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KIKUYU, CLERICAL VERACITY AND MIRACLES

Kikuyu, clerical veracity and miracles: it might seem that no three topics could bear less intrinsic relation to one another. In point of fact they are connected by very natural bonds, and it was inevitable that the controversy aroused by the publication of the Bishop of Zanzibar's open letter at the end of last year¹ should run rapidly through stages which raised successively the three issues of intercommunion, the sincerity of clerical engagements, and the supernatural origin of Christianity. The bomb-shell which Dr. Weston cast into the Anglican camp was thus like one of those fire-work bombs of Chinese concoction, which explode first into a serpent, out of which is at once extruded a noisome reptile, while from that in turn proceeds a fiery dragon. Each successive stage of the controversy cuts more deeply and uncovers more clearly the canker which lies at the root of much of our modern Church-life. The question raised in its first stage concerns only the limits of proper Christian communion; the issue in the second stage is just common honesty; while what is at stake in the third stage is the very existence of Christianity. The three issues are necessarily implicated in one another because they are only varying phases and interacting manifestations of

¹*Ecclesia Anglicana*. For what does she stand? An Open Letter to the Right Reverend Father in God, Edgar, Lord Bishop of St. Albans. By Frank, Bishop of Zanzibar. 1914. Some curious details as to the publication of this letter may be read in the Christmas (1913) number of *The Christian Warfare* (Talbot & Co.), the organ of the Catholic Literature Association.

the fundamental conflict, underlying them all, between faithfulness to the Christian deposit and that indifferentism which is the outcome of essential unbelief.

I

The Bishop of Zanzibar was handicapped in dealing with the question of the limits of proper Christian communion by his position as a member of the Church of England, one of the numerous and not altogether unconflicting boasts of which lies in its extreme comprehensiveness. As a bishop receiving his orders from (he may himself perhaps prefer to say "through")² that Church and ruling over a section of it by its commission,³ and as a Christian who has been bred in it and still shares its life, participating of necessity in all that that life means, he is himself living in the most intimate communion with many of far less clearness of Christian faith and profession than any of those with whom the Bishops of Uganda and Mombasa communed on that now historic occasion in the Scotch Presbyterian Church at Kikuyu. In the amazing reversal of values which characterises the thought of extreme High Churchmen, he might indeed have taken refuge in the contention that episcopal organization is more fundamental to the Church's life than purity of Christian faith, so that where

² Cf. *The Case against Kikuyu*. A Study in Vital Principles. By Frank Weston, D.D., Bishop of Zanzibar, 1914, p. 40: "A Bishop sent from England to Africa goes out not as a Bishop of the English Church, but simply as a Catholic Bishop who owes his consecration to the Universal Episcopate represented to him by prelates of the Church of England": and what follows, in which he repudiates the duty of carrying into Africa the peculiarities, among the Catholic bodies, of the Church of England,—e.g. its comprehensiveness.

³ His Open Letter itself and his appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury surely carry with them the admission of that much as to the African sees. Cf. what Bishop Tucker said on this matter: "At present the missionaries of the C. M. S. working in East Africa, and their adherents, are members of the Church of England; they form the Church of England in East Africa" (quoted in *Steps towards Reunion*. A statement for the Consultative Committee. By the Right Rev. W. G. Peel, D.D., Bishop of Mombasa, and the Right Rev. J. J. Willis, D.D., Bishop of Uganda. 1914, p. 29.)

episcopacy is everything else may be tolerated. Mr. R. A. Knox seems to give us to understand that by many of his supporters at least—and there is no reason to suppose Dr. Weston to be in substantial disaccord with them⁴—any heresy whatever might be endured better than lack of episcopal orders: truths are only “enshrined by the Church,” it seems, while “episcopacy is integral and belongs to the essence of the Church itself.”⁵ It may be supposed, however, that it is more embarrassing to contend at Zanzibar than in the Common Rooms at Oxford—at least without some counterbalancing action—that it is more important to induce Mussulmans and Fetish-worshippers to permit themselves to be episcopally organized than it is to bring them to the acceptance of the Gospel. At all events the Bishop of Zanzibar has felt compelled in protesting against what he deems the laxity of the Bishops of Uganda and Mombasa in the matter of episcopacy, to protest also against the laxity of the Church of England in tolerating within its communion men who deny fundamental elements of the Christian faith. By so doing, he has not only guarded himself to some extent against the uncomfortable *tu quoque*, but has immensely strengthened his case. He appears not merely as the zealot of untenable episcopal pretensions,⁶ but as the champion of the Christian religion.

⁴“The Church does not *accept* the Episcopate,” he remarks (*The Case against Kikuyu*, p. 56), “she cannot exist without it.”

⁵*The British Review*, February, 1914, p. 186.

⁶His own contention is expressed in the words: “So that ultimately we are compelled to admit Episcopacy to be the result of divine will and guidance; and, apart from modernist views, the purpose and wish of Christ Himself” (*The Case against Kikuyu*, p. 18). But even this is made out only (1) by confusing parochial (Presbyterian) and diocesan (Episcopal) episcopacy, and then (2) invoking the amazing principle (p. 13): “For it is now positively agreed among Christian theologians that it is not possible to distinguish in effect between an immediate act of God, and an act performed by Him through the agency of the Christian Church”—that is to say what the Church does, God does; and hence whatever is established by the Church must be declared to have been established by God. On that principle it may be said that Episcopacy is “the purpose and wish of Christ”, for has it not been established by Christ’s Church? This mode of con-

We may regret—we do regret—that it has been left to High Churchmen in the Church of England, to come forward effectively in defense of these fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. We may ask—we do ask—where are those Evangelicals who still boast that they constitute the core, or the larger portion, of the Church of England; and who, one would think, would have the greatest stake of all in the fundamentals of the faith and the warmest zeal of all for the preservation of them pure and whole for those who are to come after them—for what have they more than these? But it is a cause for rejoicing that in the prevailing apathy there are some who, even if it be merely because of the qualities of their very defects, raise a voice in defence of the well-nigh deserted cause of fundamental truth and demand greater faithfulness in preserving pure the deposit of the faith.⁷ There surely is no one really awake to the demands of the present situation, not only in the Church of England but in all the churches, who

ciliating the Divine Right of Episcopacy with its tardy origin in the Church is becoming quite common. An extreme instance of it,—on quite other grounds than those occupied by Dr. Weston—may be found in the argument of the Rev. J. H. Skrine, D.D., who knows that “authority derives from Church to office and not the other way”—that is to say that Bishops are the creations and representatives of the church—and who on that ground seems disposed to grant the validity of non-episcopal ministries, and yet who is able to make his own such language as this: “Briefly, we declare that the Order of Bishops is an integral part of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ” (*Eucharist and Bishop*, 1914, p. 21).

⁷We agree thoroughly with the opinion of Dean B. I. Bell (*The Atlantic Monthly*, July 1914, p. 95): “Better the bitter intolerance of those who believe too much and too strongly than the easy complaisance of those who believe too little, and hold that too lightly.” And there is truth in his remark that not only is (this so-called easy) “tolerance a destructive force” which is in danger of eradicating the very “capacity for constructive thought”, but that those who are condemned as “intolerant” are often so—as he expresses it—only because they are “seers not politicians”. Jesus Christ, he points out, certainly did not follow the methods of our modern campaigners for what they call “Church Unity”, among whom there is manifested a tremendous amount of good feeling and a clear assumption “that there is no such thing as objective religious truth”.

will not recognize the necessity of such a protestation as is embodied in the following words,⁸ or who will withhold (apart from its sacerdotal coloring) his hearty sympathy from it.

"I submit to your Lordship that it is safer for us to do and say what God has commanded, rather than, being, moved thereto by an unbalanced desire for union, to falsify our witness and tamper with the message with which we have been entrusted.

Nor has He revealed to us that by the way of modifying revealed Truth to the taste of the modern world we shall lead the souls of men to Him. Rather has He bidden us uplift our voice in solid, corporate witness to the Faith delivered to the Church, leaving it to His wisdom and love to turn the modern mind to His sacramental presence in His Church.

For Modernism does not make men Christians in the accepted sense of the word, much less does it make them sons of the Holy Church of Christ. It is a new religion, and every soul attracted thereto means a new betrayal of the witness with which we are entrusted. It is easy enough to cast away the dogmas that hinder the modern mind from professing Christ, but if so be God requires of us, for the furtherance of His plans, a faithful witness to Revelation rather than an increasing roll of not very humble disciples, to what purpose is our self-appointed task?"

When Dr. Weston speaks here of "an unbalanced desire for union", he has of course in mind, among other manifestations of it, especially the proposed scheme of federation set forth in the resolutions of the Kikuyu Conference; and he may be supposed, accordingly, to be thinking, among other betrayals of the cause of truth which he thinks have been perpetrated in the cause of union, particularly of the betrayal of the cause of episcopacy of which he considers Drs. Willis and Peel to have been guilty in assenting to that scheme of federation. We regret to be compelled to understand that these Bishops have no intention whatever of "betraying" the cause of episcopacy; whatever value they attach to the union of the churches, they attach more value to episcopacy.⁹ They stand flatly on the "Quadrilateral" of the Lambeth Conference of 1888 as the

⁸ *Ecclesia Anglicana*, p. 27.

⁹ Cf. *Steps Towards Reunion*, pp. 7 and 28 ff.

irreducible basis of union,¹⁰ and are held by it to a certain conservatism which makes the Kikuyu scheme conspicuous among such schemes for its moderation and its faithfulness to those Christian truths at least which are embodied in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. It even goes beyond this measure of faithfulness to fundamental Christian truth, to lay as the foundation-stone of its proposed federation an emphatic assertion of two of the key-doctrines of Christianity, the deity and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.¹¹ It is not merely Kikuyu, however, that Dr. Weston has in

¹⁰ They therefore themselves say truly (*Steps Towards Reunion*, p. 52): "The Kikuyu proposals represent an honest attempt to interpret what we believe to be the spirit and intention of the Lambeth Conference in regard to closer coöperation in the mission field." This is the strength and weakness of the Kikuyu scheme. Its strength, because thus a certain degree of conservatism is secured to it. Its weakness, because the fourth provision of the "Quadrilateral" makes episcopacy indispensable to reunion, and the second provision lays down an utterly inadequate doctrinal basis for a united church. The Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, though statements of certain essential elements of the Christian faith, are emphatically not "a sufficient statement of the Christian faith". The Kikuyu Conference did not find them such; and there are other elements of the Christian faith besides those it felt it necessary to add in more emphatic statement, which no Protestant should be willing to omit. If we are prepared to abandon all that has been gained by the Reformation for spiritual religion, why should we stick at the Pope?

