amount of goodness, utility, and beauty in the simpler systems of Church order which they have adopted. Who is to decide between them? Various systems flourish at the same time, and strike their roots into the same soil, so that we cannot say any of them is unsuited to our particular age or race; are we to say that these contradictory and opposing systems are alike divine? If we set aside the polity divinely revealed, how can we consistently hold by a Divine dogma or duty, or rite of worship set down in the Scripture? Are we to discard Scripture testimony on all these subjects together; and are we, without a supernatural guide, to set out on a fantastic hunt of our own after the beautiful, and the useful, and the good?

Is it not in accordance with common sense, that every principle of polity, and every element of divine worship, as well as every dogma and precept, should be tested by the Holy Scriptures—the ultimate standard of faith? If they are given to discover to the creature the will of the Almighty, nothing can be more reasonable than that on all religious questions the voice of God ought to be heard. But if we set aside the Bible, or rather if we remove from the judgment-seat Him who speaks to man through the Bible, then nothing remains but that we submit to be led either by the infallibility of Rome, or the instinct of our own depraved nature, as to what is the beautiful and the good; and neither guide is, in our opinion, trustworthy or safe. The language of the objector is that of a man who, if he ever had faith in the Bible, has now lost it, and who occupies ground at variance with the great Protestant position that won the battle of the Reformation, namely, that the Word of God, contained in the Scriptures, is the only rule of faith and conduct.

Ignorance of the Scriptural principles of Church Polity, and indifference to their great value, has opened the door to many errors. Till we examine and reflect upon the subject, we scarcely suspect how many unscriptural things have come in to deform the Church in this very way. If Christians throughout the ages had possessed any distinct views of what the rule of faith teaches on the Christian ministry, it would have been very difficult for them to admit its hierarchical development on the one side, or the denial of its divine institution on the other. From inacquaintance with what Scripture teaches in regard to the laying on of hands, a multitude of additional ceremonies were added, in hope, we suppose, of making ordination more “beautiful and useful and good,” and many unwarranted inferences were drawn from it—indelibility of orders, apostolic succession, and so on. Mistaken conceptions of the Scriptural discipline has, by a series of small changes, led gradually up to the prevailing practices of penance, indulgences, auricular confession, and priestly absolution. The infallibility of general councils, and of the Pope as representing the general council, has claimed

support from a perversion of what is told us in the fifteenth of Acts regarding the meeting of the apostles and elders. If the Church had kept a firm grasp of what the Scriptures teach about the supremacy of Christ, it would with far more reluctance have accepted either the headship of the Roman bishop, or that of the civil power. It is wonderful how many errors have flowed in on the side of Church Polity, and how ignorance of the subject, or indifference to its value as a part of Christianity, has made the admission of gross errors easy. The Church of Christ has long suffered from the evils so produced; and from her obvious dislike to enter on the subject seriously and without prejudice, she is likely to suffer very much longer.

Perplexing questions may be asked on the subject, which it would be hard to answer. Every existing system of Christian Church Polity still retains something of the Divine. Perhaps no existing form, however excellent, conforms in everything to the Scriptural pattern. Any attempt at a complete restoration, owing to the altered circumstances of our time, must prove a failure. To make it workable something would need to be supplied; and if carried out with changes, it would vary less or more from the Divine model. The robes of boyhood are not suited to the full-grown man. Alterations in the Scriptural Polity of the New Testament Church, are to some extent needed to meet the altered condition of new countries and new ages. Divine principles need to be wisely developed; unsuitable practices must be allowed to drop out; new agencies have to be used and adapted to the grand objects which the Church has been founded to promote. All this we freely admit. But the essentials of Church Polity revealed in the Bible ought never to be rejected; and new elements should not be admitted without necessity or manifest utility. Unauthorised and unnecessary changes, made often to gratify somebody's sense of the useful, and beautiful, and good, always appear innocent; but they are not so; they in fact are the root of the mischief, and in proportion to their number and variety are sure to grow into something that the besom of reform must one day sweep away.

T. WITHEROW, D.D.

FORCES ANTAGONISTIC TO CHRISTIANITY.

No. I.

