

THE
MERCERSBURG REVIEW.

OCTOBER, 1873.

ART. I.—CHRISTIANITY AND HUMANITY.*

BY PRESIDENT J. WILLIAMSON NEVIN, D.D. LL.D.

As the subject is altogether too broad for anything like full particular discussion, all that I can aim at in the present paper must be an outline simply of its general significance, in the form of a series of brief and comprehensive topics or heads of thought following one another in close logical order, and yet thrown each one more or less upon itself for its own separate evidence and confirmation.

I. The world of nature, made up as it is of innumerable parts, is nevertheless one universal whole, bound and held together through all its parts by the presence of a single Divine idea, which reaches its end in Man. Its constitution in this view is not mechanical, but organic; that is, it is not a scheme of things put together by simply external juxtaposition, but a system of things cohering together inwardly through the power of a common life. It may be regarded as a pyramid, rising through a scale of degrees to its apex; or as an orb, determined from all sides to its centre. In either case the end is the same. Man is the apex and centre, and for this reason also in himself separately considered an epitome, a synopsis or recapitulation.

* A paper prepared, by invitation, for the General Conference of the EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

tulation we may say, of the entire natural creation. He is the last sense of it, and the only true key to its meaning in all its lower forms of existence. So much we are plainly taught by the first chapter of the Book of Genesis. Our own consciousness confirms the lesson; and it has come to be so irradiated now by the light of science, that a man must forfeit all claim to rationality to make it a matter of any serious question or doubt.

II. It is no less plain, however, that man is the consummation of nature in this way, only because he is in himself a great deal more than nature. Nature in its totality looks beyond itself, is a continual *nisus* indeed in its own constitution toward a higher order of existence without which it has no power ever to become complete; and the very fact that it ends in man implies therefore of itself that he is for it at the same time the beginning of that higher existence, and the medium accordingly through which room is made for the work of creation to run its course in new and far more glorious form. Such superiority belongs to him, as we know, in virtue of what he is as mind or spirit, in which are joined together as one the two faculties of the will and the understanding, making him to be in the image and likeness of God, and capable thus of receiving into himself the light of God's truth and the power of God's love as the perfection of his own life. Man in this way exists really in two worlds. In his physical organism he belongs at all points to the world of nature, the system of things seen and temporal, with which he stands in continual communication through his bodily senses. In his spiritual organism he is just as intimately comprehended in the world of spirit, the system of things unseen and eternal, which lies wholly beyond the range of his senses, although it is all the time touching him in fact and making itself felt upon his life in a different way. The difference between these two orders of existence with man, however, is not just that between body and spirit generally considered; for the distinguishing life of man, that by which he differs from the mere animal, is primarily and essentially all in his mind, and only by derivation from thence in his body. But his mind itself is so constituted as to have in it so to speak two different regions, one looking

directly into the natural world through the body and the other opening principally into the spiritual world. Hence properly speaking the difference between the external man and the internal man, some sense of which is found entering into the deeper thought of the world through all ages. It is not simply with the regenerate and righteous that such dualism has place; it belongs to our life here universally.* Man is by his creation at once both spiritual and natural, the denizen of two worlds. That is his distinction from the beast, which is natural only and not spiritual.

III. The dualism here brought into view, it is hardly necessary to say, is not abstract, the conjunction of these two modes of existence in any simply outward relation. It is a distinction which seeks and demands unity, the organization of its two sides into the power of a single concrete life. Neither is there any room for doubt, in regard to the law which should govern the coalescence of the two orders of existence into one. The natural, all know at once, is in order to the spiritual. Here only it is that mind comes to its native home and true destination, by entering into the light of God. The two orders of life are thus of themselves correlated as outward and inward, lower and higher; and this implies of course, that the outward and lower should be ruled in full by the inward and higher. That is the true idea of human culture. That is the only intelligible

