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SOME ESSENTIALS *of* RELIGION

VOL. I LAYMAN'S LIBRARY OF PRACTICAL RELIGION

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FOREWORD

These chapters have not been written for hurried reading; they are studies of Central and Vital Truths, for those who wish to think them out again under the guidance of the Church.

JOHN CHARLES, OTTAWA.

Note:—In placing these books before Church people through the churches no financial gain is contemplated for anyone concerned. Those who are initiating the Library, and all the writers, are content if the Church they serve is benefited thereby.

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GOD OUR FATHER

By The Rt. Rev. J. C. Roper, LL.D., D.D. Bishop of Ottawa.

VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

The first word of the Layman's Library may properly be a message from Laymen. These are the terms of it.

"The hope of a brotherhood of a humanity reposes on the deeper spiritual truth of the Fatherhood of God. In the recognition of the fact of that Fatherhood and of the divine purpose of

the world, which are central to the message of Christianity, we shall discover the ultimate foundation for the reconstruction of an ordered and harmonious life for all men."

These words have a theological ring about them. They are however the words not of theologians, but of representative and responsible statesmen in conference on urgent questions of public welfare. The message was issued by the premiers of Great Britain and of all British Dominions to all citizens of the British Empire. It forms a remarkable confession of faith in the spiritual basis of human life. The peace of the world depends on goodwill among men, and goodwill among men rests on spiritual forces, and of these forces the source of all and the greatest of all is the fact of God our Father and of His gracious purpose for the world.

WHERE CAN WE LEARN OF GOD?

All who wish to know God truly must put themselves to school under Christ the Master. A wonderful school it is. Little children are at home in it and the greatest minds among men find in it always something new to learn. The wonder of the school and the power of it lie not only in the personality of the Teacher but in the fact also that He Himself is what He teaches. What Jesus Christ was God is. The revelation of God we possess in Christ is a revelation that is personal and complete. "This is life eternal to know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."

This does not mean that the knowledge of God—or even of God as Father—is the exclusive possession of Christians. A long line of Hebrew prophets, called and inspired by the spirit of God, revealed God's Name and will and attributes in different ways and in different portions to generation after generation of His chosen people. It was the special privilege of Israel to receive the oracles of God. Christ Jesus, Whose coming the prophets foretold, took over the revelation of God that each had given, corrected it where it had been misapprehended, endorsed it, set it in order, and completed it. In the fulness of the knowledge of God that had been given them Israel stood unique among the nations. Nevertheless other races had some knowledge of Him also. God has not anywhere or at any time left Himself without witnesses. In our classical studies we heard of Jupiter or Zeus "Father of men and of gods". Greeks of old in their philosophic search for unity, Hindoos in their longing for absorption into the divine, Chinese in the moral precepts of Confucius, Mohammedans in the constant call to prayer which they obey, all bring before us religions that are sincere in their adhesion to one or other of the great truths about God which they have discovered.

I stood one night on the deck of a ship on the ocean. The moon was at the full and was shining in a cloudless sky. The light penetrated everywhere. No part of the wide expanse of water was beyond its reach, and yet straight before me was a broad pathway of light reaching as far as I could see. So bright was this pathway, that compared with it on this side and on that all else seemed to be in darkness.

Some rays of the knowledge of God are recognized in all the great world religions. Along the line of the prophets of Israel the light of God's self-revelation shone with special brightness, sometimes waxing it is true and sometimes waning, until the day dawned and Christ the Sun of righteousness arose.

This is what St. Paul means when he tells the Christians at Corinth that God Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in their hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

WHAT DO WE KNOW OF GOD?

But what is the knowledge of God that has been revealed? We find it in the Old Testament gradually unfolded, in the New Testament perfected. What truths does it contain? We must approach this question with humility and reverence. He of Whom we are thinking is the Living God. We are in His presence while we think and speak of Him. The whole splendour of God's Being is beyond us. He is the Creator and Lord of all. Nevertheless, if we are guided by the Revelation He has given us in Holy Scripture, we can wholly trust our thoughts of Him as far as they carry us, just because they are not our own but have been given us by Him.

GOD IS PERSONAL

"The Lord God is the true God, the Living God and an Everlasting King." He is also our Father. God then is Personal. He is One on Whom we can lean, to Whom we can pray, whose works we can study in the Universe He has made and in the history of men and of nations which He controls. This is the first truth of God our Father that comes home to us when we learn the Lord's Prayer. It is also the last and most profound that we shall rejoice in when we meet Him face to face, and know Him as we are known.

It is a truth of vital and practical importance, affecting our whole outlook on life. Because God is Personal with mind and heart and will we believe that this great world has a plan on which it is being fashioned and a purpose towards which it is tending. Within this plan and purpose we too have a place, and no mean place. We too are persons with minds and hearts and wills. We are not then mere straws on the stream of destiny, or victims of blind fate. We are children of our Father Who is working in and through all mightily in wisdom and in love.

This is not a theory only; it is true to the experience of religious men. In it is found the secret of confidence, strength and joy. It is the infinite and varied record of this experience which the Psalms contain that gives to them their special value for our use today.

"Thy hands have made me and fashioned me, O give me understanding that I may live. Be Thou my stronghold whereunto I may always resort, for Thou art my house of defence and my castle. The Lord is my shepherd therefore can I lack nothing. The Lord is my light and my salvation. The Lord is the strength of my life. Who so dwelleth under the defence of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

In a faith like this we can face our duty manfully. In life's responsibilities and perplexities we can trust our Father.

IT IS A TRUTH OF PERMANENT VALUE.

Personality in God and in man are closely related one to another. That men are persons and must be so regarded is a matter of intense practical concern to us all and to the social life of this and every age. We cannot ignore personality in man. To do so is to awaken resentment, unrest and strife. The statesmen already quoted are clearly right. Peace and progress in the world depend on the recognition of this truth growing more and more adequate until we realize fully the brotherhood of men which is implied in God's Fatherhood. We cannot ignore Personality in God, or pass it by as a truth that belongs to childhood only. It is a vigorous intelligent faith which commands the allegiance of men. Ultimately the dignity of our own manhood will be found to depend upon it. To lose sight of it is to lose our way in religious life and thinking. To hold it fast is not an attempt to make God in our image, but to acknowledge that we are made in His.

GOD IS HOLY

In the Old Testament God is the Holy One in Israel. In the New Testament also we remember Christ's own words in prayer, "Holy Father keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are one". God's Holiness is closely connected with His glory; we must associate with it all passages in Holy Scripture which attribute to Him majesty and radiance, beauty and light. The religious value of this truth is very great.

In the vision of the Holiness of God men have found their chief impulse to worship Him, and have felt the claim on their own lives exercised by the moral splendour of God's own character. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." Further, in proportion as they have realised God's holiness and moral claim, men have felt the need in His presence of acknowledging their own infirmity and sin. This was the experience of Isaiah and of St. John. It has been the experience of an innumerable company since. We all have our share in it in the services of the Church. It finds expression in one of the greatest of our hymns,

"Holy, Holy, Holy, though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art Holy, there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in Love and Purity."

This is undoubtedly the first great impression that the Holiness of God should make upon us. There is, however, another truth within it which must not be forgotten. There are in both the Bible languages Hebrew and Greek two words which in English are represented by the one word "holy". One of them stands for moral righteousness, the other has the meaning of set apart or consecrated. This latter word when used of God means that God is set apart from the world He has made. Not in the sense that He is separated from it, for He is very near; but in the sense that He is not himself a part of it or identified with it or confused with it.

This truth was needed in Old Testament times to save God's chosen people from falling back into dark immoral forms of nature worship which possessed the kindred people from whom they had been called out. It is needed no less to-day to save us from falling back into non-Christian ways of thinking. God is distinct from His world; He is never separated from it. Is this difficult?

An illustration may help if it is not pressed too far. An eagle is perched on the topmost bough of a tall dead tree. A motor boat hurries by at some distance across the water. The great bird takes flight. It is in the air. It breathes the air and is upheld by it. The air is in the bird, in every quill, I believe, of every feather. Yet the bird is not the air, and the air is not the bird. They are distinct; separated they cannot be. Without the air the bird could not exist. "In God we live and move and have our being." We cannot for a moment imagine Him away. Without Him we could not exist. Yet man is not God. We are close akin, He is very near. But God is not man, nor man a part of God. We hear sometimes that God is all and all is God. Christian truth cannot be expressed in this way. Our faith in the Holiness of God declares that He is within the world but distinct from it, above it, around it, controlling it, making it the servant of His will, that He is the source of all, the upholder of all, the Master of all.

GOD IS ALMIGHTY

God our Father, Maker of Heaven and Earth, is Almighty. "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Here also are two words and two thoughts, not one alone. God is Almighty in the sense that His power is supreme and irresistible. This is wholly true but it is not the thought that stands in the forefront either in Holy Scripture or in the creed. It is there in the background, where sheer force must be and ought to be.

The prominent thought, however, when we profess our faith in God the Father Almighty is the thought of His wise, holy sovereignty. He is the Ruler of all, the Master of all, of Himself and of all persons and things. Not by might but by persuasion He is content to exercise His Dominion over men. So God governs the world and in His government we find the model for the true government of men. Force has its use only where freedom has failed. It is not God's power but His patience that excites our wonder and at times our perplexity. We are puzzled because He does not intervene more directly with His outstretched arm, but waits on man's agency and allows such latitude to man's self-will and blindness and cruelty. It is the price of our freedom. This we know and more we do not know as yet. But we can trust our Father for what Jesus Christ was God is.

We know therefore in the story of the Cross and of the Resurrection that while sorrow and suffering and disaster are not removed from human life, God does not stand apart from them and unconcerned. All who pass along the way of sorrows and into the valley of death may find in Christ, that is in God Himself, the sympathy of One Who has passed that way before, and the strength of One who has conquered death and all its powers.

GOD IS EVERYWHERE PRESENT AND KNOWS ALL THINGS.

The attributes of God pass inevitably and naturally one into another. It cannot be otherwise because they are all ways in which the Living Eternal Being reveals Himself. In thinking of His Holiness and of His power we are led to think of His presence and in thinking of His presence we are led to think of His knowledge.

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good." It will not be possible to speak here in any fulness of the knowledge of God. Two facts, however, should always be kept in mind. Nothing can be hid from Him Whose eyes are in every place. Nothing is obscure to Him Who is everywhere. Yet it is not God's knowledge of them that causes men to be what they are or to act as they do. There is a big problem here. In theory it is too big for solution, but in practice the problem is not so great. God's knowledge does not compel us more than does His will. Within the limits that we are well aware of, that come to us from inheritance and from environment, we are free and because we are free we are responsible.

A second consideration is this. The Holy One Who is ever present, Who makes His moral claim upon us and expects the best of us, is no other than our Father. He knows us through and through. Yet as a Father he has compassion on His children. He knoweth whereof we are made; He remembereth that we are but dust. The presence of God may best be studied in close connection with His Personality. It is as a person that He is present. The 139th Psalm will help us best to realize how universal His Presence is. We can then follow out the teaching given there and elsewhere in Holy Scripture, in the witness of the Church, and in the experience of men. He Who is everywhere present, just because He is our Father, can be present with us by His own appointment in special ways and places and for special purposes. He is present in nature in its vastness and in its minuteness, and in both we can read His thoughts after Him. He is present in the affairs of men and of nations in all ages. He speaks to men in the voice of conscience and we hear Him in its strange authority to command and to forbid. In Christ He is present revealing Himself in human experiences and in human deeds and words and service. Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name He is in their midst. In the Sacraments He is present to give His sacred gifts.

GOD IS OUR FATHER.

We have considered now some of the great truths of God which have been revealed to us, but the Fatherhood of God in itself, what is it that we know of this?

In the teaching of Christ our Master,—the Fatherhood of God is the central truth of all. It gathers into itself all other attributes and gives to all a special quality. It is our special Christian heritage. The heart that believes God to be "Our Father" has room for the conviction that "God is Love". We shall perhaps gain fullest insight into the greatness of this truth if we concentrate our thoughts on certain facts which stand out with special clearness in Holy Scripture.

First of all it is His presentation of the Fatherhood of God which gives to our Saviour's teaching its wonderful tenderness and power. Not power alone, nor tenderness alone, but both. He tells us that our Heavenly Father knows our every need; that He Who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field will not be unmindful of the children of men; that our Father's heart is full of that eager, forgiving, redeeming love which wins our heart in the parable of the Prodigal Son. On the other hand, He would have us ever mindful that our Father, when we approach in faith and penitence, is One Whose Name is to be hallowed, Who is the Lord of heaven and earth to Whom all things are possible, Who governs all things and knows all things, even the inmost thoughts of men.