EXPLANATIONS.

BY forces antagonistic to Christianity we mean hostile forces, in so far as they are hostile. The qualification is important. Positivism, for instance, may well be regarded as an antagonistic force. But then the stream of Positivism is not unmixed. There blend with it certain elements of good; and these, of course, are not against the Christian religion. A similar remark might be made of all non-Christian systems. They are clouds rather than lights, but still they have some light. Here we have the principle, broad as the earth—whatever is good, under whatever name, is friendly; whatever is evil, under whatever name, is hostile to Christianity. We say under whatever name; for, unhappily, good is sometimes called—even believed to be—evil, and evil good. For example, on the one hand, the early Christians were often by the Romans called atheists, and Christianity was commonly regarded by the Jews as worse than a blasphemous fable. On the other hand, many Christians at one time called slavery a Scriptural institution, and regarded persecution as a perfectly legitimate weapon against heretics. To-day there are sceptics who call Christianity a worn-out superstition, and Christians who believe all scepticism to be only an attempt to overthrow a religion that condemns the profligate life of the sceptics. Thus it happens that if anything good or evil is only labelled with this or that name, there is some chance of its being accepted or rejected without inquiry into its true nature. Hence the warning, that we must not only note the name but also carefully examine the thing itself.

Having thus explained the meaning of the title, we now ask, How far have we the right to demand from opponents, opponents from us, the definition of the terms employed?

The answer must depend partly upon what is meant by a definition, and partly upon what it is we are asked to define. As regards the first it is seldom, outside of mathematics, that a complete assignment of limits is possible. To define with perfect accuracy requires perfect knowledge. So long as knowledge grows, definitions must be subject to change. But this cannot excuse the loose and careless employment of terms in which the same word or phrase is used in such variable senses as to render clear apprehension impossible. It is true that some of the causes of ambiguity are to be found partly in the present imperfection of our thinking faculties, partly in the defects of language whether as the instrument or as the expression of thought. These are, so to speak, essential causes, and can be removed only by the comparatively slow action of increasing culture from generation to generation. But there are also causes which may be called accidental. Thus a writer has his imagination fired by the wonderful fitness of a word to express a special meaning, and he launches what seems to him his "new creation" upon the sea of literature. Unfortunately, however, the term has already other meanings, and these, when the freshness of the peculiar use has worn off, begin to assert themselves, and it soon becomes impossible, without some explanation, to ascertain which meaning is intended. Then, of course, there is the very common cause—much more pardonable in speaking than in writing—carelessness. And yet another, strange as it may seem, is the demand for definition itself. As experience proves, men readily forgive themselves faults that are avoidable, when they are censured for faults that are not avoidable. Hence, feeling that they cannot define completely, they do not define at all. We shall get more if we ask less. Yet, the least that can be asked is, accurate description of the thing under consideration and uniform use of the word. Terms ought to be, like faithful friends, always the same.

As regards the things which we are called upon to define, these are of three sorts. Some cannot be defined, though well known; some it is useless to define, because no uncertainty in relation to them exists; and some need to be defined

that they may be identified. Yet let no one suppose that absence of definition is absence of knowledge. The peasant may be wholly unable to define a plough, but it does not follow that either he or any fellow-labourer to whom he speaks does not know a plough. There are objects of knowledge quite as familiar to all men as is the plough to the peasant, but which do not admit of definition at all. Every one will acknowledge that it is not definition to describe the meaning of a term in language less comprehensible than the term itself. Thus, for example, have we for that which is represented by space, time, matter, motion, force, self, any simpler or more intelligible terms than these? If not, then it would be contrary to reason to ask for a definition; or to pretend that, because we cannot define, we do not know self, force, motion, matter, time or space. May it not be said that the perceived impossibility of definition is, in these cases, a proof not of the littleness but of the greatness of our knowledge? For is it not because we know so much that we are prepared to say that that which we know cannot, from the nature of the case, be compressed within the limits of our defining phrases?