¹¹ "The basis of Federation shall consist in (a) the loyal acceptance of the Holy Scriptures as our supreme rule of Faith and Practice; of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as a general expression of fundamental Christian belief; and in particular belief in the absolute authority of the Holy Scripture as the Word of God: in the Deity of Jesus Christ, and in the atoning death of our Lord as the ground of our forgiveness" (*The Kikuyu Conference. A Study in Christian Unity*, by J. J. Willis, Bishop of Uganda, 1914, p. 19). Bishops Peel and Willis explain (*Steps Towards Reunion*, p. 25) that "these clauses are not inserted as additions to the historic Creeds, but as emphasizing positions which were felt by some of the members of the Conference to be peculiarly in danger." This is a defence against the imputation that they did not treat the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as (in accordance with the Lambeth declaration) "a sufficient statement of the Christian faith". For this Dr. Headlam, for instance, calls them sharply to task: he will have nothing but these two Creeds and he will have no "interpretations" of them (*The Church Quarterly Review*, January 1914, pp. 417 f.).

mind; and no thoughtful observer can doubt that the "unbalanced desire for union" which he cites to the bar of our judgment, constitutes one of the gravest, because one of the most insidious, dangers which confront the Churches of our day whether at home or on the mission-field. The crimes which have been and are being committed in the name of union rival in number and in greatness those which are said to be committed in the name of freedom. Nor has this "unbalanced desire for union" always even the excuse of drawing its impulse from a serious purpose, so as to be chargeable only with a faulty perspective; it sometimes seems to be the outcome of little more than thoughtlessness and lack of spiritual earnestness. A recent writer,—who is much of the same general way of thinking with Dr. Weston—even correlates it with nothing deeper than the so-called "practical" genius of Americans. We read:¹²

"The American nation is ever out for results. Its triumphs are in applied science. A new experiment is its joy. We are impatient of delay, of debate, of dependence upon any one. The problem of irreligion arises; let the religious bodies get together, and get busy. The plain man wants something he can understand. Why have rival businesses, when one can accommodate the trade? Sunday is neglected; let everyone go to church once on one Sunday, it matters not where. Fix the day, and we will all wear a button and go to church. Missions are right. They help civilization. But there is waste of money and men in the same fields. Business methods demand coöperation in the Mission Fields. Organize, advertise, unify, push things through. If objection should be taken that this is a very worldly proposition for attaining spiritual results, there are certainly many who would see no great harm in that, who conceive that the twentieth century demands a new version of Christianity, who claim that problems of faith have had their day, who would change now even our Lord's own test of discipleship. It is no longer 'Whom do ye say that I am?' but 'What do ye say that I am?' The Kingdom of Heaven must find its realization on earth. Social betterment is the Gospel. There is little wonder that reunion at any price for practical purposes is the temptation of the hour. And the method is—Coöperate that you may find unity. In practice this means that convictions of faith are kept for private edification. We are forced to act, when we get

¹² H. P. Bull, *The Constructive Quarterly*, September 1914, pp. 464f. Compare A. C. Headlam below, note 19.

together in spiritual affairs, on what are common beliefs, and the wider the circle of coöperation the narrower are the borders of common faith—until the Christian Creed is too broad to be taken in."

Extremes meet. As the zealot for episcopacy may be in danger of subordinating to the conservation of mere tactical succession, or of a mere provision of order, that saving truth for the perpetuation of which in the world alone episcopacy exists, so the zealot for union is in danger of sinking the claims of the truth for the safeguarding and propagating of which alone union is valuable, in the mere abstract fact of union itself. Union for union's sake is as starved and hunger-bitten a programme as episcopacy for episcopacy's sake: each alike sacrifices for what it believes the efficiency of the machine the very cause for which alone the machine is supposed to be useful. It may sound well to bewail the reproduction in the foreign field of the "unhappy divisions" by which the Church at home is rent. But the only thing clear about this complaint is the multitude of unhappy assumptions on which it is based. Every division (like every war) is of course "unhappy" when considered with reference to those who are in the wrong in it. But equally every division (like every war) is "happy" when looked at with reference to those who maintain the right by it,—who by it, let us say for example, preserve for themselves and for the world in which they are placed as the seed of the Kingdom, that purity of faith and life, from which alone the Kingdom of God can be propagated. Where the seed is not pure, what shall the harvest be? Obviously the only justifiable way in which our "unhappy divisions" can be healed is by the abandonment of their error on the part of those whose error necessitates them. To attempt to heal them by abandoning the truth to which their existence is the outstanding witness, or to mitigate them by ceasing to insist upon this truth, or to cover them up by the suppression of at least all corporate testimony to it in some sort of an amalgam of truth and error, involves the fearful guilt of unfaithfulness to the Gospel with

which we have been put in charge, as the one saving force in the world.

The "unhappy divisions" by which Reformed Protestants for example are separated from their brethren of other communions are just the external marks and therefore the public witnesses of the purity of the Gospel in which they trust and for the preservation and propagation of which in the world they exist as organized communities. Their brethren in other communions—the existence of which bears witness to other convictions—they have no difficulty in heartily recognizing as Christian brethren, though in error,—oftentimes no doubt serious and in itself considered deadly error; and they have no difficulty in heartily cooperating with them in the whole range of Christian work, so long as thereby their own particular testimony to the purer Gospel which in God's providence they have been enabled to preserve, is neither abandoned, nor truncated, nor diluted, nor obscured. These "divisions" mean to them just the Gospel; the Gospel that has been maintained by them in this its purity only through struggle and strife, tears, and yes, blood, during two thousand years of Christian history. They cannot undo this history; nor can they in these latter days cast lightly off from them the heritage of divine truth of which through this history they have come to be the guardians in the world. This heritage they must preserve at all costs; and at all costs they must transmit it pure and whole to those, whether at home or abroad, to whom it is given to them to convey the Gospel. They owe the heathen the Gospel; the Gospel in its entirety and in its purity; not a diluted Gospel, nor a truncated Gospel, nor a distorted Gospel, as if a diluted, or a truncated, or a distorted Gospel were good enough for heathen. And they owe them this Gospel as it has been clarified, and compacted, and guarded, and given its most vital and perfect statement, after two thousand years of study and thought and experience and controversy, that the new churches growing up under their care in fresh lands may be saved from the er-

rors of the past and protected from the necessity of fighting on their own ground all the old battles over again—as they inevitably will be compelled to do, if we withhold from them the results of the controversies of the past. Being possessed of the pure Gospel, we dare not either for ourselves or for them consent to its adulteration. After all, what is required of stewards is first of all that they be found faithful.

O but, it will be said, the waste and the scandal of our “divided front” in the face of the heathen world! No doubt there is both waste and scandal in our divided front. All Christians should be one; because all Christians should hold fast in its completeness the Gospel in its purity. But the guilt of this waste and scandal must rest where it belongs,—on the shoulders of those whose attenuation or corruption of the Gospel necessitates the divisions by which alone the pure Gospel can be maintained in the world. They cannot justify the abandonment of the pure Gospel that we may present to the heathen world in undivided front a depraved and contaminated, and therefore weak and ineffective Gospel. Meanwhile we may console ourselves with the reflection that it is easy to exaggerate both the waste and the scandal of a “divided front” in the face of the heathen world. We are not referring here again to the fundamental truth—which nevertheless we are bound to bear above all things in mind—that there is a gathering which is really a scattering abroad. Our minds too are moving for the moment on the plane of good policy, and we are bringing into question the bald utility of what is called our “undivided front”. If there is something imposing in an “undivided front”, which may seem to promise results, there is something to be expected also from generous emulation and variety of appeal.¹³ It is greatly to be doubted,

¹³ Uganda is often adduced as a proof of the value of having but a single church in a field (so e.g. Eugene Stock, *The Church in the Mission Field*, p. 7). It may perhaps be worth while to note therefore Dr. Willis' testimony that in Uganda the converts of purest life are not found in the sections in which there exists no other but the Church of England and this one church has become therefore powerful and

at all events, whether such an "undivided front" as could be given to Christianity by sinking essential differences and covering over suppressed divergences of the utmost importance, in an indistinguishable mass of apparent sameness, could be more effective in winning the heathen to the common Christianity than the frank exploitation by each type of belief and organization of its own particular message. Certainly the heathen may be trusted,—none can be more fully trusted,—to feel the gulf which separates a Christian of any type from the heathen around him, and to class solidly together in their thought all Christians of all types as a people apart. The differences that divide Christians, in the heathen apprehension as truly and as spontaneously as in that of the Christians themselves, divide Christians. The essential unity is not lost in the superimposed variety, and the "front" amid all divisions remains for all spiritual ends undivided.

Those who have read with attention any considerable portion of the immense correspondence in the British newspapers, which was called out by the Kikuyu incident, will not have failed to note a number of testimonies from actual observers on the ground to both facts here adverted to—the positive value of what we may call "competition" in mission work also, and the full recognition by the heathen of the solidarity of the whole Christian body despite its more superficial divisions. We are glad to observe that the promoters of the Kikuyu Federation exhibit no tendency to minimize the reality of this solidarity or its ready recognition by the heathen. Dr. Willis himself, in defending before his Anglican brethren (that such a defence should be thought necessary betrays the real point of weakness and scandal in our "unhappy divisions"), his recognition as fellow Christians of the converts of other churches, throws the whole weight of his defence on the fact that the Mission Authorities are after all helpless in the matter—apart from

"the fashion"; but in those in which the Protestant Christians are a minority in a Roman Catholic community. (*The Church in Uganda. A Charge to Missionaries of the Uganda Mission, 1913; 1914, p. 18.*)

any decision of the Authorities, the mission converts will recognize their Christian brethren on sight. He testifies:¹⁴

"No one who has lived in direct touch with African heathenism and knows the profound gap that lies between even the primitive and often most imperfect native Christian and his heathen brother can doubt for a moment on which side of the gap the convert from another Mission is standing. And even were he himself to hesitate, his own converts, to whom the 'Communion of Saints' is still a vivid reality, would be quick to recognize through all outward differences a Christian and a brother."

Similarly the well-informed writer of that one of the "Kikuyu Tracts" which deals with the question of comity in the mission field, bears testimony at once to the ready understanding by the heathen of the essential unity of Christians of all names and the strong sense of solidarity existing among the converts themselves. He writes:¹⁵

"Non-Christians, and especially Muslims and Hindus, are quite familiar with varieties within their own borders which in no way interfere with fundamental unity, nor are ever regarded as essentially contrary to one another. . . . All outsiders probably, Chinese and Japanese as well as Muslims and Hindus, are quite able to appreciate true Unity underlying superficial variety."

And as to the insiders:¹⁶

"One of the most refreshing glimpses of real Catholicity is the way in which converts will warmly welcome as brethren all who own Christ as Lord, be they Romanists or Plymouth Brethren. They look aghast and astonished sometimes at petty ecclesiastical rules which seek to pen them off from one another."