Again, the Fatherhood of God is unchanging and universal. It must be so for He is the Eternal Father, and "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Nevertheless, man's power to respond to God's Fatherhood is not everywhere the same. We shall understand this best if we study the Bible teaching on sonship and brotherhood in the light of the revelation which God has given of His Fatherhood. There are in the Bible different kinds of sonship, or sonships on different levels. The fact that we are created and created in the image of our Maker constitutes sonship. He is our Father Who gives us life. "Have we not all one Father, hath not God created us?" There is, therefore, a sonship which is natural and universal, but it is not in itself complete. Its value consists in the fact that it is the ground of a higher relationship. It is the capacity for sonship, which, however hidden or dormant, we believe to be in every man.

Nevertheless so long as men are ignorant of God and indifferent to Him, they are not in any full sense His sons. We find, therefore, in the Bible another kind of sonship. God is our Father because He gives us more abundant life, a life of redemption from ignorance and sin. This is illustrated in the Old Testament by the choice of Israel and the great covenant promises involved in it, "I will be their God and they shall be My people," "I will be his Father and he shall be My son." In the New Testament we find the same principle in the choice by Christ of His Apostles and disciples for special privilege of knowledge and grace. This choice is perpetuated by Christ in His Church. Our Christian sonship is a special sonship. It is ours by Baptism wherein we are made members of Christ, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of Heaven. Two practical considerations follow. First, if there are different levels of sonship there are different degrees of brotherhood. The message of the premiers is right. The hope of a brotherhood of humanity *does* repose on the deeper spiritual truth of the Fatherhood of God. This brotherhood, however, is not a relationship which comes to us simply by nature; it is a relationship which in social, individual, national and international life must be morally won.

Again, those who have Christian knowledge and grace have not received this privilege for themselves alone. They are God's sons who have special gifts in trust on behalf of all mankind who have them not. The call to Missionary work is based on this responsibility, and will remain so until "the earth is filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea."

Finally, there is the unique sonship of Christ Himself. His sonship is perfect and complete. It is also the channel through which our sonship, whether of creation or redemption, comes to us. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knoweth the son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." It is this Eternal sonship which constitutes the special significance to our confession of faith in God the Father in the Apostles' Creed. Christ is One Who comes to us from the Eternal life of God. That life which though inseparable from man and from the world is yet forever holy and distinct. The Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity helps us here. It arose out of simple loyalty to New Testament teaching. From the first it has been a living practical faith. Christians learnt to recite their belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost; they were baptised in the threefold Name and sang the Doxology before they thought out the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity and before they were called upon to defend it. We find in this great truth the most profound realization of Personality in God. We see in it a vision of eternal fellowship in life and in love, towards which we strive on earth. In the light of it we begin to understand that man, not only as an individual, but also as a social being, is made in the image of God.

FUNDAMENTAL THOUGHTS ABOUT CHRIST

By The Rt. Rev. E. J. Bidwell, D.D., D.C.L., Bishop of Ontario.

TWELVE FUNDAMENTAL THOUGHTS ABOUT CHRIST BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED.

- (I) Christ's Religion is a "Revealed" Religion.
- (II) Jesus Christ the Son of God eternally existing in the Godhead became Man for our salvation. This is called the Incarnation.
- (III) He was born of a Virgin.
- (IV) The Gospels ascribe to Christ not Divinity only, but Deity.
- (V) He is also true Man, and Sinless.
- (VI) When He spoke God spoke.
- (VII) He is the Saviour of the world.
- (VIII) He rose from the dead.
- (IX) He founded a Church.
- (X) He is the Mediator between man and God.
- (XI) He is with His Church and her members to the end of the world.
- (XII) He is the Light of the world and the Lord of Life.

CHRISTIANITY A REVEALED RELIGION

Christianity, of which Jesus Christ is the Founder and Divine Head, is essentially a "revealed" religion. It is not, that is to say, the result and culmination of the progress of evolution in man's beliefs about God. Nor was it the outcome of an impact made upon Judaism by Hellenistic thought. It is, and has always from the first claimed to be, a direct revelation by God of Himself to man through Jesus Christ.

To say this does not mean however that the world was not in any way prepared for the coming of Christ. On the contrary, the traces of that preparation are clear throughout the Old Testament, from beginning to end. If the Old Testament is read in the light of a progressive revelation of God's Nature and Being, and His relations with mankind, its difficulties disappear, and it is seen to point clearly to the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ. But the method is that of God pointing out the way to man, not of man's discovery of it for himself. When almost the whole of the then known world had been brought under the sway of the great Roman Empire, the time was ripe for a World Religion. So "when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son" to bring the message of salvation to the whole of mankind.

THE PRE-EXISTENCE AND INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

The Christian Creeds make it clear that the coming of Christ was the fulfilment of God's plan when they state, as does the Nicene Creed, that our belief is in "One Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, ... Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man". The Church plainly teaches the belief in the pre-existence of the divine person from the beginning, as alone meeting all the facts, and has steadily rejected every other belief, in spite of all difficulties. That Jesus was man was perfectly clear: His Godhead was much more open to attack. So the belief that in Jesus Christ God became man is put in the very forefront of our confession of faith.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH.

The belief that Jesus Christ was born of a pure Virgin is entirely in keeping with the belief in His pre-existence as God. There is no space to set forth here the weighty reasons for the importance of this belief. It is sufficient to say that it is inseparably interwoven with the whole Christian conception of His Incarnation, namely, that in Jesus Christ we have perfect God and

perfect Man. The Virgin-Birth keeps the balance even between His Deity and His humanity. This article of the Creed, which is based on the direct statement of two of the four Gospels, is therefore most helpful in enabling us to understand that in Jesus Christ we behold Divine and human nature joined in perfect unison, He being "God of the substance (essential nature) of the Father, begotten before the worlds, and Man of the substance (essential nature) of His Mother, born in the world".

GOSPEL PROOFS OF THE GODHEAD OF CHRIST.

The Credal statement that "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and Man; yet He is not two but One Christ" is not an arbitrary dogma, but is based upon the facts as set forth in the Gospels. There are our Lord's own direct statements as reported in St. John's Gospel; ("I and My Father are One". St. John X. 30. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" St. John XIV. 9.) There is also His reply to the question of the High Priest at His trial, reported by St. Matthew (XXVI. 63, 64.), St. Mark (XIV. 61, 62.), St. Luke (XXII. 70.), in which our Lord distinctly claimed Divine Sonship, and that in the sense stated in the Creeds, as is shown by the fact that He was at once adjudged to be guilty of death for blasphemy, which would not have been the case had not His claim amounted in the mind of His judges to that of equality with God. Passing for the moment Peter's confession of faith at Caesarea Philippi (St. Matt. XVI. 16) there are certain inevitable inferences establishing the belief that in Christ God became Man which are drawn from His life and teaching while on earth. Some of the most salient of these are;—

1. He invariably speaks to men about God not as one whose thoughts are the outcome of even the deepest and most perfect spiritual insight a man could possess, but as one who had absolute knowledge. We feel instinctively that it is God who is speaking to us about God.

2. Next, he makes a claim upon men that no man, however perfect, ought to, or would dare, to make; a claim which men would strongly resent another man making on them. For He claims men body, soul, and spirit, and not only for time, but for eternity, and tells them that the acceptance or rejection of that claim will make all the difference to their eternal destiny (e.g. St. Matt. X. 32). And He could only make this claim as One who speaks as God.

3. His teaching is delivered with an absolute authority that no man could possibly arrogate to himself. What he says is final; "I say unto you". Nor does he offer salvation through acceptance of a system or philosophy of life, but through Himself; "Come unto me"; "Follow me"; "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"; and many similar statements abundantly illustrate this fact.

CHRIST'S MANHOOD. HIS SINLESSNESS.

We need no proof of the Manhood of Christ, as we can read about it for ourselves in the Gospels. We can see from the records therein contained that Christ was man like as we are. But there was one most important difference between us and Him. He is the only man who was ever free from the taint of sin. He alone could fearlessly ask the question:—"Which of you convicteth me of sin"?

But the fact that He was sinless does not imply that He was never tempted. Had He been entirely free from temptation, His manhood would have been so utterly different from ours that it would mean little or nothing to us. But He was not so free. This we have on His own authority, as the account of His temptation in the wilderness can only have come from Himself. And there can be no doubt that He was tempted not only on that occasion but constantly throughout His earthly life. As the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

But the sinlessness of Christ does not if rightly understood repel us, or prove any barrier between us and Him. It is not an abstract belief about Him, but is exhibited in His life as a man, thereby showing of what manhood is capable if the human will be brought into perfect harmony with the divine will. We know ourselves that the closer we bring our will into agreement with the Divine will, the less liable we are to fall before temptation, and we also know that the nearer we draw to Christ, the easier it becomes to will for ourselves what God wills for us. The sinlessness of the Son, Whose will was always in perfect agreement with that of His Father, has always been the inspiration of the saint, and at the same time the great attraction of His personality to the sinner.

THE MISSION AND THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

Jesus did not begin His public Mission till He was about thirty years of age. It opened with His baptism by John the Baptist, when by the descent of the Spirit of God upon Him and the voice from heaven He was marked out as the "Beloved Son", or as the Fourth Gospel represents John

the Baptist saying, "The Son of God". Then followed a retirement of forty days into the wilderness, at the close of which He faced and overcame the severe temptations, which were all intended to debase and destroy the ideal embodied in His Mission as the Saviour not of His nation only but of the whole world, and the Founder of a spiritual Kingdom in the hearts of men. He soon gathered together disciples, of whom He selected twelve, whom He named Apostles, to be His constant and intimate companions. They did not fully realise either the mystery of His Person, or the object of His Mission, till after He rose from the dead. The conviction that a flash of spiritual insight brought to Peter at Caesarea Philippi (St. Matt. XVI. 16) was not sufficiently strong to prevent Him from publicly denying His Master at His trial.

It is difficult to summarise our Lord's teaching, for it cannot be reduced to any system. His Ministry was one of Reconciliation of man to God. As He said, He came to "seek and to save that which was lost". His Gospel is the "Gospel of the Kingdom of God", or "The Kingdom of heaven". This Kingdom was not relegated to the dim and distant future but was to be inaugurated here and now. In all those who should become members, a change of heart, a turning towards God instead of away from Him, and a complete readjustment of values were required.[1] He was Himself as it were the Door to this Kingdom, which could only be entered through Him. He asked men to make Him the centre of Life, instead of self. 'If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*.'

It should always be remembered, in studying the teaching of Christ, that it is based upon the fact that men have a spiritual as well as an intellectual and physical life; in other words, that they have a soul as well as a mind and body, and of these the life of the soul is the most important. He does not set forth an elaborate system of conduct, but rather enunciates certain great general principles on which the Christian life is to be based. These principles are to be applied to every human relationship. The teaching of Christ does not deal with particular circumstances, which vary from age to age, and differ in different countries in different races of men, but with human nature which is the same everywhere in its fundamental characteristics. Consequently His teaching is never out of date, but each generation can obtain the light it needs therefrom. It is not any flaw in the teaching of Christ, but the very imperfect application of it by men to the circumstances of life, which has from time to time caused the charge of failure to be brought against Christianity.

CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR—THE ATONEMENT.

The purpose of the Incarnation was not only to reveal to men through the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ the true Nature and Being of God. It was also to effect the reconciliation of men to God. To accomplish this purpose the great obstructing barrier of sin had to be broken down. The means chosen, in the infinite wisdom of God, was the Death of Jesus Christ upon the Cross. By this supreme act of self-sacrifice He opened to men the way of reconciliation to God, and became their Saviour from the dreadful power of sin, which by themselves they could not and cannot overcome. It should also be remembered that in speaking of this sublime subject we are dealing with a mystery, which it is beyond human power fully to explain, and that for that reason no really adequate theory of the Atonement can be set forth. But of the fact there is no doubt. The experience of countless men and women has proven conclusively the saving power of the Cross. When they have accepted that sacrifice made for the sins of men, and have taken Christ into their lives, the predominant feeling is that their sins have been forgiven. And the fact that it is through Christ's sacrifice, and not by anything they themselves have done or could do, that they have won pardon, so far from lowering their moral sense as might be expected, in that they are simply benefiting by the action of another, invariably on the contrary makes a profound impression on both life and character, enabling them through the resulting loyalty and devotion to Christ to reach a standard of life and conduct much beyond that which had previously satisfied them.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

That Christ rose from the dead on the third day has been from the very beginning the unquestioned belief of the Christian Church. It is the main theme of the first Christian sermon ever produced, that by Peter on the day of Pentecost. The Gospel records are perfectly plain as to the nature of Christ's Resurrection. He rose from the grave in His complete Personality, spiritual and bodily, though His risen body was free from certain limitations of pre-resurrection life. It was the same body as His disciples had known before His death. Of this He bade them assure themselves by actual contact. That He rose from the dead in His human as well as in His divine nature is the guarantee that we men can share in His resurrection. "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive".