We have here the true answer to the atheist's demand in reference to God, and to the underlying assumption that if we cannot define we do not know. Indeed, it is because we know Him as manifested everywhere, yet as everywhere more than His manifestation, that we feel so strongly all attempts at definition must for ever fall immeasurably short of expressing even what we perceive of His perfections, how much more the perfections themselves. Definition is the expression of limits, and therefore there can be no definition where no limits are perceived. Still that is no reason for denying the reality of our knowledge. It would be manifestly false to say we do not see the ocean, simply because we cannot see its shores. It would be no less false to say we cannot know God, simply because we can perceive in Him no limits. St. Paul's philosophy was as true as his devotion was deep, when he taught the Church to say, we know Him who passes knowledge. Certainly this is the largest and highest

and deepest knowledge we possess; nay, it is a knowledge to which all specific kinds are but tributaries; a knowledge which is always increasing, but whose increase itself perpetually serves to show that the Being whom we contemplate has no limits in space or time.

It appears, then, that our conclusion that no definition is possible arises, not as assumed from ignorance, but from knowledge of God. Even if it were not possible to know, we might still know *of* God. Even though we should never know God in Himself, that does not prevent us knowing Him in His works. Even if knowledge were defined as comprehension, shutting out apprehension altogether; even if we had no knowledge of God at all, that fact would not in the least justify the atheist's position. For it is not a question of knowledge only—it is also one of belief. Are we not all familiar with the truth that there are often reasonable grounds for believing where there are no means of knowing? The fact is, the greater part of all that passes for scientific knowledge is only scientific belief. So long, then, as we have grounds for belief in God, the absence of knowledge, were it a fact, as atheists wrongly suppose it to be, would afford no reason for Atheism. We conclude, therefore, that the demand for a definition of God is one which is as contrary to reason as it is revolting to reverence.

Definition is, however, always necessary where some uncertainty exists as to the sense intended. We have thought it well to give two or three examples, asking our readers to extend, at their leisure, the list for themselves. It is desirable to notice in passing, that many words employed in this controversy have departed, more or less, from their original or proper meaning. In some cases it is now hopeless to recall them within the limits their derivation suggests; in others, the effort, in the interests of exact thought, may well be made; and in every instance it ought to be clear which of the meanings we intend. The first example we give is the word Infidelity. Originally, it meant unfaithfulness, and had no reference whatever to scepticism or doubt. On the contrary, it rather implied obligation or duty recognised by conscience,

but ignored in conduct. It may, therefore, be legitimately applied to those who in profession live for Christ, but in fact live for themselves. The infidelity of professing Christians is the most formidable foe with which Christianity has to contend. That they so often live contrary to their professions is logically a condemnation of themselves, not of their creed; but practically the result is to weaken faith in the reality of Christianity, and to afford occasion to the avowed enemies of Christ to say that His religion is a failure. The case is different when we regard the weaknesses of Christians. Faults that are not intentional, still more faults of which the Christian has not yet become conscious, cannot be rightly taken as illustrations of infidelity or unfaithfulness. Besides, Christianity is, in one of its aspects, avowedly a process of salvation, and it is no more reasonable to take a man who is being saved as an example of complete Christianity than it is to take a man who is recovering from a serious illness as an example of perfect health. It is those who pretend to be set on the service of Christ and are not who are the real infidels. At the same time it must be admitted that this is not the common or popular use of the word. In every-day language an infidel means any one whose teaching or belief is opposed to Christianity, and is used indifferently for sceptic, freethinker, atheist, agnostic, positivist, secularist, deist, and sometimes rationalist, or even unitarian. This indiscriminating employment of the word is not so common to-day as it was twenty-five years ago, but it is very objectionable on at least two grounds. It leaves quite uncertain which of the several opponents we have in view, and it carries with it an implication of evil motive which, at least, ought not to be taken for granted. For while many, without doubt, become infidels in the second sense only because they are already infidels in the first sense, yet there are others of whom no such assertion can be truly made. And in these cases it is wrong to use the word, since it implies what we do not or ought not to mean. Our terms should not be larger than our ideas.