* "Das Gesamtverhalten wie das Gesamtgefühl des Menschen bekundet auf unwiderstehliche Art, dass er als 'Fremdling' sich wisse in dieser Sinnenwelt und dass das Hinausstreben über dieselbe der eigentliche Sinn aller eigenthümlich menschlichen Thätigkeit sei. Daher die rastlose Unruhe und der tiefe Zwiespalt, der sein ganzes Wesen durchzieht, indem er jedes Erreichte sofort wieder vor sich verneinen muss; die ungestillte Sehnsucht gerade mitten im kräftigsten Lebensgefühl, die jeder höchsten Freude sogleich sich beimischende ernste Wehmuth, was ebenso die Quelle höchster Erhebung zu Poesie und Religion dem Menschen wird, als umgekehrt den irdisch Gesinnten in die Veridung eines leeren, ewig unbefriedigten Strebens hinauswirft: alles dies ist nur das Zeugniß einer unablässigen Verneinung seines gegenwärtigen Zustandes; das heisst aber zugleich: seines substantiellen *Hinausseins* über denselben. Es ist zugleich die thatkräftige Wirkung und unwillkürliche Beglaubigung seines wahrhaftigen, jenseitigen Wesens. Indem der Mensch alles Zeitliche zu einem Ungenügendem herabsetzt, in keinem irdisch erreichten Ziele sich gefangen giebt, verräth er dadurch, eine überzeitliche Macht und eine überzeitliche Bestimmung in sich zu tragen." From I. H. Fichte's *Psychologie*.

end of man's redemption. It is possible for this order to be reversed. The spiritual may be hopelessly turned away from the light of heaven, and merged in the darkness of mere nature. But that in the end is the damnation of hell.

IV. It is not then by any violent sundering of the higher life in man from the lower that he is redeemed and saved. This would be a sublimation of his existence that must destroy at last all its reality. What the case calls for is the full and complete reduction of his lower life to the obedience and service of the higher, the raising of the natural through the spiritual into the harmonious union of the whole man with God. Room is made for this in the twofold constitution of the mind itself, by which it is possible for it to flow down as it were from its own superior region into that which is lower, so as to join them together as with the intimacy of soul and body in the power of one and the same truly spiritual life. It is not simply from itself, however, that any such heavenward determination of the human spirit can come. There must be for this purpose a flowing into it of spirit and life from a yet higher sphere. Only in and by the powers of the heavenly world itself, only through real conjunction with these powers proceeding forth as they do from the Lord of life and glory, is it possible to conceive rationally of the glorification of the natural in man by means of his spiritual in the way here spoken of. The case requires and involves thus in the end an actual coming together of nature and the supernatural, the human and the divine, to make the idea of humanity and the world complete. On this hinges in truth the whole problem of man's salvation.

V. The twofold constitution of man, as we have now had it under consideration, may be taken as a key for the right appreciation in general of the two economies, the two different orders of existence, which are joined into one immediately by means of it in his person. We need no other argument to prove that the two economies are in fact one economy in a deeper and broader view, and that the unity of creation regarded as a whole does not stop by any means with the natural world, but embraces along with this at the same time the entire sense and

significance also of the spiritual world. How indeed can we have any faith in creation at all as the work of Infinite Intelligence and Love under any other view? The two worlds, natural and spiritual, form together one universe; and the union of nature and mind in man serves to show, with a sort of palpable demonstration, how they stand related each to the other in this cosmical whole. Their connection is not one of space or time. It transcends altogether these limitations. The spiritual world is not on the outside of the natural locally, nor does it come after this temporally. It is not a mere sublimation or etherealization in any way of the natural. The relation between the two orders of existence is of one sort rather with that between soul and body in man; two modes of being, which are totally distinct, while yet they work into each other everywhere as coexistent spheres in the general identity of his life. It is the relation of interior and exterior, higher and lower, prior and posterior, cause and effect; and here, as in the case of soul and body, it is the spiritual world of course, which goes before the natural in this order of precedence. Things seen and temporal stand everywhere, thus, in the active presence and power of things unseen and eternal. The spiritual world, it has been well said, works from within, and actuates all and each of the things that exist and are formed in the world of nature, as the human mind works into the senses and motions of the body; so that all the particular things of nature are as it were sheaths and coverings, which encompass spiritual things, and proximately produce effects corresponding to the end of God the Creator.

VI. The spiritual world here introduced to our view, we can see at once, is heaven-wide apart from that abstract and visionary conception of it, by which it is too commonly regarded as being the mere negation or coming to an end of the world of outward sense and matter. We do not characterize it properly, when we speak of it simply as immaterial and supersensible, or resolve it into the notion of an intellectual and ideal system. It is beyond the reach indeed of our present sense, and for this reason it transcends also the range of all our natural thinking.