As to the exact nature of our own Resurrection body, naturally it is not possible to speak with exact certainty. Yet it is certain that the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead means much more than the survival of the spirit. It teaches plainly and clearly a bodily resurrection. In the inspired statement of St. Paul, found in the familiar Lesson of our Burial Service, (1 Cor. xv. 20-end), we have four great facts set forth regarding the body which is laid in the grave, and

what it will become at the Resurrection:

First: It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.

Secondly: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.

Thirdly: It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

Fourthly: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

From this it is clear that our resurrection body will be such, as under the different conditions prevailing in the future life, will have every element of personality which we possess now, but in a glorified and spiritual form. "I" shall be "I" in the resurrection body, and recognisable as such to those who know and love me now. Beyond this we need not go. For it is God Who will raise us from the dead, and to Him nothing is impossible.

CHRIST AND His CHURCH.

Though the actual word "Church" is only found twice in the Gospels, on both occasions in St. Matthew (XVI. 18 and XVIII. 17)—that Christ meant His followers to form a visible Body with proper equipment for the task of evangelising the world after He had left it in the flesh is shown clearly by the following facts. In the first place He selected twelve men, whom He kept together, trained together by close and constant association with Himself, and to whom He gave the distinct commission not merely to preach the Gospel but to admit men into the fellowship by the Sacrament of Baptism. He also instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Communion which, though it had other purposes, was certainly intended to be, and was in fact, from the first, a bond of visible corporate union of all Christians. Also the early records of Christianity, as found in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, point conclusively to the conviction that in the foundation of the "Churches" in different places, and in the beginnings of very definite organization that are there seen, general instructions given by our Lord were being followed by the Apostles. It has been argued that, as the first Christians were convinced that our Lord's return would be quite soon, they would not have concerned themselves with the foundation of a Society intended to last for an indefinite future. It is quite true that they did believe that the second Advent of Christ would not be long deferred. This belief arose partly from a mistaken interpretation of certain sayings of our Lord, in which they confused His prediction of the fall of Jerusalem with the end of the present age, and partly from a very natural idea that His manifestation in Glory could not be separated by any length of time from His Resurrection and Ascension into heaven. The fact remains, however, that the foundations of the Christian Church were planned with the care and forethought that an age-long existence called for, with the result that, when the expectation of an almost immediate return was seen to be unfounded, the disappointment did not in the slightest degree weaken the faith or check the growth of the Church. The certainty that Christ would return remained, as it still remains, one of the component parts of the Christian's belief about Christ. When the time comes, He will most certainly return "to be our Judge", but as He Himself said "Of that day and hour knoweth no one ... neither the Son, but the Father only". It is not for us to speculate therefore about the exact date of Christ's return, but to endeavour to live in such a state of preparation that we should be ready to meet Him at whatever time His second Advent may occur. "Blessed are those servants whom their Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching."

Christ is the Head of His Church, which is therefore a Divine Institution, though it works in the world by human instruments. Into this Body we are admitted at Baptism, and by virtue of Christ's Headship become by our admission "Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven".

CHRIST AS MEDIATOR

As Christ is God and also shares our humanity, and in virtue of His great Act of Reconciliation shown on the Cross, we rightly approach God the Father through Him. That is why we end our prayers with the words—"through Jesus Christ our Lord", and plead the Sacrifice of the Cross before the throne of God in the Blessed Sacrament. St. Paul (Romans VIII. 34.) speaks of Christ as making intercession for us at the right hand of God.

HIS CHURCH AND HER MEMBERS

Christ told His disciples that He would be with them always, even to the end of the Age. This promise He, as Head of His Church, fulfills, both to that Body at large, and to the individual members thereof by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit through which He works both in the heart of the individual and in the whole Body, to which He has given the charge of the Means of Grace. We also rightly believe that He is specially present in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, which He Himself instituted and ordained for His followers.

CHRIST THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD AND THE LORD OF LIFE

In closing this brief and therefore necessarily very imperfect summary of a vast subject, our final thought may well be that in union with Christ lies our supreme hope both in this world and in the world to come. For He is the "True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world"; the only Guide Who will never lead us astray. And the closer we draw to Him in prayer and sacrament, worship and service, the more abundantly shall we recognize the truth of His own inspiring word; "He that believeth on the Son hath ever-lasting Life", for Christ is the Lord of all life, now and for ever.

[1] Note.—In Infant Baptism this requisition is made of the Sureties, or God-Parents; "which promise, they (i.e. the Infants) when they come to age themselves are bound to perform." (Catechism).

III.

THE BIBLE

By The Ven. Archdeacon Paterson-Smyth, D.D., Litt.D., D.C.L.

This is a vast subject. What is one to do with it in an essay limited to twenty pages? Keeping in mind the purpose of the editors I have decided to confine myself to one main thought: Reassurance as to the unshakeable position of the Bible amid present-day doubts and disquiet.

With all his reverence for the Bible there sometimes come to a thoughtful layman perplexities and tacit questionings. This is partly because we are thinking a little more than our grandfathers did, but still more because God has given in our day fuller knowledge of the truths of history and science, and also of the making of the Bible itself through the keen investigations of what is called Higher Criticism.

There is no space to discuss such questions here. But if it be not presumptions after many years of study of these questions I should like to assure the reader that not only is there no peril to the Bible in any of this new knowledge, but that when he has got over any disquiet caused by some shifting of his point of view it should make the Bible for him a more living, appealing presentation of God. At present I can only help him to examine his foundations.

I.—FOUNDATIONS

1.—If the fear should ever come upon you, my reader, of the possibility of the Scriptures being discredited by present-day controversies after having been accepted as God-given for three thousand years, first pause for a moment, and let the full weight of these thoughts press upon you of all that is implied in the fact (1) that any set of old documents, always open to scrutiny and question, should for thousands of years have been accepted as of Divine origin; (2) that they should have been yielded to by men as an authority to guide their conduct by commands often disagreeable to themselves; (3) that this acceptance and obedience has been chiefly amongst the most thoughtful and highly-cultured nations of the world; (4) that it has gone on age after age, steadily increasing, and never in any age has made more progress than in this cultured, enlightened, all-questioning century in which we live.

2.—What has given these Scriptures such authority? Remember they were only separate documents, often with hundreds of years intervening between them, written by different writers of different characters to different people, and under different circumstances. Remember that in many cases we do not know their origin, or how they assumed their present form. And yet somehow we never can reach back in their history to a time when they were not treasured and revered among men as in some way at least above human productions. There they stand, a long chain of records with one end reaching away into the far back past, and the other gathering around the feet of Christ.

And remember especially this, that they were selected out by no miracle, that they rest on no

formal decision or sentence of Church or Council, or pope or saint, nay, not even of the Blessed Lord Himself; for long before He came, for centuries and centuries there they stood, testifying of Him, cherished and revered as a message that had come from above "at sundry times and in divers manners". All study of their history shows that their acceptance rested on no decision of any external authority. They were accepted as of Divine origin for many generations before they were gathered into any fixed collection. "The Church", said Luther, "cannot give more force or authority to a book than it has in itself. A Council cannot make that to be Scripture which in its own nature is not Scripture".

It is true that the great Synagogue, or their official descendants, collected the Old Testament Canon of Scripture. Yes, but when? Somewhere about the time of our Lord, when the books had been for ages recognised as of God. It is true that the Christian Church collected the New Testament writings into a Bible, and arrived at a decision concerning certain books the authority of which had been in debate. Yes, but when? After they had been for 300 years accepted as the God-given guide of the Church. *Evidently it was not their being collected into a Bible that made them of authority, but rather the fact of their possessing authority made them be collected into a Bible.*

3.—Again, I repeat the question, what gave them that authority? And there seems no possible answer but this, that they possessed it of themselves. They commanded the position they held by their own power. Men's moral sense and reason combined to establish them. They appealed by their own intrinsic worth to the God-given moral faculty, and the response to that appeal through all the ages since is in reality the main foundation of the Bible's position.

Look at the Old Testament. If we at the present day are asked why we receive it as inspired, we usually reply that we receive it on the authority of our Lord and His apostles. They accepted it as the Word of God, and handed it on to us with their official approval of it. Well, but why was it accepted before their day without any such formal sanction? How did men come to believe and obey as Divinely inspired the words of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, and the rest? Except in the case of Moses, there were no miracles or portents; no external voice from heaven to command men's allegiance. They were not established on their Divine supremacy by any single authority. Why then were their utterances accepted?

It seems evident there can be but one answer. They asserted that supremacy by their own intrinsic power. Men were compelled to acknowledge that their declaration that "the word of the Lord had come to them" was true. There was that in the messages of the prophets and in the evidence by which they were accompanied, which compelled this belief.

The books of the New Testament became recognised among Christians just as the books of the Old Testament had been recognised among the Jews, by virtue of their own inherent evidence. Certain witnesses came forward and recorded in writing the teaching of our Lord, or announced certain messages for which they had His authority, or the guidance of His Spirit in communicating them to their fellows. Men had to decide for themselves whether they believed those claims. The Apostles were supported, indeed, in many cases by miracles, but not always; and though those miracles afforded momentous evidence, they were not recognisable in themselves, when standing alone, as decisive of the whole question. No apparent miracle, it was felt, could of itself authenticate a message from God which did not bear internal evidence also of having proceeded from Him. The appeal in the early Church was directed, as in the time of our Lord Himself, to the hearts and consciences of men. He Himself could but appeal to those hearts and consciences, and men accepted and rejected Him, not by reference to any external authority, but in proportion to their capacity for recognising His Divine character.

"Thus from the first to the last, the authority of the Scriptures has been equivalent to the authority with which they themselves convinced men that they had come from God."

I have been anxious to show you that the position of the Bible rests not on any miracle, or any external authority of the Church or Council, but on its appeal to the minds and consciences of men. You may doubt a miracle, you may doubt your individual instincts, you may doubt the competency of any one body of men; you cannot doubt so easily the conviction of a hundred generations. They found in it a power to make them good and they were convinced that it had come from God.^[1]

Now consider that this Bible has held its authoritative position in the face of the most violent attacks all through the centuries; that infidels have dreamed that they had overthrown it and exploded it times without number, with the result only that its power has steadily increased, so that to-day it would be almost as easy to root the sun out of the heavens as to root this Bible out of human life.

Take this single fact as an illustration. A hundred years ago Voltaire refuted it quite satisfactorily, as it seemed to himself. "In a century," he said, "the Bible and Christianity will be things of the past." Well, how has his prophecy been fulfilled? Before his day the whole world from the beginning of it had not produced six millions of Bibles. In a single century since, and that too, the enlightened, critical nineteenth century, *two hundred millions* of Bibles and portions of Scripture have issued from the press, in five hundred and forty-three languages. And I have read somewhere that the house in which Voltaire lived is now one of the depots of the Bible Society.

II.—THE WITNESS IN OURSELVES.

1.—I have pointed out that the authority of the Scriptures has been equivalent to the authority with which they themselves convinced men that they came from God. Now let us try to bring this conviction home to ourselves—to *test on ourselves* the power of these Scripture utterances which persuaded men of old that they came from above. For it is as they compel in us the same convictions that we can readily understand the making of the Bible.

Get outside all thoughts of an authoritative Bible. Forget the fuller light of Christ in which you stand, which reveals comparative imperfection in those ancient writers. Put yourself in their place. Picture the nations of the earth in their ignorance and depravity, with their blind gropings after God, reaching no higher than fetishes and idols, and the tales of classical mythology. Then listen wonderingly to those prophetic voices in Israel amid the surroundings of that dark old world before Romulus and Remus were suckled by the wolf:

"Jehovah, Jehovah. A God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.

"Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil.

"Thus saith the high and holy One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite one.

"What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?"

And mingled with these noble thoughts, like a golden thread woven through the web of prophecy, see that strangely persistent groping after some great Being, some great purpose of God in the future—from the Genesis prediction of "The Seed of the Woman" to the vision of the Coming One by the great prophet of the exile "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ... the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Try to realise the impressiveness of it. All down the Jewish history in the midst of a dark world came these mysterious voices telling of a holy God,—teaching, threatening, pleading, encouraging, pointing to a gradually brightening ideal and to the hope of some Great One who yet was to come. And to deepen its impressiveness notice that these prophets asserted passionately their conviction: "These are not our words. These are not our thoughts, God has put them into us." "The word of the Lord came unto me. Hear ye therefore the word of the Lord." How could the people doubt it? They were not good people. They were stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, "who did always resist the Holy Ghost". They hated the high teaching. They killed the prophets and stoned those who were sent unto them. But conscience insisted that these prophets were right and, by and by, in deep remorse they built them sepulchres and treasured up what fragments they could find of their sacred words. How could they help it? Put yourself in their place. Do you not feel that you must have done the same if you had been there?

2.—The same is evidently true of the Psalms, the hymns of the Jewish Church. They, too, owe their position to the appeal which they made to the highest in men. They were the utterances of noble souls who with all their imperfections knew and loved God, and all kindred souls then and since have felt their power in inspiring the spiritual life. The author's name did not matter. In most cases it was not known.