Things being so on the mission field, we need not be in haste to deny the faith that we may abate "the weakness and scandal of our divided front." Apparently the strong impulse to ill-considered schemes of union of essentially discordant churches on mission ground flows from some other spring than concern for the purely spiritual life of the converts.

¹⁴ *The Kikuyu Conference*, p. 11.

¹⁵ *Comity on the Mission Field*. By the Rev. H. G. Grey, M.A., Principal of Wycliff Hall, Oxford, Formerly Principal of St. John's College, Lahore, India, 1914, p. 2.

¹⁶ P. 7.

We may endure with patience accordingly even those divisions of the forces operating in the mission field which have as little reason behind them as that produced by the pretensions of Anglican prelacy. Dr. Willis and Principal Grey alike being witness, these pretensions on the part of Anglican missionaries do not prevent brotherly intercourse among the converts. They do not even introduce any new factor to be reckoned with on the field. Protestant missions are in any event faced everywhere by Romanist missions making the same exclusive claims. If Protestant missions can adjust themselves to the conditions created by the presence of the Romanists, they are already adjusted to any problem raised by Romanizers: Anglicans and Romanists will only be classed in the public mind together, as over against Protestants. Should the Anglican authorities, on the appeal of the Bishop of Zanzibar, therefore,—as they possibly may under the dominating (we had almost said, domineering) influence of the High Church section of the clergy—choose “the policy of isolation” deprecated by Professor A. C. Headlam¹⁷ and close the way to such an adjustment as that which the Bishops of Uganda and Mombasa propose to make; this is to be regretted chiefly for the sake of the Church of England itself and the missions she has so splendidly sustained, which, we are given to understand, would find it difficult in such conditions permanently to retain their own converts.¹⁸ No increased difficulties would be brought to other missions which have it in their hearts only to make disciples of all the nations.

It is a pity, however, to permit the mind when engaged

¹⁷ *The Church Quarterly Review*, January 1914, p. 406.

¹⁸ Cf. Eugene Stock, *The Church in the Mission Field*, 1914, p. 8. At one point Bishops Peel and Willis postpone the loss thus (*Steps Towards Reunion*, p. 52): “There may not be an immediate danger of losing our present converts; but there will be a very great danger of losing their children.” They quote (p. 36) with strong approval the Rev. W. Chadwick’s opinion: “If we hold ourselves aloof from other Churches we shall be left in a hopeless minority,—we not only lose power for the whole cause of Christ in the face of Mohammedanism, but we shall be ignored when in the future a native Church of East Africa is formed.”

on such things, to dwell even temporarily upon questions of mere policy. It ought to be a matter of course that no considerations of policy can determine action where principles are so deeply involved. It may be intelligible that the members of native churches themselves,—and especially the leaders among native Christians—should be attracted by the alluring vision of strong national churches; it is very natural that the advantages, political, social and other, which would accrue to such relatively great bodies, should blind them for the moment to the nature of the spiritual compromises by which alone they may ordinarily be attained. It is even intelligible that many missionaries themselves, weary of the difficulties which clog the work in small, isolated communities, or worn by the frictions which unavoidably attend the divisions of interest among several separate, however cordially sympathetic, communions, may be swept along by the current setting so strongly towards consolidation. No doubt there are gains, obvious and large, which may be secured by the smelting of all the churches in an area into one. But there is a price to pay; and what is wholly unintelligible is that the Missionary Agencies at home and the churches they serve, which might be supposed to look out upon the field from a more elevated standpoint, should show themselves so frequently ready to pay the price—which not rarely includes desertion or compromising of the very Gospel for the propagation of which in the world they exist.¹⁹

¹⁹ Cf. A. C. Headlam (*Church Quarterly Review*, January 1914, p. 408) commenting on the reports printed in *The Continuation Committee Conferences in Asia, 1912-1913*, writes: "There is a danger which sometimes comes to the surface as we read these reports that a conception of religious unity might prevail which would take the form of what we might call a 'successful commercial combine'. Christianity, it is argued, is weakened by the isolation and separation of the different religious bodies: there is universal competition: let us therefore unite. Here lies a serious danger. There is as great danger in such union as there is in an insincere political combination of religious bodies. All such proposals forget that the basis of religion is truth, that any combination which is to be sincere and permanent must have a basis that is recognized as true, and that religious truth can only be gained by earnest prayer and study."

Nothing could afford a more startling revelation of the wide-spread indifference to the most central and most precious Christian verities than the disposition manifested in many quarters to look upon the slender doctrinal basis laid down in the Lambeth "Quadrilateral"—the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds—as a sufficient sum of Christian doctrine on which to found a church's confession and a church's life. This is to blot out at a stroke sixteen hundred fruitful years of the church's thinking and the church's living, and to begin afresh with the veritable *incunabula*. The entire body of saving truth, won once for all for God's saints of every clime and blood in the throes of the great controversies of a millenium and a half,—we need instance only those with the naturalism of Pelagianism and its successors, and with the sacerdotalism of Rome and its imitators (they center around the doctrines of Free-Grace and Justification by Faith)—have no place in the meagre teachings of these cradle-Creeds. And yet even these Creeds are often treated as providing too extended a doctrinal basis to be insisted upon; and unions of churches are proposed upon an even narrower foundation of doctrine than that they lay down. Certainly nothing could be more disheartening than the constant manifestation, in the negotiations for bringing the several churches in the mission field into some sort of amalgamation, that men set more store by petty points of ecclesiastical order or practice than by the most fundamental or most central truths of the Christian revelation. The Gospel will be cheerfully given up that they may "become One"—one what?—but not a peculiarity of organization or a customary method of administering a sacrament. Men will readily fraternize on equal terms with those who deny the deity of Christ, or His substitutive atonement, or justification by faith, but not with those who differ with them as to the qualifications for the ministrant of the eucharist or the proper mode of applying the water in baptism. A very good example is offered by the "South India United

Church," as it is described at least by Mr. B. M. Streeter.²⁰ The churches "founded by five British and American Missions of different denominations," we are told, have entered into this union, and "some other bodies are contemplating entering" it. "Three Churches, however, felt precluded from participation, by what they regard as points of principle." What are these "points of principle?"

"The Anglicans stand outside, because they—or at least one important section of them, whose opinions the rest cannot disregard—believe that an episcopally ordained ministry is necessary for the regular administration of the Lord's Supper. The Lutherans stand out, because they hold that a correct belief about the nature of the Elements administered, i.e., the doctrine known as Consubstantiation is equally essential. The so-called 'close' Baptists stand out, on the ground that Baptism, other than that of adults, and that by complete immersion, is invalid."

Has anyone felt precluded from participation in the union because of the exceeding defectiveness of its Confession of Faith—a Confession of Faith which knows the Trinity only as a "mystery" not expressly affirmed to be true,²¹ the Incarnation only as it might know a supreme *avatar*,²² sin only as a repeated act of man, not as a fault of nature,²³ redemption only as some vague "way of salvation" established by Christ with no affirmation either of a substitutive atonement or of justification by faith? So far as appears, not one.

Phenomena like this are not accidental. They are intrinsic to an "unbalanced desire for union", and are inevitable wherever this "unbalanced desire for union" has its way. In the very nature of the case bodies can unite only on the basis of the minimum of truth held among them. That body which confesses the least of truth held by any of the contracting bodies, necessarily sets the maxi-

²⁰ *Restatement and Reunion. A Study in First Principles.* 1914, pp. 157 ff.

²¹ "We believe in one God. . . . We acknowledge the mystery of the Holy Trinity."

²² "His only-begotten Son, who alone is the perfect incarnation of God."

²³ "We acknowledge that all have sinned."

mum of truth which can be confessed by them all. Otherwise that body would be excluded from the union. The inevitable result is that the Union-Churches being, or in danger of being, erected in the mission fields are being systematically organized on the basis of the least doctrinal profession made by any church doing work in the several missions; sometimes they even appear to seek an even lower doctrinal basis than is actually professed by any one of the contracting parties,—apparently to meet the demands of “undogmatic” individuals in the missions, to prepare the way for the “liberal” era supposed to be dawning, or to refrain from binding the “poor, ignorant natives” to too much truth. Any one who does not see that thus a great wrong is being done to the native churches; that what is really being done is to found a series of new sects in mission lands organized on the very lowest plane of profession and therefore of life—for life always follows doctrine and can no more rise above it than a stream above its source—known in Christendom, must be blind indeed. When we contemplate what we do not say may be, but, in the natural development of effects, must be, the ultimate result of this, we are tempted to address our zealous advocates in the mission fields of union at all costs, in some such words as those which Charles Kingsley places on the lips of his Raphael, as he bowed himself out from the presence of Cyril of Alexandria,—of course *mutatis mutandis*, and of course including the offensive phraseology in the final clause in the *mutanda*:—“I advise you honestly to take care lest, while you are only trying to establish God’s kingdom you forget what it is like, by shutting your eyes to those of its laws which are established already. I have no doubt that with your Highness’ great powers, you will succeed in establishing something. My only dread is, that when it is established you should discover that it is . . . not God’s Kingdom.” It is at least beyond controversy that no church can be great in the only sense of greatness which matters with churches,—great before God,—which lays its

foundations in contempt for God's truth given for the healing of the nations.²⁴

II

We have supposed that the Bishop of Zanzibar, as a member and prelate of the exceedingly "comprehensive" Church of England, must have felt some embarrassment in arraigning the Bishops of Uganda and Mombasa for their readiness to fraternize with Christians of non-prelatical communions. We must suppose him to have felt an even greater embarrassment as a "Catholic" member of the Protestant Church of England, in denying to any of his fellow-members of that church an equal right with himself to its spacious toleration. That the "Modernists" as they are more and more coming to be called—they used to be called "Liberals"—the legitimacy of whose position in the church of England he challenges, hold their position in it only by doing incredible violence to the formularies by which, as members of that church, they are bound, is obvious enough. But the attempt to deny them the privilege of doing these formularies this violence comes with little grace from the adherents of that Romanizing party which has established its own right to a place in the church—it seems to have ended by becoming the ruling place—by doing equal violence to them in another interest. You may play fast with formularies; or you may play loose with them; in the interests of ordinary honesty we think it better that you should play fast with them. But it seems particularly indecorous to undertake to play both fast and loose with them—fast with them as regards others, loose with them as regards yourself.