But this does not make it in any sense shadowy or unreal. In its own superior order of existence, it has a character of positive reality and substance which goes immeasurably beyond the visible and tangible show of things in the world of nature. The spiritual world is not the pale shadow of the natural. On the contrary, it is the cause of the natural, that on which it depends; the interior soul of the natural, that from which it draws its continual life; the universal issue and end of the natural, that in which only all its powers and possibilities become complete. It is a world or universe, full of concrete existence and sensible experience, full of living relations, activities and powers, full of endlessly diversified phenomenal scenery and surroundings, with which, for grandeur, beauty and glory, the universe of nature can bear no comparison whatever.

VII. The living entities, powers and activities of the spiritual world, thus gloriously constituted, refer themselves throughout to God as their origin and source, and in doing so form necessarily an organized system, endlessly manifold and yet universally one, flowing forth with perpetual derivation every where from the fulness of Him, who in such way filleth all in all.

VIII. Collectively considered, this outflowing of the Divine Life, in the presence and power of which the spiritual world is thus created and upheld, is the *Word of God*; the self-utterance of the Infinite and Eternal Father, by which He is to be regarded as coming forth from the otherwise incomprehensible depths of His own absolute being, and making Himself known in the universe of His works. "By the Word of the Lord," we are told, "were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth." So again: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." What can be more plain or full than this? The whole creation has its principle and beginning here, starting in the spiritual world, and reaching down through that to the natural world, which as we have seen is dependent on the spiritual throughout as a lower and relatively more outward mode of existence. The Word of God is the

alpha and omega of the universe, embracing angels and men, the heavens and all the powers therein, together with the whole boundless compass of nature ; all things from first to last, from inmost to outmost, come together in this common ground, and have in them no real cause or power of existence in any other view.

IX. If any thing were needed more than has been already said to establish the idea of an organized harmonious unity, reaching through the universal creation and binding all its parts together as a single whole, we have it with overwhelming force in the great truth here brought into view. The Divine Word is the all in all of creation, the one principle from which the whole of it flows. How then must this not be, through all its orders of existence, through all its economies and constitutions whether of nature or of grace, one always and everywhere with itself, even as the Word is One ?

X. The law of original existence for the world in this view, is of course no less necessarily the law also of its continued subsistence. Heaven and earth stand perpetually in the presence and power of the Divine Word ; and this not in the character of an almighty *fiat* simply, taking effect upon them in an outwardly mechanical or magical manner, but in the way of life flowing into them continually through the Word from God Himself ; in whom as we know, all angels and men, as well as all living creatures lower than man, live, move, and have their being. “ Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven ; Thou hast established the earth and it abideth.” The principle of stability in both cases, is that from which both heaven and earth took their origin in the beginning. So all changes also, through what are called the laws of nature, come no otherwise in truth than by the operation of this Divine agency flowing down into the natural world through the spiritual. Nothing less than this is involved in that magnificent language of the Psalmist : “ He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth ; His word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool ; He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels ; who can stand before His cold ? He sendeth

out His Word, and melteth them; He causeth His wind to blow, and the waters flow.”

XI. The Divine Word, by which the heavens and the earth continually exist in the way now shown, is the same that constitutes the living soul of all Divine Revelation from the beginning; making the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, in which this Revelation is contained, to be the very embodiment in natural form of a supernatural spiritual power and glory surpassing immeasurably the reach of all merely natural intelligence or thought. This is what we are to understand by the inspiration of the Bible. It is the Word of God, in its ever-living supernal majesty, occupying and possessing the sacred text, not simply as the cause and origin of it at the first, but as its truly informing and actuating spirit through all time. Of the Bible it must be said always in this view, *God is There*. It is the very *shekinah* of His presence, as represented by the Ark containing the two tables of the Law in the Jewish sanctuary; the *testimony*, the *covenant*, so called, in and by which God came near to man and drew man into union with Himself. Everywhere the Bible is this union and meeting together of the invisible and eternal, the “powers of the world to come,” with the interior deepest needs and aspirations of the human spirit in its present bodily state. Hence its authority for all orders and degrees of intelligence, from lisping infancy on to old age; an authority not dependent at all on criticism or hermeneutics, but powerful enough if need be to set this at defiance, to turn it into derision, as in itself a higher right, holding consciously—or if not that, then nevertheless *sensibly*—from the felt power of the Divine itself, hidden in the outward text, and yet shining forth from it so as to give understanding to the simple; even as one may take in the light of intelligence from the eye of another, and catch the inspiration of love from his beaming face, whose presence otherwise may be only most imperfectly understood. The full sense of the Holy Scriptures is unfathomable even for the angels themselves. How much less may it be sounded by the plummet of any simply human science? It is a voice everywhere from behind the veil of sense and time,