The word sceptic is open to a like criticism. A sceptic

was at first one who sees, and may have next meant one who is trying to see, and then one who is uncertain as to what it is he sees; then one who seeks the truth, but is in doubt as to what is the truth; and finally, as doubt so often ends in unbelief, one who denies. In some instances, it is employed, indeed, as meaning one who seeks the truth yet with the emphasis on "seek" rather than "truth." The present writer was on one occasion speaking in public on this subject, when a hearer rose and said, "After all, what is there better than seeking the truth?" The reply was, "Finding it," an answer which apparently astonished the inquirer as much as if it then entered his mind for the first time that the object of seeking *is finding*. My friend belonged to the class of men who are not only sceptics in the sense of being nominally perpetual doubters, practically perpetual deniers, but who are also quite satisfied to be *always* sceptics. This glorification of scepticism, as if it were something to be valued for its own sake, was once, and perhaps still is, very common. It appears to arise from a singular misuse of the word. It may seem odd, but it is true that scepticism is to some minds a sort of faith, almost a worship. The dictum that there is more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds does not apply in this case. For here it really is not a question of doubt, whether honest or dishonest. The truth is, that what is called doubt or scepticism is simply a certain set of opinions or beliefs—a *creed* under another name. In some curious way these self-styled sceptics have managed to convince themselves that scepticism is but another name for intellectual freedom, political liberty, and scientific progress. One cannot help thinking there must have been something terribly wrong in the historic action of Christianity, as presented in the several churches, to render such a misuse possible. Happily, not only are men beginning to distinguish between the Christianity of Christ in the New Testament and the Christianity of the Church in history, but also the latter is gradually becoming more like the former. So, in time, all sincere souls will see and say that the highest, if not the only function of scepticism, is to make way for a true faith. Meanwhile, it is desirable to rescue, if possible, the word from its common misuse, and bring it back

from denial to doubt. At all events, let us not give it a credit in the one meaning which it deserves only in the other.

It is worth while to look into this a little more in detail. There are from the present point of view four possible attitudes of mind, for two of which it is not easy to find appropriate words. The first is belief, the second is simple absence of belief, the third is doubt, the fourth is scepticism—in the sense, to use an objectionable word, of disbelief or denial, or what is now commonly meant by unbelief. The first and third present no difficulty; belief and doubt are terms that can scarcely be misunderstood. But the second and fourth—the simple absence of belief and the actual presence of disbelief—need some distinct terms; unbelief would etymologically serve for the third, but unfortunately it has already the sense of the fourth. Until some better words are found we can but call the second non-belief, and the fourth disbelief. The four attitudes of mind, then, may be thus expressed. The first, belief; the second, non-belief; the third doubt; the fourth, disbelief; with scepticism as wavering between the third and fourth.

Freethought (together with certain phrases that belong to the same class) presents similar difficulties. Freethinking ought to mean, but does not, thinking that is free. It is intended, perhaps, to have some such meaning when altered by unbelievers, but in common use it is only another name for one who rejects Christianity. There is some uncertainty as to what those who call themselves freethinkers really intend by the term. One might suppose they meant what the word in itself signifies. But when we find freethinkers denying the freedom of the will, what can they mean by freedom of thought? We need not dwell on the cases where freethinking apparently means freedom not to think; or, as the Bishop of Peterborough has put it, where men call themselves freethinkers before they have begun to think. But it is perplexing to find men to whom no such language can be properly applied, alleging, almost in the same breath, that men are the mere "creatures of circumstances," and that they, the unbelievers, are freethinkers. For logically it follows

that either the unbelievers, as freethinkers, are not men; or if men, and therefore the creatures of circumstances, they are not free, and, therefore, not freethinkers. So again, where it is asserted that man is not responsible for his belief, since belief is determined by causes he cannot control, there is an explicit denial of freedom, and an implicit assertion of the immorality of blaming a man for what he cannot help. But if thought be free, then, on account of that very freedom, man is responsible for how he thinks; and, so far as thought affects belief (and it affects it very powerfully), for his belief also.