The position of the Psalter, then, is not due to any author's name, to any Council's sanction, but to its compelling appeal to the highest side of men in that old Jewish Community. That was how the Holy Spirit wrought in making the Bible. Judged by the higher standard of Jesus Christ we can see imperfections and faults due to the poor imperfect men who wrote the Psalter. Strange if it were otherwise in that dark age in which it grew. But when all allowance has been made for these, who can doubt that that Psalter, which has been so powerful in inspiring human life through the ages since, caught on to men's souls in those early days and convinced them that it came from God.

Again let us test its compelling power on ourselves. Keep back still in that dim old world with its self-seeking, and idolatries, and human sacrifices, and lustful abominations, with no real sense of sin, no longings after holiness, and listen to the Jewish shepherd reciting in the field, and the Jewish choir boy singing in the church:

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His Holy Name, Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thy diseases. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.... Like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord merciful to them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are but dust.

"Lord, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness and speaketh the truth in his heart.

"The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the path of righteousness for His Name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Are not such songs in such an age one of the miracles of history? How could men help loving and reverencing and preserving such songs? How could they help feeling that a divine Spirit was behind them?

3.—The rest of the Old Testament is the history of God's dealing with the nation, a story gathered under the guidance of God's providence in many generations, from many sources since the far back childhood of the race. The historians were evidently men with the prophetic instinct. But I make no appeal on the score of their being prophets. The appeal is made by the history itself. Was ever national history so extraordinarily written? It is the history of an evil and rebellious people, yet everything is looked at in relation to the God of Righteousness. Records of other ancient nations tell what this or that great king accomplished, how the people conquered or were conquered by their enemies. In these Jewish records everything is of God—a righteous, holy God. It is God who conquered, God who delivered, God who punished, God who fought. There is no boasting of the national glory, no flattering of the national vanity; their greatest sins and disgraces and punishments are recorded just as fully as their triumphs and their joys. In the records of other nations the chief stress is laid on power and prosperity and comfort and wealth. In these strange records goodness seems to be the only thing of importance. To do the right, to please the holy God is of infinitely more value than to be powerful or rich or successful in life. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord." "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord," are the epitaphs of their most famous kings.

Therefore the national history of Israel also holds its position by its appeal to the religious instinct. No author's name, no theory of its composition affects its position. Whatever its imperfection, it has impressed itself upon us as the simple story of God's dealing with men.

III.—THE WITNESS OF CHRIST.

I now point you to the chief ground for every Christian man of his belief in the Divine origin of the Bible. It is this. *That it all centres in Jesus Christ Himself.* It cannot be dissociated from Him. It is closely, inseparately bound up with His life.

The Old Testament tells of the preparation for Christ. The New Testament tells that when that preparation was complete "in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son." Jesus Christ, as it were, stands between the Old Testament and the New and lays His hand upon them both. The Old Testament contains the Scriptures which He told men were of God and which bare witness of Him. The New Testament is the story of His words and works, and the teaching of apostles and early disciples sent forth by Him as teachers with the power of the Holy Ghost. It is this fact that Christ is its centre which accounts for the striking unity of this collection of separate documents. The parts belong all to each other. And surely for us Christians our conviction as to the authority of the Bible is increased a thousandfold by the attitude of Christ Himself towards the only Bible that He had, the Old Testament.

It was the Bible of His education. It was the Bible of His ministry. He took for granted its fundamental doctrines about creation, man, righteousness, God's providence and purpose. He accepted it as the preparation for Himself and taught His disciples to find Him in it. He used it to justify His mission and to illuminate the mystery of the cross. Above all He fed His own soul with its contents and in the great crisis of His life sustained Himself upon it as the solemn word of God. And I cannot help feeling that the Bible which was good enough for Christ on earth should be good enough for me.

IV.—THE WITNESS OF ITS POWER.

1.—Need I remind you of that practical conviction of every earnest Bible student, the conviction which Coleridge expresses when he speaks of the way in which it "finds me". Men feel by their own spiritual experience that the Book witnesses to itself. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with their spirit" that the Book is the Book of God. It "finds them" as no other book ever does. Its words have moved them deeply; it has helped them to be good; it has mastered their wills and gladdened their hearts till the overpowering conviction has forced itself upon them, "Never book spake like this Book."

Need I point you to the world around, to the miraculous power which is exercised by that Bible, to the evil lives reformed by it, to the noble, beautiful lives daily nourished by it? Did you ever hear of any other book of history, and poetry, and memoirs, and letters that had this power to turn men towards nobleness and righteousness of life? Did you ever hear a man say, "I was an outcast, and a reprobate, and a disgrace to all that loved me till I began to read Scott's poems and Macaulay's History of England?" Did you ever hear a man tell of the peace and hope and power to conquer evil which he had won by an earnest study of the Latin classics?

You can get a great many to say it of the study of the Bible, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. You can see the amount of happiness and good that has come to the world even from the miserably imperfect following of it. You can see that the world would be a very paradise of God if it were thoroughly followed. Misery and vice would vanish forever, purity and love and unselfish work for others would hold their universal sway on earth. The millenium would have begun.

Need we be disquieted about a Book that comes to us thus accredited in so many powerful ways? Can we not see with restful hearts that all for which we value it is safe from assault; that we never can doubt that it has come to us from God.

With this confidence in our foundations we shall study peacefully and with interest all new knowledge on the Bible. Instead of fearing a conflict of Science and Scripture we shall learn to read our Bible more wisely. For example, we shall read the Creation story not as a scientific treatise but as a simple religious primer for an ancient child race three or four thousand years ago to teach them first lessons about God. And if Higher Criticism teaches us that some of the old books have been edited and re-edited before reaching their present form, that David did not write all the psalms, that Moses did not write the whole of the Pentateuch as it stands to-day, we shall learn to regard it as a matter of mere literary interest.

Such questions may be discussed with a quiet mind. For if the authority of the Bible rests not on any external miracle, nor on any author's name, nor on any theory of its composition, nor on any pronouncement of any one body of men, but on its own compelling power to convince men that it came from God, then its foundations are safe enough, and the question how the Books grew or by whom they were written or edited or brought together into a Bible is a matter of literary interest in no way vital to the authority of Scripture.

We shall therefore need in our Bible reading more thoughtfulness, more study, more prayer. But the outlay of these will be repaid a hundredfold. The Bible will shine forth for us more real, more natural, more divine. Our beliefs will rest on a firm foundation. And, though there may be still things that puzzle and perplex us, we shall learn that our Christian life does not depend on the understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, but on the humble obedience to the will of God, which for all practical purposes is clearly revealed.

Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be
written for our learning; grant that we may in such
wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly
digest them, that by patience, and comfort
of Thy Holy Word, we may embrace
and ever hold fast the blessed
hope of everlasting life, which
Thou hast given us in
our Saviour Jesus
Christ. Amen.

[1] I am quite conscious that I may be pointed to the acceptance of the Koran and the Sacred Books of India as a fact that weakens this argument. I have no hesitation in admitting that, in part, the reason of their acceptance, too, lies in their appeal to the consciences of men through their containing broken rays of "The light that lighteth every man coming into the world." I should be sorry to think that Christianity required my belief that the God and Father of all men left the whole non-Christian world without any light from Himself. But surely there is a vast difference between the position of these books and that of the Bible. All that is good in the Koran existed already in Christianity and Judaism, and is mainly derived from them. The Sacred Books of India, with their pearls of spiritual truth gleaming here and there amongst a mass of rubbish, can surely not be compared with the Bible in reference to the above argument.

IV.

WHAT IS FAITH?

**By The Rev. H. M. Little, L.S.T., Rector of the
Church of the Advent, Montreal.**

A careful reader of the Gospels must be struck with the insistence which Jesus Christ places upon faith. "Verily I say unto you I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" "Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, son be of good cheer." "According to your faith be it done unto you." "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

What then is this faith which Jesus Christ asks of people? Is it nothing more than a "looking upward" by one in need to one able to supply the need? Jesus was never satisfied with this attitude.

THE TRUE NATURE OF FAITH.

In the case of the twelve Apostles we see what the nature of true faith is. Jesus Christ chose them that they might be with Him in order that they might learn His "secret"—the knowledge of His Personality. He wished for such confidence in Him that they would commit themselves wholly to His keeping. For the lack of this faith He rebuked them in the storm on the lake. Their faith failed them again at the Crucifixion; and it was the first task of the Master after the Resurrection to build again this confidence which was shattered by the tragedy of His death. He was successful. The early chapters of the Acts record the degree of calm confidence with which these same men committed their lives to His keeping (though absent from their sight) as to One possessing all authority in heaven and on earth. Such is the true nature of Faith.

THE EVERLASTING WHISPER.

Perhaps it will be better to clear away a misconception existing in some minds arising from a confusion of thought between the exercise of personal faith and the facts themselves of which the Christian revelation consists. The two are quite distinct. "The Faith" means the facts of revealed religion made known to us through the Church and interwoven into the very texture of the Creeds and the Book of Common Prayer,—originally the content of the oral gospels. We speak of the Articles of the Christian Faith, meaning the Apostles' Creed. The doctrine of the Holy Communion or of the Ministry of the Church, etc., are parts also of "The Faith"; of this "faith" the Church is the guardian and the teacher. This is essentially different from that inward personal movement of the soul towards God which we are now considering. The former may be thought of collectively as an objective thing—something quite apart from the individual,—which he may disregard or fail to understand; whereas personal faith is a movement of the soul of man which as we shall see vitalizes his being and calls into operation all his capacities. It is possible to be thoroughly instructed in the verities of "The Faith", and at the same time to be devoid of personal faith; while on the other hand persons are to be met with who possess an intense personal faith in the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity who have through no fault of their own but a very slight intellectual grasp of the contents of "The Faith" as it has been committed to the Church of God. Yet "The Faith", "the Christian Faith" must be cherished by faith (that movement in the soul of man towards God) if the believer is to grow up unto the knowledge of God.

FAITH NOT ANTAGONISTIC TO REASON.

We find ourselves in a world of material things and physical phenomena. We watch and study nature; we witness its orderly movements. We ask questions. Is matter the real thing and the true explanation of it all? Does nature reveal an intelligence behind the universe and working in it? Are the movements in nature the product of law,—and how did the laws begin to operate and when? We listen to the answer of the materialist, but it does not satisfy, because somehow or other it does not account for everything. Surely, we say, if the operation of law accounts for everything, there must be a lawgiver. Besides this we observe in nature both design and beauty.

This suggests to us a mind behind nature. Man looks also within himself as part of creation and finds he has a moral sense. He makes distinctions between right and wrong; there are present to his mind ideas of justice and mercy and love,—whence came these, he enquires, for these are not material forces at all, they are intellectual and spiritual? He sees men die and infants born, and he asks whence do they come and whither are they going. He refuses to believe that this life sees the end of man for he has within himself the witness that he is spirit and not matter. It is in this refusal of the innermost being of a man to consent to any materialistic explanation of the phenomena of nature or of human life that faith declares itself. The judgment which insists that the only adequate explanation of the universe (as science has made it known) must be sought on the basis of the existence of a spiritual world permeating all that is seen in human life, and that behind it all as its source and origin, as its upholder and controlling power, is God—this is faith.

Further. Faith—living faith—is the elemental act within man going forth from him as a son in search for the knowledge of God as Father. It is the greatest energising force within man, for it includes within itself the other capacities within man's personality, such as his emotions and his will; and in the case of the intellect,—it embraces all that the intellect can accomplish, and then goes beyond the limit which intellect can reach. For faith takes all the conclusions arrived at by man's intellect, and then, supported by these conclusions, makes its venture as it were by the very power which is its own.

FAITH GOES FURTHER THAN REASON.

Think for the moment of the subordinate part played by reason in relation to both heroism and love. Heroism is universally admired. It springs spontaneously from within. It makes few calculations. It seldom weighs the pros, and cons. It may act rationally or in defiance of reason. It cannot stop to argue. It may court certain destruction. The challenge is accepted. The heroic action is done. And is it not the same with the affections? Whoever met the lover who became so through his intellect? Who can know what love is except by loving? The lover does not sit down and reason the matter out, and after weighing all considerations say, "Yes, I will now love." Tell him to act thus and he will laugh outright. Love it is which draws him and causes him to act. He finds himself acting as he does just because he is in love, that is all. 'Tis true that reason exercises her part. Reason may show him that his love is harmful, or on the contrary that it has the sanction of his best judgment. But it can do no more. Evidence can be found everywhere to the fact of love recklessly pursuing its career in spite of reason. Reason has its limitations and love goes beyond it; outstrips it like heroism. It is exactly the same with faith. If you want to know what faith is, give yourself up to its influence, let yourself go out in response to it, let it carry you along, until by experience you will come to know the power of faith and the illumination of faith and the reality of faith. Other faculties will come to your aid to assist and to guide, but they can never be a substitute for faith. The personal knowledge of God can only be reached through faith. (Heb. II. 6.).