having in it eternal meaning. What Christ says of His own speech on one occasion is true of Sacred Scripture universally; its words are SPIRIT and LIFE. They are "quick and powerful." God is in them of a truth.

XII. The economy of Revelation ends in what St. Paul calls the "Mystery of Godliness," by which God, as the Word, "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." We cannot go too far in owning and proclaiming the infinite majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ, as being in this way the actual manifestation of God in the flesh. The whole truth, and power, and glory of the Gospel, are comprehended in St. Peter's confession, *Thou art the Son of God*. On this rock only, Christianity and the Church stand firm against the powers of hell. The Son of the living God, Christ is Himself the living God; the fulness of the Godhead bodily; the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person; the Lord of heaven and earth; by whom all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; who is before all things, and by whom all things consist. He is the image of the otherwise invisible, unknowable, unapproachable God, whom no man hath seen nor can see. The Father is in Him, as He also is in the Father. He and the Father are one. He is in a word the Jehovah, the *I am*, of the Old Testament; the Alpha and Omega, as He proclaimed Himself in the vision of Patmos, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

XIII. Christ, the Son of God, is the Saviour of the world, through the Divine Life which is in Him as God, and which He is able to communicate derivatively to all who look to Him, and come to Him, for that purpose. Whatever other things enter into the idea of salvation, they are to be regarded as conditional only and incidental to this, which is most plainly set forth in the Gospel as central and fundamental for all else. "In Him was Life," it is said, "and the Life was the light of men." He

is "the way, the truth, the Life." He is "the resurrection and the Life." To follow Him, is to "have the light of Life." He "hath Life in Himself," and in virtue of this "quickeneth whom He will." To His disciples He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also;" making life for them to be the efflux of His own Life. "God hath given to us eternal life"—so the Divine record itself runs—"and this *Life is in His Son*. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life;" to which St. John adds with grand conclusion: "We know that the Son of God is come; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and ETERNAL LIFE."

XIV. The Life which is thus in Christ the principle and fountain of salvation for men, must pass over to them in a living way, so as to become in them also a true rational and spiritual life conjoining them with the Life of the Lord; and the organ or faculty by which this is found to be possible on the side of man is *Faith*; which is an activity both of the understanding and the will in their highest form, joining them together as one in the apprehension of the Divine Truth and the Divine Good—these by their everlasting marriage constituting in fact the inmost essence and substance of the Divine Life. Faith is no mechanical or magical appointment in this view, through which men are justified and saved in an outward way by having imputed to them what is in truth no part of their own proper personal existence or experience. It is the meeting of the human spirit inwardly with the enlivening rays that issue actually from the Sun of Righteousness. It is the turning of the soul within itself toward the Lord, and the opening of its inmost receptivity to the life that is forever flowing from His presence.

XV. There is, in such view, only one true faith for man. All the innumerable realities of the spiritual world are so many truths, indeed, which make room for its exercise; but this universe of truths is at the same time one universal complex, in which all refer themselves with inward interdependence, correlation, and common derivation, to the same general origin and

source; and so in full conformity with this, all the possible exercises of genuine faith refer themselves in like manner to a single generality, head themselves together as it were, explicitly or implicitly, in one ground faith which is the root and principle of faith in all other forms. What that primordial faith is—the faith of all faiths—is determined at once by what we are bound to acknowledge as the primordial truth—the truth of all truths—as this comes before us in the being of God, made known to us through His Word, and with full revelation at last only, in and by His Son Jesus Christ. The true Christian faith in this view is not made up certainly of a system of separate and independent doctrines or facts, loosely thrown together each on its own supposed evidence and worth; neither can it be made to start from any such particular doctrine or fact at our pleasure. There is but one order here that is either practically or theologically sound and right; and that is the order which is governed by the objective constitution of the Gospel itself, the order which begins with the Lord God our Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, and which sees and owns all other truth only as flowing from His presence.