We are meanwhile entirely in sympathy with Dr. Weston

²⁴ It is quite clear on the face of it, and among reasonable men it is commonly recognized, that all useful coöperation presupposes real agreement in faith. We must be one before we can usefully act as one. Nothing is more hopeless than to attempt to make a false unity serve the purposes of a true one,—to agree to differ and yet to function as not differing. We might as well try to make a hive by imprisoning together in a box bees belonging to different swarms.

in his contention not only that the presence of the so-called Modernists in the Church of England gravely weakens that church as a teacher of Christianity, and that not least in the mission field;²⁵ but that their presence in it is in itself intolerable. His remedy for the evil is the direct one of calling upon the church to move in its judicial authority and cleanse itself from heresy. "The *Ecclesia Anglicana*," he declares,²⁶ "needs at once to choose between the liberty of heresy and the duty of handing on the faith as she received it. She cannot have the one while she fulfils the other. And the sooner she chooses the better for her, the heathen and the Moslem." We are in as complete sympathy with him with respect to the remedy which should be applied as with respect to the nature of the evil requiring it. The chief of Dr. Weston's supporters in the home Episcopate, Dr. Gore, however, while fully agreeing with him as to the seriousness of the evil, appears nevertheless not to be able to go the whole way with him with respect to the remedy which should be applied. If we understand Dr. Gore, he would deprecate any attempt on the part of the church to extrude the Modernists by judicial proceedings. He would be satisfied with a declaration by "the bishops, as the official guardians of the Church" repudiating all complicity with their claim to a legitimate place in the church, and the relegation of their actual separation from the church to their own consciences. "Let us continue," he says,²⁷

²⁵ Dr. Weston feels very strongly on this matter and permits himself the use of somewhat biting language in speaking of it, likening so "comprehensive" a body as the Church of England to "a Society for shirking vital issues" (*Ecclesia Anglicana*, p. 10), and expressing serious doubt whether it is not thereby rendered entirely "unfit to send missionaries to heathen or Mohammedan lands" (p. 7). "I can speak only for what I see and know," he remarks (p. 14); "and speaking for this Mohammedan land, I do not hesitate to say that a Church that has two views in its highest ranks about the trustworthiness of the Bible, the authority of the Church, and the infallibility of the Christ, has surrendered its chance of winning the Moslem."

²⁶ *Ecclesia Anglicana*, p. 15.

²⁷ *The Basis of Anglican Fellowship in Faith and Organization*. Fourth Impression. 1914, p. 26.

“to leave the individual members of our ministry to their own consciences.” Of course not neglecting to prod their consciences with very distinct and strong intimations that in the opinion of many of their fellow-Churchmen, they have, like the Jesuit casuists whom Pascal scourged in the *Provincial Letters*, been “led on, in a special atmosphere, to adopt a position and maintain a claim which, looked at in the light of common morality, proves utterly unjustifiable.”²⁸ For, even if we put it on this low ground, how can it be denied that “the officer of a society who finds himself unhappily brought to a conclusion the opposite of some fundamental principle of his society, is bound to resign his office?” Is not this—so far from “a violation of liberty”—just “common conscientiousness”?²⁹

This reasoning is undoubtedly sound. But it is futile to expect it to have more effect in this case than in other similar cases, as for example in the case of Dr. Gore himself and other adherents of the “Catholic” party. The Episcopal declaration which Dr. Gore asked for has, in response to numerous signed petitions, been given,³⁰ and all things

²⁸ P. 25.

²⁹ P. 16. The Bishop of Ely (Dr. Chase), in the preface which he has prepared for the reprint of his essay on *The Gospels in the Light of Historical Criticism*, 1914, joins Dr. Gore in urging the Liberal clergyman who “has been led by his studies to deny portions of the historic creed of the church”, to consider “whether he is not sacrificing his intellectual honesty, whether he is acting fairly towards its members, if he seeks to maintain his position as an accredited teacher in the Church.” He seems more ready than Dr. Gore, however, to have the Bishop act authoritatively in the matter “in the last resort”.

³⁰ In response to several petitions (one of which contained almost 50,000 signatures) and on the motion of the Bishop of London, the Upper House of Canterbury Convocation, April 29, 30, 1914, debated and adopted certain anti-modernist resolutions (*The Guardian*, April 30, 1914, p. 569). These began by reaffirming two earlier deliverances. The former of these was a resolution passed by the same House, May 10, 1905, as follows: “That this House is resolved to maintain the Catholic Faith in the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation as contained in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, and in the *Quicumque Vult*, and regards the faith there presented, both in statements of doctrines and statements of fact, as the necessary basis on which the teaching of the Church reposes.” The latter of them was a resolu-

remain as they were before. Why should men who are able to reconcile it with their consciences to accept office under the condition of assent to formularies which they do not believe, and to prosecute the functions of their office under the condition of reservations with respect to declarations which they publicly recite at every service, be driven from office by the *brutum fulmen* of an episcopal pronouncement?³¹ Not all men look upon Bishops and their deliverances with the reverence which their High-Church principles presumably impose upon Dr. Gore and his friends. And why should men subject their consciences to the instruction of moral teachers who have not seen fit to illustrate their counsels by their own example? Shall they not remember not merely *Tract Number Ninety* but *Lux Mundi*? Or if their memory is too short for that, shall they not attend to Dr. Gore's remarks in this very pamphlet on the Old Testament and recall his solemn affirmative to the question put to him when he was ordained deacon: "Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?"—a question which he tells us the Bishops have determined to qualify "if they can",³²—from which we learn that it remains as yet unqualified. Dr. Gore, it is true, challenges "any one to show at what point I fail in orthodoxy as judged by our standard, the standard which I have already endeavored to state, the standard, that is, of the ancient and undivided Church, as

tion agreed to by the Lambeth Conference of 1898, as follows: "The Conference, in view of tendencies widely shown in the writings of the present day, hereby places on record its conviction that the historical facts stated in the Creeds are an essential part of the faith of the Church." These resolutions having been reaffirmed Convocation proceeded to guard itself from the imputation that it condemns legitimate scholarship, and reasserts the Episcopal organization of the Church of England. In its leader of May 7, *The Guardian* expresses approval of this action.

³¹ It is not surprising, then, to observe Mr. J. M. Thompson writing of Dr. Gore's proposal (*Contemporary Review*, June 1914, p. 827) that such a declaration as he desires "would be futile, unless followed up by legal proceedings against recalcitrant Liberals."

³² *The Basis*, etc., p. 18.

interpreted by the message of the Bible."³³ But is there not manifested here a certain lack of a sense of humor? It would be hard if Dr. Gore could not escape the charge of heresy, were he permitted thus to adapt the standard he will be judged by to his own opinions. But by any standard hitherto in force in the Church of England—or, for the matter of that, in any of the great churches of Christendom—he could scarcely be so fortunate. Meanwhile his personal appeal to men to act conscientiously with regard to their ecclesiastical engagements suffers fatally from the inevitable *tu quoque*.

The only effect of the demand that Liberal clergymen shall voluntarily withdraw from the church in the interests of their sincerity has been accordingly to call out angry refusals which, perhaps not wholly unnaturally, manifest resentment at the imputations of dishonesty made and a disposition to maintain their position in the church at all hazards. Mr. J. M. Thompson, for example, cries:³⁴

"The Church can always withdraw the commission which it has given; why should it expect the individual voluntarily to surrender it? Why should the clergyman who is not allowed to put his own interpretation upon the formularies when he is admitted to the Ministry, be invited to do so as a ground for leaving it? For that is what is involved in the claim that he should resign. The Church will not, or cannot, make good such an interpretation of its formularies as would justify deprivation by law—it dares not proceed against the Liberal clergyman as a heretic. It therefore asks him solemnly to consider whether his interpretation of the Creed is not heretical, and, if he thinks that it is, to resign. If this is a cowardly method, it also is a cruel one, for it lays a double burden upon the individual conscience. The man in the dock may fairly say, 'If you can prove that I have committed a murder, you have every right to hang me; but you have no right whatever, when your case breaks down, to ask me to commit suicide.'"

³³ P. 21.

³⁴ *The Contemporary Review*, June 1914, p. 829. Mr. Thompson has now passed beyond Liberalism and Modernism and has become a "Post-Modernist", and he tells us that "the Post-Modernist, like the Modernist, holds with the traditional beliefs so long as he can, and stays in the society so long as it will let him" (*The Hibbert Journal*, July 1914, p. 742).

It is obviously useless to appeal to a man in this state of mind on purely ethical grounds. He entrenches himself behind bare law and refuses to admit that conscience need be sensitive to any demand which the sheriff cannot enforce. "He is happy in his work, and believes that there is room for him as well as for others within a modern and progressive Church."³⁵ As to the formularies,—nobody really believes them anyhow, that is, through and through; and when each disbelieves them somewhere no one has the right to assail the sincerity of another because his disbelief happens to fall at a different place from his own.

"How many of us nowadays accept the descent into Hell, the resurrection of the body, or the coming of Christ to judge the quick and the dead, in the sense in which these beliefs were held by the men who composed the Creeds, or by many subsequent generations of Christians? Do the clergy? Does the Bishop of Ely? If he does not, how does his position differ from that of the clergy whose 'sincerity of confession' he is not afraid to doubt? By what right can the bishops enforce the Apostles' or the Nicene Creed and criticise the Athanasian? By what rule other than that of private preference can they condone the non-literal interpretation of one clause, and condemn that of another? By what infallible instinct, or by what appeal to authority, can they decide that one man's re-interpretation of the Creed is an allowable latitude of doctrine, and another man's is heresy; that there is no place for A in the ministry but that B may be a bishop? These questions are not asked impatiently or with any intention to attribute dishonesty where certainly none is to be found. But they are pertinent to the present situation. And unless there is some better answer to them than has as yet been forthcoming, the Liberal clergyman may well feel that he has as much right to remain in the ministry as others whose orthodoxy is above suspicion."³⁶

It must be allowed that as *ad hominem* reasoning this is very effective. The retort, "You are another!", though perhaps not uncommon among a certain class of disputants, seems, however, scarcely a satisfactory proof that we are not ourselves one; it appears on the contrary to begin by admitting that we are one. The conclusion of the reasoning

³⁵ P. 830; cf. p. 833: "So long as they are happy in their work, and do not want to give it up, why should they sacrifice their whole ministry to an intellectual difficulty?"

³⁶ P. 831.

would seem to be, therefore,—if we are to take it at its face value,—not that there is no insincerity in the relation of the Liberal clergy to the formularies of the Church of England, but that there is no sincerity in the relation of any of the clergy of the Church of England to its formularies: that sincerity in clerical assent to formularies has absolutely died out in the Church of England. Worse: that there is no such thing as sincerity to be considered in the matter of assent to formularies; any man is justified in assenting to any formulary whatever and then teaching anything whatever that he happens to wish to teach—"within a modern and progressive Church." Apparently Mr. Thompson's argument proves too much: he would have done more justice to himself had he confined himself to the question raised,—namely the ethics of his own position,—and not gone off on the, perhaps not unnatural, tangent, of, My position is ethically as good as your position. It might well be that, and yet ethically bad.