If by freethinking the unbeliever wishes to express opposition to creeds, he does not much better his case; for if the creed to which he is opposed happens to be true, then his freethinking has the misfortune to be false thinking. If to avoid this difficulty, he maintains that all creeds are false, then he but plunges deeper in the mire; for either he has himself a creed, which is only another word for belief, or he has not. If he has, then he alleges that his own creed is false, and his plight becomes infinitely worse than that of the despised believer, seeing that the latter holds a creed which he believes to be true, while the former holds a creed which he asserts to be false. But if he maintains that he has no creed, that he does not believe in anything, then we have in him either a being in whom the absence of belief is explained by the grandeur of his intellect, enabling him to dispense with all testimony, and to become, in the strictest sense, his own scientist, in which case he is a mental monstrosity; or else one in whom the absence of belief is explained by the fact that, if he once admits belief at all, he can no longer pretend to be a freethinker; in which case he so cynically denounces himself, that no further condemnation is necessary.

It is possible, however, that all that is meant is opposition, not to creeds, but to authority. But here again there is no escape from alternative positions. If by authority is intended the application of physical force, then there is here no argument against Christianity, which refuses to sanction carnal weapons.

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If by authority is meant the force of example, then, in order to avoid this, it would be necessary to break up the social life of the world; for assuredly, wherever two men live together, the example of each will tell upon the other. We cannot suppose that the earnest freethinker wishes to escape from what the Bishop of Derry has called the "noble coercion of the highest reason"—in other words, that he cares much for thought that is free, unless it is also true. We do not see, then, any possible meaning of the word that does not imply more than the unbeliever wishes. And the only freedom of thought worth contending for is this—"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

It is, however, of great importance, to ask how far and in what sense the error of the freethinker may be laid at the door of the Church. That there is some relation of cause and effect between iron intolerance on one side, and wild licence on the other, is quite certain. It has often been pointed out that the scandals of freethinking on the Continent may be distinctly traced to the abused authority of the Church of Rome. But Rome is not the only sinner in this respect. Every bigot is a father of freethought. On the other hand, let freethinkers remember that *they* are the greatest supporters of the Church of Rome. The most dangerous enemy of reform is revolution; the most useful friend of bigotry is freethought. If reform must end in revolution—if the abandonment of bigotry means the acceptance of freethinking—then, of the two inevitable alternatives, we prefer the first. For though unreformed and bigoted we still preserve something of the ancient good; whereas, if we are swept by the storm of revolution into the maelstrom of freethought, we preserve nothing at all. The reason that thinks by law, and therefore does not pretend to be free except as this is freedom; the faith that, as belief, depends on the evidence for Christianity, and as trust reposes on the character of Jesus Christ, thus submitting itself to the canons of historic criticism and the conditions of moral progress; the love that, more than anything, symbolises the Infinite, and which, by a blessed contradiction, seeks and finds its freedom only in the service of man,

and therefore of God; the conscience that regards, with unutterable scorn, every suggestion of freedom from restraint, and responds only to the absolute, "Thou shalt," or "Thou shalt not," of God;—all these disappear in the wild whirl of opinions variously called infidelity, scepticism, freethought. Men may be forgiven if they decline to step from the solid ground of their ancient faith into such a sea as this!

Yet when all is said, the bigotry of the believer is less excusable than the excesses of the unbeliever. For the excesses of the unbeliever are the natural outcome of his unbelief; the bigotry of the believer is an unnatural concomitant of his belief. To refuse to do right for fear we should do wrong is intelligible but not respectable. To refuse to recognise what is true, for fear we should seem to recognise also what is untrue, is to become indeed the slave of appearances. It is unworthy of the Church of God to take into account, in estimating the value of non-ecclesiastical thought, any other considerations whatever than those of justice and truth. It has been said (but not to justify the non-recognition of good in the midst of evil), "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." That is certainly scriptural common sense, if it be interpreted as intended, thus: "Among the things that are lawful there are some that are not expedient." But the principle applies only to lawful things, and injustice and untruth are never lawful; and it is never expedient to shut our eyes to justice and truth, from whatever point of the compass they come. Truth is the universal heritage, justice the universal obligation; and if Christians differ from other men in this respect, it is only because Christ has made to them the obligation more profound, the heritage more precious.