XVI. It is strange indeed that any one looking earnestly into the New Testament should ever miss seeing, that the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in the view now stated, the power of owning Him to be the Son of God (with all which that means), not notionally, and from the memory only, but from the interior depths of the soul, is in very truth the beginning of all faith, and that without which all else calling itself faith is turned into a pale abstraction resembling death far more than life. Can Peter's confession, the rock on which the Church is built, ever cease to be what it was in the beginning? Is it less true now than it was eighteen centuries ago, that the one universal work of God, the fountain of all other obedience and righteousness, is to *believe* on Him whom God hath sent? How often are we not told that to believe in Christ as the Son of God is of itself to have eternal life, and that the want of such faith in Him is itself the doom of death, because it is a rejection in fact of the life that dwells in His person and is to be found

nowhere else? "He that heareth my word, He says, and believeth on Him that sent Me (in other words, seeth the Father in the Son), hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." But why go on here with testimonies? On this subject, they are altogether too full for particular quotation.

XVII. Life, eternal life, thus attributed to faith, is not to be viewed as a reward attached to it extrinsically by God, but is the necessary result of what faith is in its own nature and office; as being the medium of communication on the part of man with the Lord of life and glory, who is the fountain of all spiritual being, from which depends, as we have already seen, the right order and perfection also of all natural being. Faith saves us through its object, which is the Divine Truth, being in reality so related to this that neither can be in any man without the other. The Divine Truth (joined always with the Divine Love) is made through faith to be actually in the soul as a part of its own existence, like light in the eye. In Thy light, says the Psalmist, we shall see light. But light again is at once but another term for life; and in the spiritual world, accordingly, the Divine Truth is synonymous with the Divine Life; they cannot be sundered one from the other. In the heavens, truth is substantial essence just as really as life is, both flowing together from the Lord. "I am the Truth," he says; "I am the Light of the world;" "I am the Life;" all in the same intensely realistic sense. Faith, then, as the receptacle of Divine truth, the shining of Divine light in the soul, is necessarily communication at the same time with the Divine Life proceeding from Christ. Its power to save is just this, that it opens the spirit of man, made in the image of God, toward the answerable fulness of God in Christ, and so makes room for a veritable conjunction with Him, in the sense that the very idea of religion has been felt to demand through all ages. This, indeed, is Eternal Life.

XVIII. Christianity, having for its origin and ground our Lord Jesus Christ seen and owned by faith to be the Son of God, in the way now presented, is a vast and mighty system,

as already intimated, of other truths and facts innumerable (taking in at last, indeed, the universal sense of the world), in which, however, all other truths are true, and capable of being truly believed, only in virtue of their inward coherence with what is here the beginning of all Christian life and doctrine. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, for example, is for our faith and theology, only after Christ, in and through Christ, and not before Him; and can never be construed rightly, except as controlled by the radical confession first of all: *Thou art the Son of God; the I AM, which was, is, and is to come; the Almighty.* So with the Hypostatical Union. So with the Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Atonement, the article of Justification, the Church, the Resurrection from the dead. They are all true, in their proper Christian sense, only in and through Christ. They are true Christologically only, and not in any other sense.

XIX. But while the ultimate principle of Christian faith is in this way no other than our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the rule of faith, the medium and measure of its proper exercise, the only sure directory in the end for Christian life and doctrine, is the Divine Revelation contained in the Holy Scriptures. They are "the law and the testimony," by which all truth is to be tried. They are this, however, only through their interior spiritual constitution, only as they are, in the way we have seen, the very presence and power of the same Divine Life by which Christ is declared to be the Light of the world. This it is that constitutes their true internal sense, undiscernible to the natural mind, and makes them to be in truth the "Word of God which liveth and abideth forever." They authenticate and illustrate Christ, only because Christ shines in them everywhere as the Truth of all truth to which they owe their origin. The "spirit of prophecy," we are told, "is the testimony of Jesus;" it flows from Him, and looks toward Him, in every part of the Bible. This reciprocal illumination and witness is no vicious logical circle. It is like the relation between speech and thought, or between body and soul, universally; where each term is intelligible only through the other. The mutual illumi-