The classical discussion of the ethics of clerical assent to formularies probably remains that carried on now nearly a score of years ago between the late Professor Henry Sidgwick and Mr. (now Dr.) Hastings Rashdall, the latter of whom has also given us a later summary of his views on the subject.³⁷ Dr. Gore does well pointedly to call attention

³⁷ Professor Sidgwick printed a lecture on "The Ethics of Religious Conformity" in *The International Journal of Ethics* for April, 1896. To this Dr. Rashdall replied in the number of the same *Journal* for January 1897, under the title of "Professor Sidgwick on the Ethics of Religious Conformity." Professor Sidgwick's response to this was printed as the sixth number in his volume on *Practical Ethics*, 1898, under the title of "Clerical Veracity" (his former lecture is reprinted as the fifth number in the same volume). Dr. Rashdall has also printed a discussion of "Clerical Liberalism" as the fifth number in the twenty-fourth volume of the *Crown Theological Library*, entitled "*Anglican Liberalism by Twelve Churchmen*," 1908. Cf. here also the article "Criminous Clerks" in *The Hibbert Journal* for July 1914, pp. 746 ff. by Archibald Weir: Mr. Weir thinks that Professor Sidgwick was too tender to "criminous clerks" because he took too narrow a view and thought of thier treason less as it concerned the race than as it concerned an institution. "Hence the modern mind (the expression is Sidgwick's) has no sympathy with either a lax lukewarm Church or

to Professor Sidgwick's strong argument,³⁸ as offering helpful guidance to an inquirer in this field. His opinions are particularly commended to us moreover by the circumstance that they at least are supported by his action; he resigned a Fellowship that he might not express acceptance of views which he did not really hold. He writes, however, from the Hedonistic Utilitarian point of view; though it is particularly worthy of remark that even from that low standpoint he is compelled in the name of general ethical science to condemn the practice of those who, as Dr. Rashdall expresses it, "are anxious to maintain the comprehensiveness of the Church of England by a liberal interpretation of its formulae."³⁹ What his judgment would have been had he been able to approach the matter from the standpoint of a higher ethical principle we can easily imagine; it is indeed openly suggested to us by Dr. Rashdall himself (himself a Utilitarian of less Hedonistic type) when he complains that the opinions which Professor Sidgwick announces are "almost what might have been expected from a Kantian rigorist." The question of the legitimacy of such an unnatural acceptance of formularies as is practiced by the Liberal clergy of the Church of England resolves itself thus primarily into the question of the validity of the principles of Utilitarian Ethics: to any higher ethical standpoint this practice confessedly is morally wrong.

with men who distract it by occupying positions in it while repudiating fundamental tenets. It regards them as it would regard any other defaulting officers in any other lethargic corporation. If it cared to give the delinquents a distinctive name, it would not trouble to invent a new term. It would adopt the old historical phrase which serves as our title. . . . We declare that veracity and integrity are principles whose strict interpretation and maintenance must take precedence of any convenience that laxity may be fancied to bring to a Church or a communion; and we find our moral position all the stronger. In a word, we have arrived at a stage when no conceivable advantage to religious teaching and organization can be allowed to legitimise any sort of debasement of the moral currency" (pp. 747-9). If this be really the sentiment of "the modern mind" then the modern and ancient minds have become one and Utilitarian and "Rigorist" Ethics have kissed one another.

³⁸ *The Basis*, etc., p. 11.

³⁹ *The International Journal of Ethics*, January 1897, p. 138.

To those occupying higher ethical ground than the Utilitarian, therefore, the value of Professor Sidgwick's argument is purely *ad hominem*. It shows, and we think shows solidly, that even on the low principles of Hedonistic Utilitarianism the loose practice of the Liberal clergy cannot be ethically justified. After allowing a laxity which to us seems excessive even on the ground of his own ethical principles, he is yet compelled to sum up in such words as these:⁴⁰

"My contention is simply that the widest license of variation that can be reasonably claimed must stop short of the permission to utter a hard, flat, unmistakable falsehood; and this is what a clergyman does who says solemnly—in the recital of the Apostles' Creed—"I believe in Jesus Christ . . . who was conceived of the Virgin Mary", when he really believes that Jesus was, like other human beings, the son of two human parents. He utters of course a similar falsehood in affirming the belief that Jesus 'on the third day rose from the dead' when he does not believe that Jesus had a continued life as an individual after death, and a life in some sense corporeal. . . ."

He is willing to allow to Dr. Rashdall that there are important considerations which may justly be urged against "a pedantic insistence on what he calls 'technical veracity' in dealing with formulae presented for assent or repetition," but—he continues:⁴¹

"My contention is that instead of stating and applying these considerations with the care and delicacy of distinction required for helpfulness, so as to show how the essence of veracity may be realized under peculiar and somewhat perplexing conditions, he rather uses them to suggest the despairing and demoralizing conclusion that no clergyman can possibly speak the truth in the sense in which a plain layman understands truth-speaking; so that any clergyman may lie without scruple in the cause of religious progress with a view to aiding popular education in a new theology and still feel that he is as veracious as his profession allows him to be. Or perhaps I should rather say that Mr. Rashdall's conception of substantial veracity is what grammarians call *proleptic*; the duty of truth-speaking is, he thinks, adequately performed by a Postnatalist⁴² if he may reasonably hope that

⁴⁰ *Practical Ethics*, p. 146.

⁴¹ P. 155.

⁴² This is the term Professor Sidgwick employs to express one who holds that Jesus was the Son of Joseph and Mary.

the falsehood he now utters will before long cease to deceive through the spread of a common understanding that he does not mean what he says."

He had already been led to warn his readers against the dangers of this proleptic morality. He remarks:⁴³

"It is very difficult for men in any political or social discussion to keep the ideal quite distinct from the actual and not sometimes to prescribe present conduct on grounds which would only be valid if a distant and dubious change of circumstances were really certain and imminent. It is peculiarly difficult to do this in discussing the conditions of religious union; for in theological matters an ardent believer, especially if his beliefs are self-chosen and not inherited, is peculiarly prone to think that the whole world is on the point of coming round to his opinions. And hence the religious persons who, by the divergence of their opinions from the orthodox standard of their church, have been practically led to consider the subject of this lecture, have often been firmly convinced that the limits of their church must necessarily be enlarged at least sufficiently to include themselves; and have rather considered the method of bringing about this enlargement, than what ought to be done until it is effected."

The truth of this representation and the remarkable reasoning to which the attitude described leads, are abundantly illustrated in the course of Dr. Rashdall's argument. As a whole this turns as on a hinge on two prodigious paradoxes. The first is that since "words must be understood to mean what they are generally taken to mean", so soon as all can be brought to agree to sign a formulary in a non-natural sense, that becomes its true sense—though obviously this process of change can be inaugurated only by some signing the formulary in a sense contrary to that which the words are generally taken to mean, and these must accordingly endure the reproach of insincerity for the coming good.⁴⁴ The second is that, since unscrupulous signing of a formulary is an evil, we must put aside any scruples we may feel in signing it, not believing it, that thus a new sense may gradually be given it and so unscrupulous signing of it may be prevented. We are not car-

⁴³ P. 121.

⁴⁴ Pp. 143-4.

icaturing but reporting Dr. Rashdall's reasoning. He cites at one point in illustration the Thirteenth of the Thirty-nine Articles, on works done by the unregenerate. This Article asserts that such works have the nature of sin. Nobody believes that, says Dr. Rashdall, or even thinks that he believes it. On that very account anybody can subscribe it. His subscribing it really deceives nobody; for nobody supposes he believes it. "It is," he says, only "a balance of utilities" that the subscriber has to consider. It may be bad for clergymen to have to sign such a statement when they do not believe it; it would be worse to have only such clergymen as could believe such a statement. If it be said that if everybody not believing it refused to sign it, that would secure its early correction, and no one would any longer be asked to sign it; it is to be answered that long before such a happy consummation could be reached the clergy would have come to consist only of men of such low intelligence and low scrupulosity as would sign it without believing it.⁴⁵ We must be unscrupulous, therefore, in the interests of scrupulousness. This may be good Utilitarianism but it is as absurd as it is abominable ethics. It would be a work of supererogation to refute ethical judgments based on such reasoning.

Upon one matter which was debated between Professor Sidgwick and Dr. Rashdall and which has been thrown into great prominence in recent discussion, we must adjudge Dr. Rashdall to be in the right. Professor Sidgwick laid considerable stress upon the particular obligation of the clergy to be sincere in the matter of the Creeds which they recited in public worship; and in recent discussion such stress has been laid upon this particular obligation that the like obligation really to believe other formularies assented to has been somewhat obscured in comparison. Perhaps the place given to the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds in the Lambeth "Quadrilateral" of 1888, is at once a manifestation and in part a cause of the tendency which has become

⁴⁵ Pp. 140 ff.

very marked of late,⁴⁶ to lay the whole stress of the clergy's doctrinal obligation upon them. Dr. Gore in particular has for a series of years been throwing all the emphasis on the Creeds and particularly on the circumstance that not only are they recited in public worship but that in their recitation the personal "I believe", not the general "we believe," is employed. There may be some confusion here between the nature of the obligation incurred and the effect of the increased publicity given to this obligation in its constant repetition in the face of the people. The difference in this respect can have little ethical value, however, except perhaps on Utilitarian principles. We take it that Dr. Rashdall is altogether right, therefore, when he remarks—treating it as a matter of "technical veracity"—that "the clergy do not profess their beliefs in the Creeds in any other sense or to any other degree than they assent to the whole of the Prayer-book and Articles."⁴⁷ But this cannot

⁴⁶ Dr. Rashdall says truly ("Clerical Liberalism", p. 95): "The most popular attempt to substitute another external text for the one which has been abandoned by tacit and universal consent puts the Creeds in the place of the Bible and the Articles."