FAITH GOES FURTHER THAN REASON IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

There are people who feel that they can only tread where the ground is solid; where they see quite clearly what is ahead; who take no risks; who venture nothing. Yet it is utterly impossible to live so in real life. Most of the business transacted in the world is based on a system of credits; and credit is but another name for faith in personal honesty. The financial investments that are made are ventures of faith as to profits and returns. Business foresight which is a great asset to success in life relies upon the invariableness and calculated changes likely to occur. The invalid carries out the doctor's instructions to the extent of his faith in his physician. The reader of the daily newspaper has faith in the reliability of the news served up to him. The history that men read, or the school textbooks used by children, postulate the veracity of the authors of these works. Friendships are an impossibility without the repose of faith. In short everywhere and in every department of life there can be no knowledge nor growth nor progress without faith. As I write the International Conference is taking place at Genoa where the chief obstacle to the task of putting Europe upon a peaceful economic basis is the suspicions, the lack of faith in one another that prevails, not without cause, among the nations.

So when God, Who is Spirit, tells us He can only be apprehended by faith it is childish to quarrel with this necessary condition, because He is only asking of His children the same attitude towards Him which is everywhere adopted by humanity in its social relationships, consciously or unconsciously, as an essential condition of human happiness and progress.

FAITH A BOND OF FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

Faith is required of men, not because God grudges information, but because He desires for man the unspeakable blessing of a willing, longing, intimate friendship with Himself. Among the heathen nations "He left not Himself without witness, if haply they might seek after Him and find

Him." He selected Abram and called him forth from Ur to be a father of a nation. To that nation, tried and disciplined, He disclosed Himself "in fragmentary portions and in divers manners," by a long line of inspired writers and prophets, until at last "in the fulness of time God sent forth His Son."

The Incarnation discloses the distance the Father will travel to meet His lost children, if by faith they will return to Him, and live the life of restored fellowship. Thus we understand why Jesus pleads and entreats and warns; it is because the loss of faith has such terrible consequences—consequences which in their harm to oneself and to others are incalculable. Through Jesus God has revealed the passion of His heart, His yearning love for the souls of men.

GOD DEMANDS OUR ENTIRE PERSONALITY.

The faith which God requires will include within it the exercise of all man's capacities and powers; there will be in the end no part of his personality and no department of his life which is not contributory to, or influenced by, his faith; for faith will be the means for the rounding out and the perfecting of the character. It will include the directing of the will, it will find scope for the emotions, it will receive the sanction of the intellect—it will be the movement of the entire man Godwards.

How very necessary it is for people to do some thinking regarding their religion, and how very little is done. Many people think that what is good enough for their parents, is good enough for them in religion. But this is the only department of life to which this idea is attached. These people make no enquiries, they conform to certain formularies and rules of conduct, they have prejudices and great limitations. The fruit of this is an extraordinary haziness existing in men's minds regarding religion. Here a purely moral life is deemed the same thing as a life built upon faith in Christ. Or compare the emphasis put upon ethical duties directed towards one's neighbour (e.g. he is a good husband and pays his debts); when little or no account is taken of the obligations due to God (such as Christian worship or the sinfulness of profanity). Or again, people put their trust in the reception of the sacraments without clear ideas as to the "necessary dispositions" for the proper receiving of the sacraments, a tendency to treat them as charms.

There are difficulties connected with our faith, such as the problems of pain and suffering, or inequality of opportunity, the prosperity of the ungodly, which require much thought. Besides all this the trust which men repose in God, not only in their everyday affairs, but also in those crises that happen from time to time, is strengthened immensely when the intellect contributes its support, when man knows he is passing through a desolating experience, but knows also that many others have passed through the like upheld in the darkness by faith. Every Churchman should make an effort to bring his intellect by reading and study to the support of his faith.

And the emotions, too, have their right place in the development of faith. Have we not been somewhat suspicious of the emotional element in religion, due perhaps to a disproportionate and exaggerated use of it by some religious bodies? Has there not been a tendency to suppress the emotions because there are emotional religious cults almost divorced from morality and the intellect? Perhaps, too, it has something to do with temperament? British people used to be little moved by feelings; lately they have changed somewhat. We need the vision of Jesus Christ, Who is the revelation of God the Father, as One to be supremely loved above all others—as Mary Magdalene, as St. Peter and St. John, loved Him. It would help us in worship if we used fewer subjective hymns and more hymns of the type of S. Bernard's, "Jesu the very thought of Thee," or "O Love, how deep! how broad, how high!" if we could have some simple litanies of devotion bringing to the mind of the worshipper the purity, gentleness, tenderness, patience, sympathy and meekness of Jesus Christ; our faith in him would become more tender, warmer, more personal, and without this our faith cannot be complete.

FAITH MUST ISSUE IN CHRIST'S SYSTEM OF MORALS.

A further feature in this venture after the knowledge of God is the moral one. It is only to the pure in heart that the vision of God will become a reality. To believe in Jesus is to accept His teaching in the sphere of morals quite as much as to appropriate His promises of present pardon and future rewards. In fact the promise of pardon is interwoven with the condition of doing His will, and the heavenly life is held out as a reward to those who follow His example. Jesus claims the sovereignty over man's whole personality. Those who call Him "Lord, Lord," must do the things He says. It is just at this point that the world tests the Christian faith. The world is practical; it demands not profession, but works. It knows that Jesus bequeathed a system of morals to His followers, especially in the Sermon on the Mount; and, while it is ignorant of the grace Jesus bestows to enable human nature to rise above itself, yet in its rough and ready way it holds faith of no value which is not shown in "fruits". When Society talks about the "failure" of Christianity what it usually has in mind is the failure of Christian people to conform to the Christian standard of truthfulness and justice, of honesty and straight dealing, of continence and self-respect; being like other people, lovers of money and applause rather than examples of that love for their neighbour commanded in the Gospels. The human will needs supernatural strength

to live Christ's system of morals. God demands that the entire personality, intellect, emotion, will, should be committed to Him in an all-embracing, loving faith.

A FINAL PERSONAL WORD.

A few words must be said as to the outcome of vital Christian faith. How will it be recognized or known? We answer by its interest in, and its works on, behalf of others' good. Christian faith must justify itself in service. The sphere and the nature of that service must be sought from Him Who has drawn the disciple to Himself. Sometimes it means the taking up of the old task in an unselfish way; sometimes it will lead to a new departure or an additional undertaking; sometimes it sends one far off among the Gentiles. It is not so much the kind of work that needs the emphasis, but rather the fact that if faith is being perfected it falls short of completion unless the disciple views all his activities, even the most humble ones, as occasions for service for others' good.

There is need of caution, however. We live in a busy age, and activity is nearly idolised. It is not that we must always be busy, but rather that what we do is not a mere fad or notion taken up enthusiastically and, when difficulties present themselves, then just as quickly dropped. The outcome of faith is a task done for God on behalf of others, when toil will cheerfully be borne, drudgery endured, trials met with patience, and—through evil report and good report—the work continued.

V.

PRAYER

By The Very Rev. D. T. Owen, D.D., Dean of Niagara.

I would ask you to think with me as simply and directly as possible about one of the greatest things in the world. It is something that we can all do, for it requires no special learning; it is something which we can all do at once, for it requires, from one point of view, no special training; and it is something, which if we will do, will bring guidance, peace and power, into our own lives and into the lives of others. What is this thing which is so great, and yet so close to hand, which is so worth while doing, and which we can all do, and do at once? It is prayer. It is just saying our prayers. "Oh! how humdrum and commonplace!" we say, or "How difficult and discouraging I have found it; I know I should pray, and I make resolutions sometimes to that end, but somehow it gets either formal, or crowded out, or forgotten". Yes, while we all know about these difficulties and appreciate their strength, let us think this subject out again.

WHAT IS PRAYER.

In the first place let us set before us quite clearly this great fact. God, as He has been revealed to us by His Son, wishes us to pray to Him. Prayer—the privilege, the duty and the value of prayer—is part of the revelation of God. It goes with His nature, as that nature has been revealed to us. He is the God Who wishes us to speak to Him, and to take Him into our confidence,—in a word He is the God Who wishes us to treat Him as Father. What is prayer? There is God ready to hear us, ready to heal and guide, to give rest and peace, to give light and strength, to help carry our cares, to direct our feet into straight paths. And here are we with our great needs, our cares and perplexities. Prayer is the point of contact between ourselves and that great God. Indeed, we can say more than that, for when we pray we become our true selves. We are spirits of Eternity. For a time we live upon this earth having many duties to perform, and many important offices to fulfil,—but when we pray, when we praise God, we are performing our essential work as spirits. We have dropped for the moment the outer covering of our lives, and stand forth as being what we really are,—spirits who came from God, who are doing a certain work for God here, and are to return to God. The moment of prayer is a great moment, for then it is that "deep calleth to deep", and spirit calleth to the Father and Source of all spirits. And so it comes to pass that in the moment of prayer it is not merely that this man or woman, called by this name or that here on earth,—a workman, a business man, a housekeeper,—but an eternal spirit of God is calling upon the Author of all Spirits. Such is prayer. "Prayer is that act by which man, conscious alike of his weakness and his immortality, puts himself into real and effective communication with the Eternal, the Self-Existent and the Uplifted God."^[1]

WHY SHOULD WE PRAY.

In trying to answer the question, "What is prayer?" we have, in part, answered this question also, but it is so important that it must have a section to itself.

In the first place, we should pray in order to make acknowledgment of the glory and the power of God. It is because of what God is Himself that we have need to fall down before Him in adoration and praise. We are inclined to think too much of our own needs in relation to prayer. Indeed when we mention the word prayer, we begin at once to think of our needs, of what we want, and of what other people want. These are important, but these are not first; and until we understand that they take the second place in prayer, and do not constitute its chief argument, we cannot realize the real reason for Christian Prayer. The real, the first reason for prayer from the Christian point of view is to glorify God,—to praise Him for what He is, and to fall down before the greatness of His power. We have a model prayer which teaches us about this. Among many other things it teaches us the chief reasons for prayer. It comes to us full of answers to our question, Why should we pray? "When ye pray, say, Our Father, Which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven." This surely means that God must be first in our prayers.[2] We are half way through the Lord's Prayer, we are more than half way through, before we begin to talk about our needs. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us that in prayer we are to think first of such things as the Father, Heaven, His Name, His Kingdom and His Will, before we say anything of the bread and our other needs. Yes, surely the great reason for praying is to honour God, to unite ourselves with His great purposes in heaven and earth.

Again, I would ask you to think of this from another point of view. One of the great objects of life is to know God. To know God! This sometimes seems a very mystical, far away subject, does it not? It belongs, surely, to those who have been specially endowed, or to those who have the mystical temperament! I do not think this is true. I think we grow to know God as we grow to know our friends. And how do we grow to know our friends? We speak to them, we take them into our confidence, we tell them of the things that make up our lives, and by so doing we grow into friendship. If we neglect this for long our friendship begins to wane. Now I think it is very much the same with our relations to our great Friend. We grow in our knowledge of Him and His ways, and in our understanding of His mind, just in proportion as it is our habit to go into His Presence and to take Him into our confidence about our lives. And this is what prayer is. By prayer we grow to know God. The highest prayer is "Thy Will be done", and we can only come to those heights of prayer by praying,—for it is by talking to God, looking at Him, taking Him into our confidence that we come to understand some of His ways and purposes, enter into the secret places of His dwelling, and thus learn to say, "Thy will be done!" Only they who have learnt in the School of Prayer to say, "Father ... Hallowed be Thy name" can go on to truly say, "Thy will be done". The object of prayer is not to bend His Will to ours but to so learn of him, and to so enter into His Friendship day by day that we can say, "Thy will be done".

But, of course, in prayer we are meant to ask for things for ourselves and for others. What has been said above by no means indicates the complete reason for praying. No, the Christian prays for things for himself and others. It cannot be too strongly stated "that prayer gets things done". "Ye have not," says St. James, "because ye ask not". It is the Will of the Father to give us things in response to prayer. Our Lord in the model prayer taught us to pray definitely for certain things in human life. His Father, so He teaches us, is interested in the whole of human life, all its needs, its cares, its joys, its perplexities, its strain,—all these can be made the subject of intercourse between the Father and the child. The Father cares about them so much that they must find their place in our prayers. Indeed, they are so important that they must have *their own place*. And their own place is second. So in all our praying let us remember it is God first, ourselves second. But we go further than that. It would seem as if we were not in a position to know our real needs sufficiently well to pray about them with intelligence, unless first of all we have allowed the light that comes from thinking about God, adoring His Name, and falling down before the majesty of His purpose and His will, to shine upon our life's needs. Yes, we are indeed to pray for our varied needs and those of others, but we cannot know our real needs unless God is first in our prayer, and we have prayed, "Our Father, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done".[3]

HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?

It would seem to be perfectly clear from the teaching of the Bible and the Church, and from the experience of those who really pray, that men and women can live lives of power, peace, and usefulness, whatever their lot may be, if they would but pray. There it is before us. It is the challenge of prayer. If you pray, you can do great things for God and man.