nation in the case before us holds in what we have just seen to be the peculiar nature of Faith. It is the inmost and highest in man brought into conjunction with the inflowing life of the Lord; a state thus of direct illumination from Him as the Sun of the spiritual universe, which of itself serves then to show the Scriptures in corresponding illumination also, and so to bring into view their true inward power and glory, whereby "they are able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ." This is that *testimonium spiritus sancti* of which so much account was made in the age of the Reformation, and the true idea of which has been so much obscured since. Not man's spirit as such bearing witness to God's truth (a purely rationalistic conception), but the Spirit of Christ made to be in man actually through his faith. Here lay the sin and condemnation of the Pharisees. They made much of the Scriptures, thinking to have in them eternal life: and yet they had no power to see how the Scriptures testified everywhere to the presence of Christ. Why not? Because they lacked the illumination that comes from inward union with the Divine soul of the Scriptures. "Ye have not God's Word abiding in you," Christ says to them; "for whom He hath sent Him ye believe not." The entrance of God's words giveth light, where they are irradiated with this faith; not otherwise. Entering into man in any other way, the sense of the Bible is adulterated and profaned, and the light of heaven in it is turned into thick darkness.

XX. The view now taken of the relation between Faith and the Revelation of God centering in Christ, carries us beyond the dilemma of false authority and false freedom, from the horns of which it has been found often so difficult to escape in the construction of Christianity. One is the Roman scheme, making the outward Church the beginning and ground and measure of all actual Christian faith and life. The other is the Rationalistic scheme, making the Bible to be all this in the like outward way, as a text book of divine instruction on the plane of the natural understanding, the moral and religious sense of which each man is left to work out as he best can in the exer-

cise of his own free will and private judgment. The two schemes come in the end to substantially the same result. They cast down the Word from its true supernatural throne. They rob the living Christ of His indefeasible majesty, power, and glory. They turn the communion of the spiritual world with the natural into mechanism, magical hocus-pocus, or dim gnostic imagination. They quench the heaven-aspiring light of faith, and will not suffer it to rise into the direct light of the Lord; making reason in this way blind also, and turning it over to perpetual melancholy bondage in the prison-house of the Philistines.

XXI. Christianity, completing as it does the true idea of humanity by bringing it into true union with God, is the completion necessarily at the same time of the entire natural creation which finds in man its highest and last sense; in which view then, as the end of all things going before, it must be regarded as dominating and determining, from first to last, the order both of actual existence and of right intellectual conception, for the world at large. It is not the lower anywhere in the scale of creation, that gives origin and support to the higher. On the contrary the higher as principal and chief ultimates itself everywhere in the lower. So up to the very fountain of all things in Ilim, who came forth from the Father to be in this way the beginning of the works of God. With this must correspond then any true theory or science of the world. The boasted modern *Weltanschauung* which builds its scheme of the universe on the premises of nature (as though these were for man here the *only* data to start with—the only elements to work with on to the end in trying to understand the problem of his own life), is just as irrational as it is irreligious. The only true *Weltanschauung* is that of the Bible, which derives the harmonious whole of creation, in descending order, from that Uncreated Living Wisdom (the source of all other life and light), which “the Lord possessed in the beginning of His way, before His works of old; which was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was.” The power of seeing and owning this is *Faith*; and just for this reason, faith in

Christ is the eye of intelligence for man, and the light of all science deserving the name. "Through faith," says St. Paul, "we *understand* (intelligize or see with the mind) that the worlds were framed by the word of God;" so that the visible depends everywhere in truth on the invisible, nature on spirit, and not the reverse. Without the felt practical force of this insight into the actual constitution of the world (which only faith can give), science is blind and philosophy insane.