⁴⁷ *The International Journal of Ethics*, January 1897, p. 148, cf. p. 159. Everything that could readily be said on the other part is said by Dr. Headlam in *The Church Quarterly Review*, April 1914, p. 151: "An attempt has been made by Dr. Rashdall to suggest that in relation to the teaching of the Church of England the Creeds stand on exactly the same level as the Thirty-nine Articles, and he has supported that view by saying that we only accept the Creeds because of the Articles. It seems to us that the position is one which is untenable. He quite forgets that whereas the Thirty-nine Articles are now only imposed on the clergy, and from them only a general assent is required, the use of the Creeds is quite different. Every single baptized member of the Church of England has been baptized on the basis of confession of faith, either by himself or by others in his behalf, in the Apostles' Creed. Every single communicant of the Church of England solemnly recites the Nicene Creed before he partakes of communion. Every clergyman when he is ordained, directly after his ordination, solemnly repeats the Nicene Creed as representing that Christian truth which he has expressed his readiness to hold and believe." This is an eloquent as well as conclusive statement of how profoundly the Church of England is committed to the Creeds, and how great an evil it is for a party among her accredited teachers to repudiate obligation to them. But it has no tendency to vacate the obligation under which the

be pleaded as an excuse for relaxing the obligation to believe the Creeds, but rather reveals the stringency of the obligation assumed when the clergyman, for example, says, "I, AB, do solemnly make the following Declaration: I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. . . . I believe the doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God. . . ." If this can "no longer be described as a 'signing of the Articles'" that is only because the word "subscribe" in use before 1865 has been replaced by the word "assent to"—which does not seem to be a weaker word. The obligation under which the new form of assent brings the clergymen who makes this "solemn declaration" is just as distinct, though it may not be quite as detailed, as was the obligation under which he was brought by the old form of subscription, before the words "and to all things therein contained" were dropped—their place being taken by, "the doctrine of the Church of England as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God". He who makes this "solemn declaration" undoubtedly asserts that the doctrine of the Church of England is set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles—that is, that what is set forth in them is the doctrine of the Church of England; that this doctrine of the Church of

clergy rest to the Thirty-nine Articles, to which and not directly to "the Creeds" they must give their assent as a condition of ordination, licensure to a curacy or institution to a benefice: and through which alone by their express validation of the Creeds are the clergy in this formal manner committed to the Creeds. Compare what is said not only by Dr. Sanday (*Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, etc., pp. 7 ff.) but by Dr. Gwatkin (*The Bishop of Oxford's Open Letter: An Open Letter in Reply*, p. 4) in response to the view supported by Dr. Headlam. Dr. Gwatkin (addressing Dr. Gore) says: "I cannot view the Creeds quite as you do. The daily repetition of them does not make them a whit more binding than the Articles to which we assent only on certain solemn occasions. Would our promises in Matrimony be made more binding if they were formally repeated in every service? The Creeds are ancient and venerable summaries of certain chief parts of our belief; but we have no reason for believing them beyond that stated in the Articles, that they may "be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." They have no independent authority." This is the real doctrine of the Church of England.

England set forth, and as set forth, in these Articles is agreeable to the Word of God—by which is meant just the Scriptures here recognized as the Word of God: and that he assents to this doctrine thus set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles because he believes it to be agreeable to the Word of God—by which his acceptance of the Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith is notified. He who does not mean this by his “solemn declaration” cannot be acquitted of making that declaration in a non-natural sense which no appeal to an *animus imponentis* (whether specific or general) can empty of its unethical character. No greater obligation than this can arise from the repeated declaration in public worship of belief in the affirmations of the Creed; though the breach of this more constantly and more publicly repeated affirmation may produce more public scandal.

The deeper ground of the movement to substitute “the Creeds” for the legal formularies of the Church of England is twofold. It is the result on the one hand of the decay of confidence in the Scriptures and the consequent impulse to seek for some other authoritative basis for doctrinal belief. That this new basis is found in “the Creeds” is due, on the other hand, to the constantly growing power of the High Church party in which “tradition”, and especially the tradition of “the undivided Church”, takes the place of Scripture as the ground of authoritative teaching. It is in the spirit of that party that Dr. A. C. Headlam, when undertaking to state “the principles of the Church of England” declares at once: “The first is that the fundamental basis of belief is that Creed which alone can claim to be oecumenical, the Nicene Creed, and in association with it the Baptismal Creed—that of the Apostles.”⁴⁸ The primary effect of the practical substitution of “the Creeds” for the proper formularies of the Church of England is greatly to reduce the range of her doctrinal testimony. It reduces it in effect almost to the narrow circle of the Trinity, the deity of Christ and the great supernatural

⁴⁸ *The Church Quarterly Review*, April 1914, pp. 151-2.

facts of His manifestation on earth.⁴⁹ What it is of importance for us at the moment to observe, is that it is license to disbelieve and deny even this meagre body of Christian truths that is now widely claimed among the accredited teachers of the Church of England, as a right due to them on the score of "a liberal interpretation of its formulae." To bring the matter into a perfectly clear light by an illustration—an illustration which has long been thrown into such prominence and which remains so prominent in the present debate that it may well be thought to stand at its center—it is vigorously contended that it is permissible in the Church of England, and is consistent with that sincerity in accepting its formularies which should characterize so solemn an act, to disbelieve and deny the miraculous birth of Jesus from a virgin mother and the miraculous rising of His body from the grave, and, with these great constitutive miracles, also all other strictly miraculous acts which are ascribed to Him in the Biblical narrative, including His bodily Ascension,—that is to say, to put it briefly, the whole miraculous character of His manifestation.

The grounds are as numerous as they are sinuous on which the sincerity of accepting Creeds by a solemn act of

⁴⁹ Cf. Dr. Headlam's strong words (as cited, p. 153, with which January 1914, p. 41, may be compared): "And as we believe that the historic Creed sums up for us the Christian teaching which is necessary for salvation"—the proper formularies of the Church of England say this not of the Nicene Creed but of the Scriptures—"so we must be careful not to add to that tradition by putting forward as necessary any other documents or beliefs. . . . Most of the evils of Christianity have arisen through an excessive desire to add to the Christian Creed. . . . It was added to above all at the Reformation, when every separate Church felt it incumbent upon itself to define many things which it had much better left undefined." Here is a veritable glorification of the principle of minimum confession: one would almost suppose that truth was noxious and we would do well to get along with as little of it as possible. The express repudiation of all the gains of the Reformation in the acquisition of truth (including the formularies of the Church of England to which Dr. Headlam has himself assented) and the confinement of "saving doctrine" to what is set forth in the Nicene Creed are to be noted.

affirmation,⁵⁰ and constantly repeating them in the public services of the Church with at least the appearance of assenting to their statements are defended, although their declarations—in whole or in part—are not in the least believed. One of the most popular of those made prominent in the present controversy insists upon what is spoken of as the symbolical character of the language in which the declarations of the Creed, dealing as they do with matters too high for literal human speech, are necessarily couched. No one, it is said, can take this language literally; and as everyone is compelled to attach a symbolical sense to it, each—so it seems to be argued—is equally entitled with all others to use the language and to take it (symbolically) in whatever sense he chooses to attach to it. Thus, for example, Dr. Sanday seems to argue⁵¹ that, as it is agreed that “sitteth on the right hand of God” is “pure symbolism,” so it must be agreed that references to an “Ascension” are “just as much pure symbolism.” “The right hand of God” is not a particular place; and the Ascension was not a change of locality. And therefore—so it seems to be argued—since we cannot by any possibility take all the statements of the Creed literally, we are entitled to take none of them literally, and can say with a good conscience in the face of men: “Conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary”—or as the Nicene Creed has it: “Came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man,”—and: “The third day He rose from the dead”; and mean nothing more than that He was born in the ordinary fashion, like other men, of human parentage, and, like other men, still lived in His spiritual being after His body had been given to corruption in the grave.⁵² No doubt there are consider-

⁵⁰ Thirty-nine Articles, Art. viii: “The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for that they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.”

⁵¹ *Bishop Gore’s Challenge to Criticism*, etc., pp. 13 ff.

⁵² Dr. Rashdall (“Clerical Liberalism”, pp. 98-99) says: “There is no intelligible principle of interpretation according to which the belief in

ations arising from the extraordinary confidence with which this mode of argumentation is pressed in wide circles which demand that some notice should be taken of it; and Dr. Gore may be justified therefore in taking the trouble to expose its inconsequence.⁵³ We cannot profess, however, that his discussion of *The Place of Symbolism in Religion* seems to us greatly to advance the understanding of the subject in general.⁵⁴ All is said that needs to be said when it is said as he does say effectively: "It is quite one thing to recognize that all this is symbolical language and is not to be taken literally. It is quite another thing to evacuate the pictures of their moral and practical meanings and substitute a really fundamentally different idea. . . . We must recognize that the Biblical language is symbolic, but we must recognize, if we would be Christian believers, that what the symbolism teaches is true. . . . Language may be symbolic and also true."⁵⁵

To what extent the evil leaven is at work in the Church

the everlasting punishment of heretics, in the descent into Hell, in the future coming of Christ, in the Resurrection of the body, can be mitigated or spiritualized, which will not equally permit us to take the word 'Virgin' to mean a young woman, or to understand by 'He rose again from the dead' a vision of the risen and immortal Christ. . . . It is open, of course, to anyone to contend that the toleration of the one set of opinions is, in his private opinion, desirable in the best interests of the Church, while that of the other set is undesirable. What is not open to any man of common intellectual consistency or common moral honesty is to accuse the one kind of non-literal interpretation of dishonesty, while he claims for himself, or concedes to his friends, the other instances of non-literal interpretation." We are not inclined to dispute the validity of Dr. Rashdall's *tu quoque*. But even that may be pressed beyond reason; and it has no value at all against the charge of insincerity lying against both.

⁵³ *The Basis*, etc., pp. 19 ff; *The Constructive Quarterly*, March 1914, pp. 50 ff.

⁵⁴ His contention is that "Symbolism is in place when we are dealing with what we cannot express in terms of human experience; it is quite out of place when the affirmation concerns what passed within the limits of present human experience." In point of fact all language is symbolical; and yet it manages to convey true statements of both facts and truths.

⁵⁵ *The Constructive Quarterly*, March 1914, p. 56.

of England is brought home to us startlingly by the appearance of the Lady Margaret Professors of Divinity of both Universities in the lists in championship of the lax interpretation of obligation to formularies.⁵⁶ As he gives "no explicit expression" of his own position Professor

⁵⁶ *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*. A reply to the Bishop of Oxford's Open Letter on the Basis of Anglican Fellowship. By W. Sanday, D.D., F.B.A., Lady Margaret Professor and Canon of Christ Church. 1914. *The Miracle of Christianity*. A plea for "the Critical School" in regard to the use of the Creeds. A letter to the Right Reverend Charles Gore, D.D., Lord Bishop of Oxford, from J. F. Bethune-Baker, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge. 1914. We regret to be compelled to associate Dr. Gwatkin with his fellow professors so far as the advocacy of toleration of these lax views in the Church is concerned. He writes with a constant flavor of sarcasm to Dr. Gore: "You are disquieted, and not without reason, for the air is full of reckless theorizing, and some of the literary criticism is very shallow and profane. Yet I see little cause for alarm, and none at all for 'solemn repudiations' intended to make it as dishonorable for critics as for Evangelicals to remain in the ministry of the Church of England. But, say you, Mr. X rejects the Virgin Birth, denies the Resurrection, and admits no miracles. Well, this is more easily said than proved without a minute and undesirable inquisition into private beliefs. It is not a plain question of fact, as when some disloyal person forces the most solemn part of our Communion Service with extracts from the Latin Mass; it is a question, as you say, of interpretation, and I may add, is a question calling for much caution, and sometimes for more sympathy and charity than most of us possess. Take a couple of instances. Some explain the Birth from a Virgin by saying that intense Messianic longing enabled her to do what other women cannot do; while Keim's account of the Resurrection is that Jesus lives, and sent 'telegrams' to his disciples. These theories are none of mine; they seem to me seriously defective. Yet I cannot see that one who holds them necessarily means to deny the essential truths of the Incarnation and the risen Son of Man. And if he does not cut himself off from Christ, what right has the Church to cut him off? Nay, my Lord, we need to remember that the goodness of God is leading others as well as ourselves; and by the mystery of His dealing with your own soul I entreat you to reverence His dealing with another. If my neighbor walks in darkness, I will rather pray God to cast His bright beams of light upon him than help to stigmatize him in the Church and drive him out from what you hold to be the only means of grace which God has promised."—*The Bishop of Oxford's Open Letter: An Open Letter in Reply*. By H. M. Gwatkin, M.A., Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Cambridge, Hon. D.D. and formerly Gifford Lecturer, Edinburgh. 1914, pp. 3-4.