There the challenge stands. "But", someone says, "I personally have found it very difficult to pray, possibly my gifts lie in other directions." This is often said as if the speaker thought he were unique. He is quite right about one thing,—it is difficult to pray,—but he is wrong in thinking he is unique. Prayer is one of the hardest things to do. This is one of the reasons we shirk it. Do not

be surprised if you find it hard. "It is hard," someone has said, "because it is high". Most things that are very well worth doing are things we find hard, especially at first, to learn to do.

Now let these facts stand very clear before us. God asks us to pray to Him. Of all the things we do, there is nothing that can be more worth while doing. If we will do it, we most certainly will grow into better and nobler and more useful men and women. But we shall find it hard to do. Now let us be quite clear about the problem of the hardness of prayer; there is only one thing to do about this subject of prayer, and that is to pray. The only way to solve the problem of praying is by praying. Nothing will do instead. In spite of the difficulties, in spite of distractions, of weariness, of failure, of moods, of coldness,—we pray. Nothing will do instead. Nothing else will solve the problem. Reading books and listening to sermons on prayer will not do instead. The only way to learn to pray is to pray. The people who get things done are the people who, not having the time or the inclination often, in spite of these things,—pray.

In a word, we have to treat prayer as work, as part of our definite work as Christians. We know how it is with our work. We do it every day. We do it whether we feel like doing it or not. We keep on doing it day after day, month after month, year after year. Prayer is work. We must treat it with the respect we give to our work. Again, what a mistake it is to wait on the mood. What a mistake to say, "I do not feel like praying to-day—perhaps to-morrow!" Our moods come and go. They are very fragile things, rooted sometimes in trifling causes. One of the greatest mistakes in this connection is to think that the effectiveness of our prayers depends upon the particular state of our feelings at the time. It often happens to people who pray that they have found the greatest blessings they have won for themselves or for others have been in times when "the heavens were brass", and they had little or no sense of reality or warmth in prayer. It is said that the difference between the professional and the amateur is that the amateur depends on the mood, but the professional goes on with his work day after day, paying no attention to a mood here and there. We must be, in this sense, professionals. Prayer is part of our work as Christians. Let moods come or go, the work must go on,—the great work of Praise, Petition, Intercession, Thanksgiving.

Again, if there is one thing more than another that Our Lord was clear about in His teaching concerning prayer, it is that we must be persistent in our prayers. We must pray for an answer. This is not to say that we are to pray until we receive the answer we wish, but until we receive some light and leading in relation to the subject of our prayers. It will not be necessary to do more than remind you of the two parables on this subject in St. Luke's Gospel. There was once a man upon whom there came an unexpected traveller one night, and he had "nothing to set before him". He went to a friend at midnight and said, "Friend, lend me three loaves," and would not go away until he had received the loaves, but kept on asking and seeking and knocking. "I say unto you", said Our Lord, "that though he will not rise because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." And again, there was in a certain city a judge, "which feared not God, and regarded not man", and to him came a widow with the persistent plea, "Avenge me of mine adversary." And he would not for a while, but afterward he said within himself, "Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me". These two parables, taken with Christ's own example in Gethsemane when He prayed three times concerning "the cup", make it very clear that His followers, when they decide this or that is a matter for definite prayer, must not leave that petition or intercession out of their prayers until they have received some answer, some light or leading from the God Who always hears, and always answers earnest prayer.

And last of all, in answer to our question, How should we pray? we should pray in that name which is above every name—the name of "the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." We have this great name to plead. Though in our weakness we feel unworthy to pray, though in our ignorance we know not how to pray, and though with the best of our prayers there is so much that is imperfect, we have in that One Who ever lives to make intercession for us, One Who takes our poor and imperfect acts of devotion and makes them to be heard in the Presence of the Divine Majesty. It is "through Jesus Christ our Lord" we pray. Here is our confidence. In this realization we find fresh strength and hope for the whole work of prayer. His perfect knowledge of our lives and of our temptations, coupled with His place of Honour at the right hand of the Father, gives us great re-assurance that our prayers come before that Throne with power. "Having then a great high priest, Who hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need."

FINDING TIME FOR PRAYER.

We are anxious that these articles should be very practical, and that our readers may be helped to practise their religion more definitely from reading them. Most of us are very busy people, and often it will seem as if there was no time for prayer. But we always make time to do things we consider absolutely essential. Prayer is one of the absolute essentials of the Christian

life. You will notice that it was during times of unusual pressure of duties that we are told that Our Lord found time to pray. It was when the people thronged Him to listen to His words, and to receive healing and comfort for body and soul, that we read, "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into the mountain to pray; and He continued all night in prayer to God". And again it was while "all the city was gathered at the door" that "in the morning, a great while before day, He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed". He always found time in the midst of His thronged ministry, when "many were coming and going", and He had "no leisure so much as to eat", to go apart to enter into communion with His Father. We, too, must find time to pray.

The important thing is not how long our prayers are or how short, but that our spirits have come, if only for a moment, into contact with Him, Who is Himself Spirit. This is the vital thing. This is that which brings rest and refreshment to the soul and strengthens it in its life on earth. Let me repeat, the great essential is to get into touch with God, and to get into touch every day. Now it would seem as if the morning, first thing in the morning, is the time especially to do this? Before the distractions of the day have dulled the delicate perceptions of the spirit, before the noonday sun has absorbed the early dew of morning, is the time to open the door of the heart to God, and to lift up the hands to Him. It was in the morning, "rising up a great while before day", that the Son of Man prayed. So it should be the first thing in the day with us. It need not be anything complicated or involved. Indeed, it can be quite simple. Perhaps this simple suggestion may be found helpful. When we get up in the morning, we remember that it is God first. We must let the thought of the glory, the power and the goodness of God take possession of our hearts. We bow before Him, from Whom we came and to Whom we go, and say, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son; and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen." Then a word of thanksgiving for sleep and rest, one or both of the Collects for Morning Prayer, a little prayer for others, and special needs of the day, and the Lord's Prayer to end with, and to sum up the whole act. Such is the barest outline, but it is something that everyone could do, and could do every day. Why not? And why not forthwith?

If we are to know God, we must pray. If we are to become our true selves, we must pray. If we are to walk bravely and honestly through this life, we must pray. If we are to be useful to others, we must pray. And what is prayer? It is getting into touch with God, and getting into touch every day.

[1] In further token that it is so we find, apart from Christian Revelation and experience, an instinct to prayer practically universal among men. This natural capacity to pray is one of the greatest attributes of human nature. Man has ever felt the desire to confer with the unseen.

[2] Prayer, therefore, if it is to follow the teaching and example of Christ must rise above the thought of making a bargain with God. (E.g. "If this petition is granted then I will do this or that"). Christian petitions are offered in absolute trust, "Nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt."

[3] God knows what is best for us and wills the best for us. We do not pray "Thy will be changed," but "Thy will be done." Our Lord Christ, Who had perfect knowledge of God, used prayer as one of the greatest forces to accomplish God's purpose. If we withhold prayer we leave unused a force God Himself calls for in carrying out His purposes among men.

VI.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Rt. Rev. A. J. Doull, D.D., Bishop of Kootenay.

This volume of theology is written for laymen of the Anglican Church, and it is to them that I address myself primarily in this chapter. There can be no question in our minds regarding the importance of this subject which we are now about to consider; nor yet of the necessity of arriving at a clear understanding concerning the truth. We are about to tread holy ground, therefore a reverent spirit is needful above all things else. We are about to investigate, albeit in the briefest manner, the nature and character of that Sacrament which our dying Saviour left as the bond of comradeship between His followers and Himself, and between His followers with one another, but which historically has been the occasion of more strife and discord betwixt Christian people than any other institution or fact of our holy faith; therefore we must cast aside all prejudice and preconceived opinions, and placing ourselves at the feet of Jesus seek to learn from Him the real truth which He alone can impart.

I believe that Christ is especially anxious to teach us the truth to-day after all these centuries of strife, and I am convinced that so far as the Anglican Church is concerned that there is a wonderful measure of agreement between all her members concerning the doctrine of the Holy Communion when they heed the advice of our great theologian, the judicious Hooker, and "the more give themselves to meditate with silence what we have by the Sacrament and less to dispute of the manner how."

Let us try and consider in simple faith and simple language what is revealed to us in Holy Scripture concerning this Sacrament, what truths about it are therefore enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer, and what it is accordingly that all Anglicans really believe though their mode of expressing their common faith, and though their phraseology, may somewhat differ.

INSTITUTED BY CHRIST.

Firstly, we believe that this Sacrament is of Supreme importance because it was instituted by Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and by Him commanded to be observed and celebrated by His Church until His coming again. The writers of the first three Gospels give us substantially identical accounts of what our Lord said and did in the same night that he was betrayed. St. Mark, whose narrative is probably the oldest, tells us that on the first day of unleavened bread when they sacrificed the Passover, in the evening Jesus and the twelve kept this distinctive feast of the Old Testament dispensation according to the accustomed manner.

"And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had blessed, he brake it, and gave to them and said, Take ye; this is my body. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them and they all drank of it. And he said unto them: This is my blood of the Covenant which is shed for many." (St. Mark XIV. 22-24 R.V.) St. Matthew's account and that of St. Luke are practically identical.

St. John, whose gospel was written at a much later date than those of the synoptists, does not record the institution of the Holy Communion, but does preserve for us Our Blessed Lord's wonderful teaching regarding Himself as the Bread of Life, which has such an important bearing upon a clear understanding of the true and proper place of this Sacrament in the Spiritual life of Christians. (V. St. John VI.).

St. Paul, in the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, writes: "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, This is my body which is for you; this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Covenant in my blood; this do as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me." The only other occasions upon which St. Paul uses similar language to "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," is with reference to the Resurrection of Our Blessed Lord (1 Cor. XV. 3) and to the essence of the Gospel Message taught him by the revelation of Jesus Christ, (Galatians 1. 12). We may believe therefore that St. Paul in emphasizing the sacred importance of the Holy Communion knew himself to be under the special guidance of Christ Himself.

THE CENTRAL RITE OF DISCIPLESHIP.

Secondly, we believe that from the days of the Apostles down to the present time the Holy Communion has ever been regarded as the distinctive act of Christian Worship and the highest means of Christian grace. It is impossible to go into the proof of this statement here but it can easily be verified by those ready and desirous to investigate. From the very earliest times of the Apostles, when on the first day of the week the disciples met together for the breaking of the bread, down to the present time Christians have ever regarded the Holy Communion as the Central rite of discipleship, the Sacrament or bond of comradeship between Jesus and His people, between Christ the Lord and those who are members of the Church which is His Body.

THE REAL SPIRITUAL PRESENCE.

Thirdly, we believe in the fact of Christ's presence with us in the Holy Communion. Regarding the fact there is unity of belief amongst all Anglicans, I might go further and say amongst all Christian people. It is only when men proceed to define the mode that differences arise.

Some would regard his presence as due to a Sacramental change in the elements, or to a new relationship established between the elements and the Body and Blood of Christ. Others prefer to connect it with His promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them," and to lay stress upon the fact that if ever there be an occasion when two or three are gathered together in Christ's name it is when in obedience to His Command they assemble to break the bread and bless the cup.

This fact of the real spiritual presence of Christ in the Holy Communion has ever been the belief of the Church Catholic and of the Anglican Church as a part thereof. Bishop Andrewes in the seventeenth century, writing in reply to Roman Controversialists, at a time when the Church in England had at length settled down after the upheaval and conflict of the Reformation period, asserted the belief of the Anglican Church as to the fact but also her refusal to dogmatize as to the mode of the Saviour's presence. "The Presence we believe no less truly than you to be real. Concerning the mode of the Presence, we define nothing rashly, nor, I add, do we curiously enquire."

True to the teaching and to the Spirit of the early Church the Church of England devoutly accepts her Lord's words, neither attempting to explain them or to explain them away, but leaving them where He has left them a holy mystery not requiring and therefore not receiving definition. Not as attempting to define, but as a safeguard against errors which have at various times been prominent in the Church, representative writers of the Anglican Communion have been accustomed to speak of Our Lord's presence as being at once real and spiritual. To understand the full significance of this language it is necessary that we dismiss forever from our minds the idea that there is any opposition between that which is real and that which is spiritual. On the contrary, we must grasp the fact, which all are coming to recognize more and more, that the spiritual is the real, and the real is the spiritual. I do not think that it would be possible to have this truth concerning the Sacramental Presence of Our Lord expressed more clearly, more beautifully, or more truly than it has been by Dr. Hall, the present Bishop of Vermont, who says that "Christ's presence in the Baptized is as real as His presence in the Eucharist, His presence in the Eucharist as spiritual as His presence in the Baptized". Moreover, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist cannot be said to differ in kind or in degree from His presence in and with His people at other times and in other Sacramental ordinances, but it does differ in purpose.