But it is well to remember that it is justice and truth, not unthinking liberality, which are needed when it becomes our duty to estimate the value of opinions. No doubt a certain amount of sympathy is necessary to comprehension, and without comprehension a judgment cannot, of course, be just. Nevertheless, no other verdict than that of justice and truth is of any real value. Now it has happened not unfrequently of late that the opinions of Christian men about the systems of

unbelievers have been greatly coloured by admiration of the genius and sympathy with the motives of their authors. In some cases, indeed, Christian theologians appear to have more sympathy with scepticism than with Christianity. At what may be distinctively called the Broad Church Congress, lately held in Manchester, there were speakers whose heads were perhaps with Christians, but whose hearts were manifestly on the side of sceptics. One can understand this as a reaction. But it is carried so far as to suggest that it is comparatively unimportant whether a thinker be a Christian or not, provided he is in earnest, and can express his opinions with literary grace. Now this attitude of excessive liberality is as truly unlike the genius of Christianity as is the opposed attitude of rigorous intolerance; and it is perhaps even more injurious both to the Christian and the sceptic. For unjustifiable as rigorous intolerance must always be, it at least recognises the supreme importance of the subject, which the opposed attitude does not. But there ought to be no question either of tolerance or of intolerance. The one thing needful in regard to any opinion is to ascertain whether it is true; and then, with the exactness that only devotion to justice can secure, assign it to its proper place in the great treasure-house of truth. Just as sympathy with him who sins ought never to mean sympathy with sin, so sympathy with him who errs ought never to mean sympathy with error. It is for us who are Christians to study, understand, apply, and live the faith once for all delivered to the saints; but it is not for us as Christians to diminish its mass, or change its form, or lessen its importance, from any motive whatever. Too much kindness for the man who errs is hardly possible, but it is cruelty, not kindness, to teach him to think lightly of error. The world needs to-day what it has always needed—the pure, undiminished, sacred deposit of truth, faith; taught loyally, wisely, proportionately, and with infinite sympathy for him who sins or errs, but not, indeed, for the error or the sin.

ALEX. J. HARRISON.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

NEARLY a quarter of a century ago Dr. Robert Young published *The Holy Bible* (1) in a new translation. It was a great undertaking for one man, but he was a man of vast linguistic lore and indomitable perseverance. Noting what he considered to be the erroneous, confused, and lax renderings of King James' Revisers, he produced a revised text of his own, "according to the letter and idioms of the original languages." For those unacquainted with the original languages in which the Bible was written it is very helpful. It deserves a place in the library.

No more acceptable and useful present could be given to old or young than this *Short Life of Christ* (2). This century has produced no Life of Christ of more real and lasting worth than Dr. Geikie's. When many more showy works of a similar class are forgotten, Dr. Geikie's is destined to live. This newly published book is not an abridgment of his large work in two volumes, but is entirely rewritten. It is inviting in every respect, and vividly presents the amazing story in a moderate compass. The fifty illustrations which adorn its pages are wisely-selected as to subjects, and well-executed as works of art. There is a healthiness about its whole tone. We want more such books in order to drive away what is sentimental and sensational in religion. If orthodox divines would take sufficient pains, works might be produced which would at once interest and profit our readers. Dr. Geikie is unmistakably loyal to the written word.

Jesus Christ, the Divine: His Life and Times (3). Not nearly so readable a book as the above, but to those who desire to study the Saviour's earthly life, in its organic spiritual unity and moral relations, this seems to be the very book.

In the present uncertain state of Assyriology, it is almost a hope-

(1) *The Holy Bible*. By Dr. Robert Young. Second edition, 8s. 6d. London: G. A. Young & Co., 1888.

(2) *A Short Life of Christ for old and young*. By Cunningham Geikie, D.D. Hatchards, W., 1888.