Bethune-Baker is charitably supposed by Dr. Gore⁵⁷—the charity seems to us a little overstrained—to be “only making a claim on behalf of others.” No such charitable hope, even with straining, can be indulged in the case of Dr. Sanday who with great explicitness associates himself with the lax position which he defends.

Professor Bethune-Baker would be loath to see “driven from their places by any exercise of ecclesiastical authority” even men

“who though they do not hold the doctrine of the Incarnation, conceive of our Lord as a Man so fully inspired by the Spirit of God that they can apply to Him sincerely many of the terms of traditional Christian devotion and even of Christian theology, and, regarding His teaching as a real revelation of God’s nature and His purpose for men, occupy a position of discipleship to Him which can hardly be described as other than Christian”—

if they are earnest in their work and acceptable to their parishoners.⁵⁸ That is to say he would allow a place in the Church of England to express Humanitarians in their doctrine of the Person of Christ. Naturally then he would not exclude from it any who believed in the Incarnation, however they might think it was accomplished. He goes further. He draws a broad distinction between “a doctrine which is capable of verification in present experience and a judgment of the past as to a phenomenal ‘fact.’”⁵⁹ The Incarnation and the Resurrection themselves he puts in the former category as ‘doctrines’ “strongly attested by the experience of the Church.” “The traditional beliefs in the Miraculous Birth and the restoration to life of the Body of our Lord” he places in the latter, as “simply intellectual convictions held by some on the strength of what they deem sufficient historical evidence, and by others because they seem to supply an adequate explanation, not only of early Christian belief about our Lord and of the origin and history of the Church, but also of common Christian experience ever since.”⁶⁰ And he pleads that only the doctrines

⁵⁷ *The Basis*, etc., p. 9.

⁵⁸ *The Miracle of Christianity*, p. 5.

⁵⁹ P. 11.

⁶⁰ P. 9.

supported directly by Christian experience shall be insisted upon. "No stigma," he thinks, "should be set on a clergyman who believes in the Incarnation, yet is not able to affirm the mode of this Birth."⁶¹ He even contends that such a clergyman "is entitled to recite the words of the Apostles' Creed as his profession of faith without being exposed to any charge of breach of 'the moral principle of sincerity of profession'";⁶² and, indeed, is "morally obliged in public worship to use the Creed,"—since these words which declare a fact as to the manner of the Incarnation which he does not believe are nevertheless the only means that the Creed offers him of confessing the Incarnation which he does believe. Similarly with respect to the Resurrection. Anyone who finds the testimony inadequate for such beliefs as these,—“the Empty Tomb, the return of the spirit of life to the Body which it had left, the ‘physical’ resurrection”; “but the testimony for the reality of the Appearances convincing”,—“that our Lord after His death on the Cross was really alive again and able to convey the sense of His presence and powers and will to His disciples, through whatever *media*”: believes “the essential religious conception which the doctrine of the Resurrection expresses” and “can surely with a clear conscience use the words, ‘And the third day He rose from the dead.’”⁶³ “I do not know,” adds Professor Bethune-Baker “what other form of words he could find which would so simply and clearly state his belief.” He ventures, therefore, to plead with the Bishop of Oxford and his fellow Bishops not

“to throw the weight of their authority on the side of those who would bind belief in the Incarnation inseparably to belief in ‘the Miraculous Birth’, and belief in our Lord’s Resurrection and Ascension to belief in the reanimation of His earthly Body, and so would forbid men whose essential religious convictions are the same as their own to join with them in reciting the ancient Creed of the Church, because, in regard to the Incarnation that Creed is expressed in terms of biographical statement as to how it was effected rather than as to religious conviction as to what It is.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ P. 11.

⁶² P. 11.

⁶³ P. 13.

⁶⁴ P. 17.

The master-key which is to unlock all scruples is to bear in mind

“the distinction between the religious convictions embodied in the doctrines and the forms in which they have been expressed in the past, or, in other words, between the reality of the spiritual experience enshrined in our Gospels and the ‘historical’ credibility of all the ‘miraculous’ narratives they contain.”⁶⁵

He himself has never “felt that belief in these ‘miracles’ was a necessary part of the doctrine which he desired and was pledged to preach.”⁶⁶ Christ is Himself the Miracle of Christianity: “the particular narratives of miracles in the Gospels” are but “convincing evidence of the unique impression which He produced in the time of His life in the world as man”, and not “a scientific account of the way in which that impression was produced.”⁶⁷ What Professor Bethune-Baker is pleading for, we see now clearly, is a non-miraculous Christianity, a Christianity finding its substance and warrant in present religious experience instead of in transactions of the past; and the right of the adherents of this non-miraculous, experiential Christianity to profess publicly a miraculous, transactional Christianity without derogation to their sincerity.

Dr. Sanday’s pamphlet differs markedly from Professor Bethune-Baker’s in the charming simplicity of the style in which it is written, in the directness with which Dr. Sanday identifies himself in it with the party of laxity which he defends, and we are afraid we ought to add in the extremity of the position assumed. If we do not find it quite possible, with Dr. Gore, wholly to dissociate Professor Bethune-Baker from the cause which he pleads, we gain a distinct impression from his argument that he himself is a believer in the Incarnation, and looks upon Jesus as the very Son of God in the sense of the Creeds. We grieve to say that we do not gain so clear an impression to this effect in the case of Dr. Sanday, and find ourselves, as we read his discussion, associating him in our thought with the class of thinkers who used to be spoken of as Speculative

⁶⁵ P. 14.

⁶⁶ P. 16.

⁶⁷ P. 16.

Theists,—men who are quite clear that God is a Person and acts as a Person in the government of the world; and who are in that sense believers in the Supernatural; but who profess it to be impossible for them to think of Him as acting in His world otherwise than in accordance with the laws He has impressed upon it in its making. These thinkers, it is needless to say are all Humanitarians in their doctrine of Christ as well as anti-supernaturalists in their view of the course and activities of His life.⁶⁸ Dr. Sanday does indeed say in the most impressive manner:⁶⁹

“The central truth which it is most important to guarantee is the true Godhead of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly God and truly Lord, very God and at the same time very Man. I imagine that if we were to cross-question ourselves as to what we mean when we recite the Creeds, it would be something like that in its simplest terms. That is what we are all, educated and uneducated, trying to say, and what we each believe the other to be trying to say. We should all agree that anything really less than this would be hypocritical. The man who in his heart of hearts really believed less ought not to stay where he is.”

And again:⁷⁰

“The coming of the Only-begotten into the world could not but be attended by every circumstance of holiness. Whatever the Virgin Birth can spiritually mean for us is guaranteed by the fact that the Holy Babe was Divine. Is it not enough to affirm this with all our heart and soul, and be silent as to anything beyond?”

No one could for an instant distrust the sincerity of these moving words. But the puzzled reader who finds it difficult to conciliate them with the tone of the discussion at large and its anti-supernaturalistic conclusions, and with its ex-

⁶⁸ That these things normally go together Dr. Sanday himself has taught us. “If the Son of God,” says he (*The Expository Times*, xiv, 1903, p. 65a), “did assume human flesh for men’s redemption, that alone is an event so unique and stupendous that we cannot wonder if its accessories were also in a manner unique.”

⁶⁹ *Bishop Gore’s Challenge to Criticism*, pp. 96.

⁷⁰ P. 20. Contrast the earlier language quoted in note 68: there, it is not merely “holiness” which is guaranteed by “the coming of the Only-begotten”.

plicit refusal to allow that the course of nature has ever been infringed even in the coming of the Only-begotten into the world,⁷¹ and who remembers Dr. Sanday's later Christological writings, in which he works out a view of the constitution of our Lord's Person—he no doubt only suggests it, and does not explicitly adopt it—which can hardly be thought anything other than Humanitarian⁷²; may be pardoned if he wonders whether the words are intended to convey all that they seem to mean,—at least all that they must seem to mean to one whose habitual thought of our Lord's Person runs not only in the language but in the conceptions of the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Decree. Meanwhile it is already clear from these few words what Dr. Sanday's attitude to the declarations of the Creeds is. When we recite the Creeds we mean just that the man Christ Jesus is "truly God and truly man." Affirming the Divinity of Jesus, we may be silent as to all else. The difficulty is, of course, that when we recite the Creeds we say much more of the man Christ Jesus than that He is "very God": affirming His Divinity we are not silent about everything else. We affirm also, for example, His birth of a Virgin, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to the right hand of God. Is it sincere to affirm these things of Him not believing them to be true—even though we believe that somehow, in some sense, He is very God?

Beyond what has already been suggested, Dr. Sanday has very little to say which is to the point, in justification of the lax treatment of formularies. His *argumentum ad hominem* to the Bishop of Oxford, we venture to think complete. But that carries us a very little way towards the justification of the laxity which each in his own degree practices with reference to the formularies. Certainly what Dr. Sanday speaks of⁷³ as "the one argument that seems

⁷¹ P. 19: "I cannot so easily bring myself to think that His birth was (as I should regard it) unnatural."

⁷² Cf. THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW, January 1911, pp. 166-174; October 1911, pp. 686-689; *The Hibbert Journal*, April 1914, pp. 591 f.