Our Lord is present with us in the Eucharist for certain very definite and specific purposes and we must now proceed to enquire what those purposes are. We shall be on safe ground if we say that Our Lord as the great Head is present with the members of the Church which is His Body to do those things which He did or commanded to be done at the last supper.

Why then did Our Lord at the Last Supper institute and ordain the Sacrament of the Holy Communion and command it to be celebrated and observed by His Church until His coming again?

THE CONTINUAL REMEMBRANCE.

It was ordained for the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the death of Christ, a commemoration of Our Saviour's meritorious Cross and Passion. This commemoration is made before God, before ourselves, before the world.

(a) It is a commemoration of the Saviour's death before God. The whole service of Holy Communion as celebrated in the Church of England, with the exception of certain exhortations and invitations, consists of prayers addressed, as all prayer must be, to God. The most important of these prayers is the one which we call the prayer of consecration.

In this prayer the Celebrant, as the commissioned leader and mouthpiece of the Congregation, commemorates before God that which Our Lord did in the upper room as the Passover feast on the same night in which He was betrayed.

Before God in this prayer commemoration is made of His gift of His only begotten Son to suffer death for our redemption, before God commemoration is made of that which Christ did for us upon the Cross, before God the institution of this Sacrament of perpetual memory is recalled, before God the very acts and words of Our Saviour Christ in instituting and ordaining this Holy Sacrament are solemnly rehearsed and enacted. It is impossible for any Priest of the Church of England to celebrate the Holy Communion, or for any member of the Church of England to take part in the celebration of this Holy Sacrament, without making before God the most solemn commemoration of the death of Christ and His all sufficient Sacrifice which it is possible for the mind of man to conceive. And in so doing we are at one with the Historic Churches in all ages. If it be objected that God needs no such reminding of what Christ did, then the objection is equally valid against all mention of Christ's holy name in prayer as the ground and basis whereby we trust such prayer will be accepted and answered by God. The commemoration before God in the Eucharist is but the doing in act by the whole body of the faithful of that which each individual Christian does when he says, at the close of his prayers, "Grant this for Jesus Christ's sake," or, "through the merits of Christ Jesus Thy Son Our Lord."

It is the doing in act, and by use of those very elements and words and actions which Jesus has Himself commanded, of that which we do when in the Litany we supplicate, "By the mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation; by Thy Holy Nativity and Circumcision, by Thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, by Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy Precious Death and Burial; by Thy Glorious Resurrection and Ascension and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord deliver us." This aspect of the Eucharist is perfectly expressed in Canon Bright's well known hymn, a hymn which by many not of Dr. Bright's School is regarded as their favourite hymn, and which has commended to them the truth of the commemoration before God, in a way

that might not have been possible had the same form of words been cast in a prose setting.

And now, O Father, mindful of the Love
That bought us, once for all, on Calvary's Tree,
And having with us Him that pleads above
We here present, we here spread forth to Thee
That only offering perfect in Thine eyes
The one true pure, immortal Sacrifice.

Look, Father, look on His anointed face
And only look on us as found in Him
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim
For lo! between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son Our Lord.

Our Blessed Lord is therefore present as the Head of the Church which is His Body, as the great High Priest to enable us in union with Him to plead His Sacrifice, which is the sole ground of our approach to and acceptance with God. In that which has been called the Companion hymn to Dr. Bright's, part of which I have quoted just above, the Saintly Bishop Bickersteth expressed the same great truth from his standpoint as an Evangelical Churchman.

O Holy Father, who in tender love
Didst give Thine only Son for us to die,
The while He pleads at Thy right hand above
We in One Spirit now with faith draw nigh,
And, as we eat this Bread and drink this Wine,
Plead His once offered Sacrifice Divine.

(b) But not only is the commemoration of the Lord's death made before God, it is also made before and amongst ourselves. The breaking of the Bread, the blessing of the Cup with the use of Our Saviour's words do remind us in the most solemn manner of the cost of our redemption and the great love wherewith He loved us and gave Himself for us.

The more we ponder God's amazing love in Redemption, the more wonderful does it appear and the deeper and more ardent becomes our love whereby we love Him who first loved us.

Perhaps the chiefest essential in the Christian life is that we should have a living faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death, and nothing helps us to secure this essential so much as the due and devout observance of the Lord's Supper ordained by Our Blessed Master Himself in the same night in which He was betrayed and on the very eve of His tremendous death and Sacrifice.

(c) There is a third aspect of the commemoration which must not be overlooked. The Eucharist is a means of proclaiming or preaching the Lord's death before the world until His coming again. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come" (1 Corinthians, XI. 26). There is not space at my disposal to do more than merely call attention to the evidential value of the Holy Eucharist to the truth of Christianity and to the Gospel history. But its constant celebration week by week is a fact, a fact which even the world must take note of, a fact which proclaims as no other institution of religion does that Jesus died and rose again. And He, Who has promised to be present where two or three are gathered together in His Name, He, Who has pledged His presence to His Church in the proclamation of the Gospel, is ever mindful of His promise when His followers meet together at His table, and amongst themselves and before the world proclaim and herald the death of Him Who died to be the Saviour of all mankind.

THE SPIRITUAL FOOD OF HIS BODY AND BLOOD.

The Holy Communion was ordained, and Our Blessed Lord is present in that Holy Sacrament, in order that He, the true Bread from Heaven, may feed us with the Spiritual food of His Body and Blood. In the language of the Prayer Book itself "it is our duty to render most humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God our Heavenly Father, for that He hath given His Son Our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our Spiritual food and sustenance in (this) Holy Sacrament." Whilst our Catechism asserts that "The inward part or thing signified in the Lord's Supper is the body and Blood of Christ which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." The seeker after the truth must read and compare very carefully the following passages of Holy Scripture. St. John VI., the whole Chapter; St. Matthew, XXVI. 26-30; St. Mark XIV. 22-26; St. Luke XXII, 15-21; 1 Corinthians X. 15-22; 1 Corinthians, XI. 23-end.

If this be done there will remain no doubt but that Our Blessed Lord proclaims Himself to be

the Bread of Life, the food of man's spiritual nature and being, which needs food quite as much as his physical and mental nature and being; that He ordained the Holy Communion to be the means and channel whereby we receive His flesh and blood, that is His very perfect life and nature, according to His promise as recorded in St. John VI. verses 48-58; and that St. Paul so understood its purpose and meaning.

Realizing that we are moving in the realm of the Spiritual and meditating upon the words of the Incarnate God, the very truth who can neither deceive or be deceived, we will not ask with the unbelieving Jews how can this man give us his flesh to eat, we will leave all questions as to the manner how where Christ Himself has left them, and with a most thankful heart will make the words of Hooker, the great Elizabethan Divine, our own, "What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ, His promise in witness hereof sufficeth, His word He knoweth which way to accomplish; why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful Communicant but this, O My God thou art true, O My Soul, thou art happy."

THE REASONABLE, HOLY AND LIVING SACRIFICE OF DISCIPLESHIP.

There is another purpose why Our Blessed Lord is present with us in Holy Communion. He is present as the Great Head of the Church, in order that we His members with Him and in Him may offer ourselves a living Sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service (Romans XII. 1). We have sadly forgotten the real essential meaning of worship. What is worship? Surely self oblation. It is the offering of ourselves, our bodies, souls and spirits, our talents, our gifts, all we have and all we are to God for service. But this is just what we poor sinners cannot do of ourselves, it is only *in Christ* that we can give ourselves to serve God and humanity. And so Our Blessed Lord comes to us as the Head of the Church which is His Body, the living organism in which He lives and through which He carries on His work. He comes and pleads on our behalf the merits of His atoning death and Sacrifice once offered, He comes and applies to us the saving efficacy of His atonement, He feeds us with His Body and Blood, making us one with Himself so that He dwells in us and we dwell in Him, so that we are one with Him and He one with us; and then, in Him, in union with His eternal oblation of Himself, He offers and presents us, His Body, as living Sacrifices to the eternal Father, and sends us forth to do service for Him and our brethren, not in our own strength and power but in His to whom all power in Heaven and earth has been given.

The present era in the history of the Church and the world is one which calls for great power if Christ is to be brought to a distracted disorganized sin-laden, sin-weary world,—and if the world is to be brought to Christ its one and only possible helper and Saviour, its Saviour from present and future evils in the age that now is as well as in the ages to come. That power is in Christ and is made over to His followers when in simple faith they come to Him in a receptive attitude and with the determination to use it. The fundamental importance of the Holy Communion is, that it stands forth preeminently as the principal channel through which this power is bestowed.

May all those who bear His name and desire to do Him service realize what an inexhaustible treasury of Divine strength and power the Master has provided for us in this Sacrament of His Love. Just a few words in conclusion as to our use of it.

It is food, therefore, it must be received frequently and with regularity. It is food, therefore it presupposes life and at least a degree of health in those who take it. A corpse cannot receive food, the sick have no desire for it. The Holy Communion is for those who are Baptized and have received the life of the Risen Lord. It is for those who have been forgiven and who long to show their gratitude by becoming strong through the assimilation of Christ the Bread of Life to do Him service and perform His will.

It is food, therefore not a Spiritual luxury for good people, but the ordinary necessary food for us all, poor weak pardoned sinners, God's Children reconciled in Christ, who are trying to become good and to love Him who first loved us.

The realization of our own nothingness and the all sufficiency of Christ is the condition of heart and soul requisite for a good Communion. Repentance for the fact that it should be so with us, faith that He will supply all our needs, because He alone can and because He so wills, is the attitude of those who would really know what this Sacrament was meant to be and can be to those who come to Him "as sick to the Physician of Life, as unclean to the Fountain of Mercy, as blind to the Light of Eternal Splendour, as needy to the Lord of Heaven and earth, as naked to the King of Glory, as lost sheep to the Good Shepherd, as fallen creatures to their Creator, as desolate to the kind Comforter, as miserable to the Pitier, as guilty to the Bestower of pardon, as sinful to the Justifier, as hardened to the Infuser of Grace."

VII.

IMMORTALITY

By The Rev. Canon Cody, D.D., LL.D., Toronto.

IF A MAN DIE SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN?

This question is as old as the race. Men cannot let it alone. It exercises a strange fascination. One generation, immersed in pleasure or in business, may think that *this* world is quite enough and may push the question aside: but the next generation will ask with increased intensity: "If a man die, shall he live again?" At one period of his life a man may care little for a question that carries him beyond the horizon of the present; but by and by no question comes to him with more poignant urgency.

The question will not rest, because death will not let us alone. As long as death breaks into our family circles, the problem will recur. Death came with his legions during the War and compelled a fresh answer to his challenge. No one who can think or feel is able to look unmoved on the face of death: he must ask "Shall he live again?"

It is passing strange that this should remain to any degree an open question. Why have not men reached a decisive answer? As a matter of fact, the history of nations and religions shows that man's tendency is to answer "Yes, he will live again." The natural inclination of man everywhere is to believe, not in his extinction, but in his survival.

The Christian doctrine of immortality implies vastly more than the mere survival of personality after death. It involves a *quality* rather than a *quantity* of life. Let us first, however, gather the manifold rays of light from various quarters that illuminate a future life of any kind. Some of them may be only candle lights; but their combination will reveal a trend towards immortality. It will appear that it is less difficult to believe that a man will live again than to believe he will be extinguished by death.

WHAT HISTORY SAYS.

I. A survey of human history discovers some candle lights on the problem of survival. These lights are certain well-established facts.

1.—All peoples and tribes, in all ages and of all grades of intelligence have conceived a life beyond death. Isolated exceptions are so rare that they may be accounted for by the loss, through degeneration, of an instinctive idea. This belief built the Pyramids of Egypt, reared the great Etruscan tombs, led men to embalm their dead, placed food and utensils within the tomb for use beyond, slaughtered the horses of the dead warrior and burned the widow on the husband's pyre. There is a deep-rooted and universal feeling that the spirit of man is distinct from, and superior to, the body, and survives the body. The universal fact of mortality has suggested the universal belief in immortality. This is all the more remarkable in face of the lack of immortality in nature. Nature presents the aspect of an indefinite series of things succeeding one another. It would seem that the human mind is so constructed that it tends in the direction of belief in the survival of personality. This may be but a *candle* light; yet it is a *light*.

2.—This belief in immortality persists. Various fancies and superstitions have been outgrown and cast aside in the progress of the ages. Many conceptions of the past have proved unworthy to survive. But this belief has a stronger grip on the modern world than it ever had in the past. While advance in knowledge reveals an interdependence of soul and body, it accentuates their distinction. To-day progress is interpreted to mean the triumph of the spirit and is marked by an increasing consciousness of the reality of the self which knows and wills and feels. A belief which thus survives must surely have in it something of the vitality of truth.