XXII. Where science owns no allegiance to faith in this way, it is Naturalism; and where it pretends to take in the spiritual meaning of the world in the way of religion, it becomes what we are to understand properly by *Humanitarianism*, the great heresy of the present time. This is the idea of a full completion of the world, morally and physically, in man (who is in fact the immediate completion of nature), without the necessary complement of a higher spiritual life descending into him from the Lord. The theory may set itself, as infidelity, in open opposition to the Gospel; or it may affect to take the Gospel to its bosom, and to be just that form of Christianity which is now needed to save Christianity itself from general wreck, amid the rising billows of modern unbelief. It is not to be disguised that such humanitarian Christianity has taken possession widely of the religious thinking of the world at this time; and that the evil is not confined to the doctrinal heterodoxies that have come down to us from other days, but is eating as a cancer also far and wide into what still claims to be the orthodoxy and true evangelical life of the Church. Without going into details it may be said, that wherever the central mystery of Christ is either theoretically or practically cast down from its throne; where He is not seen and owned to be the Son of the Living God, the fountain of all life and light for men in the most real view; and where Faith is not made to be the answer of the soul, first of all, to this primordial Truth, this Truth of all other truths, serving to join man with the inflowing life of the Lord, and becoming thus in man himself a "well of water springing up into everlasting life;" there, we must believe, the right confession of the Gospel is wanting, and the fine gold of the

Christian Sanctuary has become dim. It is Humanitarianism "sitting in the temple of God, and showing itself to be God." There may be an outward cleaving still in the case to old doctrines, regarded as technicals of the faith once *delivered* to the saints; but the doctrines are dead, having no root in the Living Christ (mere *εἰδωλα*, simulacra, pallid corpse-like abstractions, 1 John v. 21); and so are ready always to go up like the crackling of thorns before the fire of skeptical criticism. Or it may be, the whole idea of doctrine and mystery has been given up, under the plausible notion that all true religion has to do at last only with a good life, and what we may call the spiritual culture of man from the plane of his simply human life as such. As if the second table of the Law hung not forever from the first table! As if there could be any true morality for man without true religion! As if the life of humanity might be imagined capable of completion in any way, without being apprehended, and raised as it were above itself, by the eternal life which God hath given to us in His Son! Under either view, that of dead doctrine or that of no doctrine, the mystery of error here described comes to the same thing. Antichrist, it is in both forms, working and warring against the only true idea of Christ.

XXIII. That this true idea of Christ is indeed the question of all questions for the age, and the question toward the right solution of which all the inmost powers and deepest needs of the age are, with growing urgency, now pressing from all sides, is coming to be more and more plain to the observation of the thoughtful every day. Science, politics, and morals, believingly or unbelievingly, are forced to do homage to it. No theology has living interest, no confessionism is more than a grinning skeleton of dry bones, apart from it. All the issues of faith and infidelity, spiritual life and spiritual death, are heading themselves together here, in the grand heaven-and-earth moving interrogation of our Lord Himself: "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" Who is He as related to God? Who is He, and what is He as related to humanity and the world?

XXIV. The right knowledge and acknowledgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the view we have now taken of what He is as the full and only visible Manifestation of the otherwise invisible God, the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and that which necessarily goes along with this, the right idea, namely, of what true saving faith is on the side of man, as first of all a direct looking to and coming to the Lord beheld in such Divine Majesty, whereby room is offered for the inflowing of truth, righteousness and life, in the most real way, from His presence; these two in union—are they not, beyond all else, what the critical questionings and confusions of this last time of the Church are plainly forcing into view more and more from all sides, as the only true answer to the great world-problem with which they are concerned? Here, and here only it would seem, have we any solid ground on which to stand, in the conflict between faith and science, revelation and reason, the real existence of a personal God, on the one hand, and Naturalism, or Nature made to stand for God, on the other hand. Here, and here only, is the way opened for a real coming together of Christianity and Humanity, Religion and Morality, in the historical life of the world. Here in its only true beginning, must theology find also its true end. Here only can the strife of doctrines, the *odium theologicum* of religious systems and schools, be made to cease. Here only if ever, can the war of sects and confessions so much as *begin* even to look toward the unity and catholicity of a genuine church life. One Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God, to begin with; and so one faith, one worship, one life. To talk of negotiating or bringing to pass Christian orthodoxy or catholicity in any way other than this, is but hypocrisy and sham. As He is our Life, so He alone is our Light also and our Peace.