(3) *Jesus Christ, the Divine: His Life and Times*. By J. F. Vallings. James Nisbet & Co., 1888.

lessly difficult task to rearrange the chapters in Isaiah, so that the events in his lifetime, the development of his doctrine, the growth of his spiritual life, may present themselves in a perfectly orderly array. Yet something very like this is attempted both by Driver's *Isaiah*, and Smith's *Book of Isaiah* (4). There was less danger in the method used in the former than in the latter work; for its main object was historical and biographical, not practical and devotional. We cannot help thinking that it is unwise to allow the theories of literary criticism to form the substratum of practical exposition. In this new departure we bid the editor of *The Expositor's Bible* to be careful. An exposition of Isaiah, in the order in which the book has come down to us as an integral part of the written Word, would have been the less ambitious, safer, and more satisfactory course to have adopted. Mr. Smith's exposition, however, gathers up some practically useful lessons for our times, and strikingly and skilfully bridges over the gulf of twenty-five centuries, and makes us realise the solidarity of the human race. In dealing with the sublimer parts of Isaiah, Mr. Smith is not so successful as a sacred orator. In his remarks, for example, upon the Trisagion, the wings of his rhetoric painfully flap.

MESSRS. LONGMANS & Co. send us three volumes of their admirable series on *Epochs of Church History* (5), written under the superintendence of Professor Mandell Creighton. His name is sufficient guarantee for sound scholarship. The Rev. W. Hunt has availed himself of mediæval chronicles in writing on "The English Church in the Middle Ages." Prebendary Stephens has consulted original contemporary records as well as modern works relating to the stirring times represented by "Hildebrand." Ugo Balzani has also gone to original historical sources for another striking period, that of the fierce struggles between "The Popes and the Hohenstaufen," which terminated in the extinction of the house of Suabia. The style of all these writers is clear and spirited.

Musical Service—Is it right? (6)—Under the cover of this title an anonymous Clergyman of the Church of England has had the

(4) *The Book of Isaiah*. By the Rev. George Adam Smith, M.A. In two volumes—Vol. I. Isaiah i. xxxix. Hodder & Stoughton, 1888.

(5) *Epochs of Church History*, edited by the Rev. Mandell Creighton., LL.D. By Rev. W. Hunt, Prebendary Stephens, and Ugo Balzani. Longmans & Co., 1888.

(6) *Musical Service—Is it right?* James Nisbet & Co., 1888.

audacity to bring Musical Services—so fashionable now—to the test of Scripture and logic. It is written in a most earnest spirit by one who is devoted to the Master's service and glory, an able writer and scholar, who has brought both Hebrew and Greek literature to his aid, and has gone into the matter critically. He begins by telling us the subject "is one of great practical importance," which it really is. He does not advocate carelessness or slovenliness, which are too often *supposed* to be identical with an unmusical service. But his war is with artificiality, or the performance of a part in religious worship as a professional actor, rather than being a worshipper, worshipping "in spirit and in truth,"—the figure of Hendiadys, explained by the author to mean "*Really spiritually.*"

After explaining the nature of true worship under the New Covenant, our author produces twenty-seven reasons to prove that Musical Service, as such, is wrong.

One striking peculiarity of his style is to break off from the subject to illustrate or explain in detail some text or word bearing on the point in hand. To avoid the inconvenience of parentheses he has added eighteen important foot-notes, besides references, and four appendices. These are by no means the least instructive part of the book. If your ideas are on the other side of this question, answer and refute it, cross swords with the author if you can, and he is a foeman worthy of any Ritualistic steel.

Strange Scenes (7) are indeed strange scenes to Western eyes. They are a rich Palestine experience, one resides there in reading it: and in the light of Eastern life many a dark and hitherto apparently unmeaning passage of the Bible now appears full of power and beauty. *Strange Scenes* give some of the cream of Mr. Neil's Biblical discoveries in the Holy Land which throw new light on the Bible, though at a price very much less than we have usually to pay for other men's skimmed milk. The illustrations, forty in number, are by Mr. Henry A. Harper, the well-known Palestine artist. They form a striking and beautiful pictorial comment on many Scriptures which are opened up by the author to the surprise of the reader. This is a work which book-distributors should scatter by thousands, for it is not only a marvel of cheapness—probably the largest handsome penny book ever produced—but one of a thoroughly popular kind, well fitted to awaken indifference and to dispel doubt.

(7) *Strange Scenes*, by James Neil, M.A., with 40 original illustrations. 120,000—1d. Woodford, Fawcett & Co., 1887.