3.—This belief develops and waxes strong as life itself develops and climbs higher. The higher a man is in the scale of being, the wider his thoughts, the deeper his affections, the nobler his life; the more likely is he to believe that the soul lives on. The more fleshly, selfish and materialistic is the life, the harder it is to be sure of immortality. Thousands may live in the slime, with the beasts, and may not have a steadfast hope in a life beyond; but the great-minded and great-hearted men of the race are surest of life everlasting. Tennyson once said to Bishop Lightfoot: "The cardinal point of Christianity is the life after death." Tennyson is supremely the poet of immortality. It is his master thought; and herein he is typical of the greatest minds in human history. This belief, universal and persistent, is most vigorous in the hearts of the supreme men of our civilization.

4.—This belief, however vague may be the ideas in its context, exercises a real influence on life. It energises men. It nerves them to struggle and achieve. It enlarges their view. It inspires them for vaster enterprises. It enables them to do hard things and to persevere to the end.

WHAT PHILOSOPHY SAYS.

II. Philosophy lights more candles on the problem. Philosophy goes deeper than the statement of facts; it gives a theory of the facts; it seeks to find causes, relations and purposes.

1. The *thoughts* of the normal man are long thoughts. He has an instinctive yearning for immortality. If this instinct is absent, the man is not normal. If this instinct is suppressed, the man's soul is injured. If he does not believe in immortality, he will believe in something far less credible. It may be continued existence in the complex-life of humanity; it may be absorption of individual personality in some Oversoul. The issue is sorrow of heart, bitterness of soul, pessimism of creed, "Pessimism is the column of black smoke proceeding from the heart in which the hope of immortality has been burned to ashes." If a man remains normal, he believes in immortality. What is the inference? Tennyson has drawn it.

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust,
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And Thou hast made him, Thou are just."

A just Creator will not place instinctive longings in His Creature's soul, only to betray them.

2.—The *affections* of the soul are as true witnesses as the mind. "The heart has reasons which the reason cannot understand." It is impossible for love at its purest and strongest to believe that death ends all. Love shrinks in pain from such a possibility. It protests against such a violation of the fellowship of heart with heart. The longing for reunion is no vain desire, awakened only to be mocked.

Not so can things be ordained in a world of order. The poets are the prophets of the heart; and all the great poets teach immortality.

The heart, which God made, will not perpetually deceive us. "If it were *not* so, I would have told you." The instinct is true. The verdict of the spiritual seers of the race is favorable.

3.—Man is constituted for an ampler and more glorious life than can possibly fall to his lot in this world. Human powers are vast in comparison with human opportunities. Man is too great to be crowded within the narrow limits of seventy years. "So much to do, so little done" were among the last words of Cecil Rhodes. To develop the latent powers we possess, we have no adequate opportunity here. Deep in our souls is the quenchless desire for a fuller expression of our powers. Could God build the human soul with all its capacities for the few years of this fleeting life on earth? Not if there is rationality at the heart of the universe.

4.—This world is an insoluble moral enigma, if there is no other world to explain it. Inequalities, injustices, abominations abound. Circumstances and character are frequently at variance. Right has often been on the scaffold; wrong on the throne. The whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain. This world is intolerable, if there is no other. There must be a world in which wrong will be righted and justice done. Man's conscience whispers that the Judge of all the earth will do right; but how can He do right with all His creatures, unless He has more time? R. L. Stevenson well puts the argument: "We had needs invent Heaven, if it had not been revealed; there are some things that fall so bitterly ill on this side time." Unless this world has been created from sheer extravagance in the infliction of purposeless pain, there must be another to justify the present process of discipline, to heal the wounds of struggle, to comfort sorrow, to develop holiness. Somewhere, sometime, character and condition must correspond.

WHAT SCIENCE SAYS.

III. Does Science throw any light on our problem? There may not be any absolute scientific proof of a life beyond; but Science has no demonstrative evidence against it. At least it leaves the question open. Some go so far as to say that the results of modern scientific research, when fairly viewed, are favourable to the reception of the belief in immortality. A great modern physicist says: "The death of the body does not convey any assurance of the soul's death. Every physical analogy is against such a superficial notion in nature. We never see things beginning or coming to an end. Change is what we see, not origin or termination. Death is a change, indeed; a sort of emigration, a wrenching away from the old familiar scenes, a solemn, portentous fact. But it is not annihilation."

Dangers have seemed to threaten the doctrine of personal immortality from the standpoint of

the physiologist and the evolutionist; but these dangers have not proved fatal. The physiologist has demonstrated the close connection between the brain and the soul. It was an easy, though improper, conclusion to assert that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." But the psychologist speedily pointed out that the physiologist had gone beyond his province. He had proved only that thought is a function of the brain. Functions may be productive or transmissive. Light as a function of the electric circuit represents a *productive* function; music as a function of the organ illustrates a *transmissive* function. The music is not *in* the organ but in the organist. The organ transmits it. So, the brain is but the organ of the soul.

The evolutionist has made men think in immensities and has given prime importance to the idea of development. But a creature like man who is alleged to be the product of ages of development is surely not going to be extinguished at the tomb. Darwin himself wrote: "It is an intolerable thought that men and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress."

What candles, then, does Science light up for us?

1.—The conservation of energy and the indestructibility of matter imply that the natural forces of the world are not annihilated, however much they may be transformed. May we not hope that the peculiar form of force known as personality, the highest force in the world, will not be destroyed by the experience of death?

2.—Unfit organisms perish; fit survive. Many beliefs which once formed part of the spiritual life of man have perished in the lapse of time, but no belief has shown greater vitality and power to resist the disintegrating influences of changing environment than belief in the soul's immortality.

If this belief has survived when quickened by the most awful imaginable strain of the Great War may we not conclude that it is one of those beliefs fit to live, one of those beliefs which the Creator desires to live and grow?

3.—Whenever we find a faculty, we discover in environment something to which this faculty corresponds. Progress is possible only by the constant adaptation of faculty to environment. This is true of the animal world. Is it not also true of man? In man are found faculties peculiar to himself. There is a longing for immortality, an expanding conviction of it. Does this internal condition correspond to reality? Yes, else delusion falls on man alone. For, as a distinguished scientist (Sir J. Burdon Sanderson) has said, "there is no known instance of the development of a capacity without the existence of a corresponding satisfaction."

4.—If there is one increasing purpose through the ages, if there is development from lower to higher, from simple to complex, it is impossible to bound our vision with the grave. If personality has been attained, it is incredible that the gain of painful ages will be thrown away. "*Now* are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." The "forward-looking" habit has not been acquired for naught.

So far is Science from giving demonstrative evidence against immortality that it actually presents some considerations in its favour. The reasonableness and the beneficence of creation protest against the extinction of men by death.

WHAT CHRIST SAYS.

The candle-lights of history, philosophy and science cast a cumulative radiance upon the problem of life after death. They show that it is harder not to believe than to believe in immortality. But we need the light of the Sun. We need the demonstration of the power of an endless life. This we have in the Risen Christ. Christ brought into perfect light those truths about God and man, of which mankind had dim intuitions. By His Resurrection Christ abolished death (i.e., deprived it of force and power) and brought life and immortality to light (i.e., gives certainty, richness and power to the hope of immortal life).

1.—Christ has given *certainty* to the instinctive longing for immortality. For the shadow, He has given substance; for dimness, light; for hope, assurance. Although this hope has been virtually universal and inextinguishable, yet apart from Christ it has never become a certainty. Though historian, philosopher, poet, lover and saint have their own special arguments for the Hereafter, it is Christ Himself Who is the sure Light both of this world and of that which is to come. He has turned this hope into a full and glorious assurance.

HOW HAS HE DONE THIS?

(a) *By His teaching.*—Two things about mankind Christ took for granted—sinfulness and immortality. He did not argue about this life beyond; He took it for granted. No part of His teaching is explicable on the supposition that all ends at the tomb. His basis for our immortality is not our instinct but the character of God. On the bosom of God's Fatherhood rests man's

immortality. If God is our Father and loves us as His children, then we are His and He is ours *forever*. Death cannot break this tie of life and love which binds us to Him; it cannot rob Him of His child. That God cannot be the God of the dead, but of the living, is axiomatic. His personal relations are real and are eternal.

The Christian faith is sufficient to give us certainty and comfort concerning our departed. We are assured that the blessed dead are in His safe keeping and through Him we are one with them in a union which will one day be consummated in everlasting reunion and communion. Our Christian watchwords are enough—"love in absence, trust in silence, faith in reunion."

(b) *By His Life*.—To the eye that can see, His life is the supreme argument for immortality. He lived such a life of fellowship with God and so near to the frontier of eternity that the glory of it shone upon and from His face. The longing for a life higher than the life of time is answered in His life. Such a life could not be holden by death. It is eternal. It has the quality now and always of everlastingness.

(c) *By His Resurrection*.—He confirmed the truth of what He taught, and lived, by what He did. He rose again, transformed, not merely resuscitated. He irradiated the spiritual land. It is no longer "an undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." The empty tomb, the cumulative evidence of independent witnesses, the transformation in the lives of believers, the institutions of the Christian Church, its continued existence, the personal experience of the power of a rising life in individual Christians throughout the ages to the present time—are the attestations of the truth of the Resurrection. The Christian Church is built and still rests on the fact, luminous and sovereign, that Christ rose from the grave in fulness and newness of power. To the life beyond, Christ's resurrection gives reality and humanity and assurance. It confirmed men's subjective aspirations, it changed them into "things most surely believed." It makes every Christian certain of a higher life beyond the grave.

2. Christ has *enriched* the whole conception of immortality. In the ancient, as in the savage world to-day, immortality or the continued duration of life, was a dreary prospect, a sense of desolation rather than a source of joy, an impoverishment of life, not an enrichment of it; its scene was a shadowy realm of silence, where there is no voice of praise nor human warmth and cheer. In some passages in the Old Testament we find a loftier and clearer utterance. Through his faith in God, Job reached the idea that death may not be the final word. The righteous God would not abandon a righteous man. In revealed religion this faith in a life beyond the grave rested not on any conceptions of man's nature, but on the character of God, the Eternal Righteousness. If he has called men into fellowship with Him, His faith is pledged to them. The Psalmists won their sense of eternal security through their present fellowship with God. Along this line of religious experience of a living, holy and gracious God, the true hope of immortality entered the world. Just as union with God guaranteed to the Psalmist a life that would never end, so union with the Risen Saviour guarantees to the Christian triumph over death. Christ has filled this elementary thought of continued existence with moral content, because He has based it on a true conception of God. The Christian hope is not merely "immortality of the soul" but eternal life; and eternal life is not merely an infinite prolongation of existence in a future state of being; but is life at its highest and best, the life of fellowship, of vision, of growing likeness to God, of ample service. It is life in Christ. It is being with Christ, which is very far better than earthly life at its worthiest. It is not the mere translation, but the transformation of earthly values. This faith in immortality is moral and spiritual; it implies enriched and elevated being, as worthy and glorious as it is endless.

3.—Christ has so increased the *power* of immortality, of the Christian Hope, as almost to make it for the first time effective as a source of courage, hope and consolation. He has turned the hope of immortality into the Power of His Resurrection. All hopes exercise some influence on those who hold them; yet apart from Christ the hope of immortality has been less effective than we might expect. By His Resurrection Christ has raised this yearning hope into a mighty present power brought to bear on humanity. The Christian hope of immortality, certain and rich in the possession of abundant life, gives breadth and outlook to all human efforts. It inspires duty. Brought to bear on our work, it makes effort worth while. If all we have striven to do and yet failed to do is to be perfected in the eternal morning, we can face our tasks with fresh courage. All social reconstructions that deny or neglect the Christian thought of an endless life fail here. Their scope is too limited; their outlook too narrow. The Christian hope brings the power of endurance and victory to sorrowing hearts. Death is not a leap in the dark, but the passing into a larger, brighter room in the House of the One Father. In short, when this hope of immortality is tested by life, it is verified by the loftiness of the character it builds.

The rising life is the present demonstration of the risen life. All low, worldly, unspiritual living tends to doubt in it. If we would escape from doubt about the future, let us through the Living Christ make life larger now. If we would overcome weakening uncertainty, let us daily practice immortality. If we set our affections on things above, our rising life will assure us that we shall live forever. One of Gladstone's great exhortations was: "Be inspired with the belief that life is a great and noble calling; not a mean and grovelling thing, that we are to shuffle through as we can, but an elevated and lofty destiny." This belief is created and can be maintained only by

viewing life in relation to God and immortality.

Every man should therefore put the question to himself: "If I die, shall I live again?" "What kind of life am I living now? Is it life eternal, or life merely temporal? Is it a friendship with God which death can never extinguish?" Only One Life has ever won open victory over death. Only one kind of life ever can win it—that kind of life which was in Christ, which *is* in Christ, which He shares with all whom faith makes one with Him.

"In the midst of life we are in death" such is the cry of bereaved and dying humanity. But in Christ we are able to say: "in the midst of death, we are in life." "God has given us eternal life, and that life is in His Son." Can death touch that life? Never.

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