⁷³ P. 8.

to him to be really decisive"—"the argument from *the difference of times*"—cannot be accorded the validity which he ascribes to it. Even should we grant—which we by no means do—that "Creeds composed fifteen, sixteen, seventeen centuries ago cannot possibly express with literal exactitude the mind of to-day", it would not seem to follow that the "mind to-day" (which *ex hypothesi* no longer believes their statements) may with all sincerity give assent to their statements. It might be validly concluded that these outgrown Creeds should be discarded, or at least corrected into harmony with the "mind of to-day". It might be equally validly concluded, that "the mind of to-day"—which after all is not infallible—should be corrected into harmony with the Creeds. Facts, after all, remain facts after any lapse of time and after any changes which the meaning of the words in which they are stated may have undergone, or which "the mind" of men may have experienced during the years. It would be a sad commentary on the evolution of the modern mind, if the main thing it had acquired during the increasing ages were the power to assent in all sincerity to statements of facts of tremendous importance if true,—no matter in what form of words, old or new, these facts are stated—which it is thoroughly convinced are not true.

III

The real significance of Dr. Sanday's pamphlet does not lie, however, in its defence of the practice of assenting to formularies which you do not believe, but in the frankness with which it advocates a completely unmiraculous Christianity. We must be wary in our use of terms here. All the terms which naturally present themselves to express the supernatural character as well of Christianity itself as of those great events by which it was inaugurated in the world, commonly called miracles, are employed by this and that writer or coterie of writers, with different kinds of qualifications of their natural and formerly well-settled meanings. It is hardly possible to use them without a certain

amount of ambiguity, or without causing some offence in one quarter or another. Dr. Sanday makes an almost pathetic appeal that his affirmations shall be adduced only with scrupulous care to reproduce their exact shades of suggestion:⁷⁴

"I know that to the end of the chapter it will be said that miracles are denied, that the Virgin Birth is denied, that the Resurrection is denied, that our Lord's infallibility is denied. It would not be candid of me if I were to pretend that there is not a foundation of truth—and in one instance a considerable foundation of literal (but I would submit only literal) truth—in each of these charges. But in every single case there is some important limitation or qualification which ought to be borne in mind whenever the charge is repeated. To omit this is always to import an element of injustice. Statements respecting others, and especially statements respecting the beliefs of others, should always be reproduced in the same meaning and with the same balance of context with which they were originally made."

We have the strongest desire to do no injustice to Dr. Sanday in reproducing the statements of his opinions which he has given us: we wish to convey in our reproduction of these statements precisely what he intends to convey by them—no more and no less. But in attempting to do this as exactly as possible in current language taken at its current value, we do not know how to say anything else than that miracles are denied, nature miracles are denied, the Virgin Birth is denied, the Resurrection is denied, and our Lord's infallibility if not directly denied is certainly not affirmed and, at the best, is left in doubt.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ P. 17.

⁷⁵ Dr. Sanday's statement here suffers from a tendency we have noticed also elsewhere to employ a connecting word in an argument in more than one sense. "The exactly true proposition," he says (p. 18), "would, I think, be something of this kind: that whatever our Lord either thought or said or did was strictly in accordance with the will of the Father." The reader naturally takes "in accordance with the will of the Father" to mean all that "infallibility" could express. But the next sentence undeceives him: "It is part of the will of the Father that every age should have its own appropriate range of knowledge. Our Lord assumed the particular range appropriate to the age in which He lived." We have thus merely an assertion that our Lord, like everybody else, was subject to the decretive will of God. The Liberals

Dr. Sandy is emphatic in his assertion of his belief in the reality of "the Supernatural Birth" and of "the Supernatural Resurrection" of our Lord, and in the actual occurrence during our Lord's life—and also in the early days of the Church, subsequent to His death—of numerous "Miracles." But he "cannot so easily bring" himself "to think that His Birth was (as he should regard it) unnatural."⁷⁶ And he knows that in declaring his belief in "the Supernatural Birth" of Jesus, he is not confessing "all that the Church in the past has believed."⁷⁷ What he apparently thinks about the birth of Jesus from the physical side is that it was supernatural in something of the same general sense in which the births of Isaac and Samuel and John the Baptist were supernatural—according at least to the Scriptural representations regarding them. For the rest, when his mind dwells on "the Supernatural Birth" it is satisfied with recognizing the holiness of Him who thus came into the world. Neither can he assure himself of "the actual resuscitation of the dead body of the Lord from the tomb."⁷⁸ That the Lord "was dead, and behold He is alive for evermore"—this, he thinks, is proved; and this is all that he has it in mind to affirm. Here too he knows that he is not allowing for all that the Church of the past has believed; but he cannot "as at present advised", commit himself to the resurrection "as literal fact."⁷⁹ Neither again can he quite believe that the "nature miracles" happened just as they are recorded:⁸⁰

have a very pronounced objection to "infallibility" anywhere. Dr. Sanday gives expression to this objection. He would be more willing to use the term of our Lord than of anything else: but even here it is awkward, seeing that infallibility belongs rather to absolute than to relative knowledge and our Lord's knowledge was relative. Mr. B. H. Streeter (*Restatement and Reunion*, pp. 455 ff.) thinks it an unhappy term even with reference to God. "Infallibility is the tyrant's claim," he asserts; "that we do not want; but we do want authority, the parent's right." A "sign-post", "a lantern" to help us by our own efforts to attain the truth, he is willing to confess the need of; but not the truth itself—like Lessing's apologue about seeking and finding.

⁷⁶ P. 19.⁷⁷ P. 28.⁷⁸ P. 20.⁷⁹ P. 28.⁸⁰ P. 19.

"I think that of the two hypotheses—that they were performed by our Lord exactly as they are described, and that they came to be attributed to Him in this form by the imagination of the early Church—the latter is the more probable. I believe that in most of these cases *something* happened which gave rise to the story, but that the most difficult element in it was probably due to the extension of the original fact, rather than itself original."

He can see his way, it is true, to admit the occurrence of events which may fitly be described as *supra naturam*—"exceptional, extraordinary, testifying to the presence of higher spiritual forces", but involving "no real breach in the order of nature."⁸¹ But he cannot admit the occurrence of "events or alleged events" which must be called *contra naturam*,—which "do imply such a breach", involving "some definite reversal of the natural physical order."⁸² We do not see how a position thus explained differs from the old-fashioned, common, garden variety of naturalism. We are then in Dr. Sanday's case merely faced with a return to the simple old issue, which we thought had been fought out a generation ago, of Miracles and the Supernatural.

Of late years Dr. Sanday is nothing if not autobiographical. It is natural for him therefore to incorporate in his manifesto in behalf of an unmiraculous Christianity a sketch of the processes by which he has reached the naturalistic position he now occupies.⁸³ He has been gradually brought to it, he tells us, by careful historical investigation into the evidence for miracles. Dr. Gore had said⁸⁴ that he rejected the criticism of the radical school, as the champion of which Dr. Sanday comes forward, not because it is criticism, but because it is not sound criticism. "It is based, it seems to me," he added, "on a mistaken view of natural law, and on something much less than a Christian belief in God." Looking back on the course of his own thought, Dr. Sanday repels this characterization, at least as applying to

⁸¹ P. 23.

⁸² P. 23.

⁸³ Pp. 21 ff.

⁸⁴ *The Basis*, etc., p. 9.

himself.⁸⁵ "It could not be said of me," he insists, "that my attitude was based 'on a mistaken view of natural law, and on something less than a Christian belief in God'. At least I was not disposed to put any limit to the Divine power or to ascribe any necessity to natural law as such". It is proverbial that our knowledge of ourselves leaves something to be desired; and Dr. Sanday's readers will find it difficult to understand such a declaration. However he may consciously withhold from natural law the attribute of "necessity", and ascribe to God "the power to make what exceptions He pleases", he yet unconsciously speaks currently of miracle as if it were a thing not only that we have not observed God doing⁸⁶ but that we must assume that God will not do, because it would violate laws which condition His action.

We may illustrate what we mean by a phrase taken from *The Life of Christ in Recent Research* (1907), to the discussion in which Dr. Sanday refers⁸⁷ us as "really containing all the guiding ideas he has ever had on the subject" of the supernatural activities of God. Speaking of the Christian's experience of the answer to prayer—in which, like Theodor Haering,⁸⁸ he finds the key to the idea of the miraculous,—he remarks that "it does not prove that God will violate His own laws, but I think it does prove that, within the conditions imposed by these laws, He does interest Himself in human affairs." It is to the phraseology employed here that we call attention. Precisely what is meant by such phrases as these: "God will not violate His own laws"; "God will act within the

⁸⁵ P. 22. Mr. Streeter similarly (*Restatement*, etc., p. xi) repudiates the statement for himself and his friends, one ventures to think equally mistakenly.

⁸⁶ Pp. 22-3. The negative form of statement is significant. In point of fact we are invited to exclude miracles from happenings not on the ground of a "uniform experience" but on the ground of a lack of experience: our world-view is to be based not on experience but on the absence of experience, and thus we are to found our belief on an attempt to prove a negative.

⁸⁷ P. 22.

⁸⁸ *The Christian Faith* (1906), 1913, p. 560.

conditions imposed by His laws"? What "laws" are these which "impose conditions" on God, that He "will not violate"? By a "law of nature" we ordinarily mean merely an observed uniformity of occurrence. Is it meant that God will never, or can never, act outside a single line of observed occurrence? That He will, or can, never act otherwise than as we observe Him acting ordinarily? That He has established for Himself "laws" of action which He will, or can, on no account "violate"? That His customary mode of activity imposes "conditions" on all His actions? It is difficult for the ordinary man to see what "law" God would "violate" by acting on proper occasion after a fashion different from that of His ordinary mode of action. We can hardly say that He *must* act uniformly without reducing Him from a person to a natural force: it is only a natural force which must by its very nature act uniformly. Nor can the circumstance that He has so made natural forces that they act uniformly constitute His own action in a different mode a violation of them. It would be a violation of them only if He compelled *them* to act in a mode different from the uniform mode of action which He imposed on them in their making as the law of their action. And nobody supposes that this is the way in which God works what is called a miracle. We do not see how we can avoid saying that a very crude idea both of "natural law" and of God's mode of action in working miracles underlies the forms of statement which Dr. Sanday currently employs in speaking of the subject.

It would be a pity to neglect Dr. Sanday's invitation⁸⁹ to survey in connection with the present expression of his views on miracles, what he has formerly written about them.⁹⁰ Very much is to be learned from such a survey.

⁸⁹ P. 22.

⁹⁰ The publications which chiefly come into consideration are the following: (1) "Free-thinking" in the *Oxford House Papers*, First Series, 1886; (2) Article, "Jesus Christ" in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii, 1899 (reprinted in *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, 1905): cf. also *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, 1905; (3) Paper at the Northampton Church Congress, October 1902 (reprinted in *The Expositi-*

For example it becomes at once clear as we glance through the series of writings to which he refers us, that his naturalistic opinions, here expressed with so keen a consciousness, have not been of quite so slow a growth and have not come to their present completeness quite so recently as might be supposed from the mere letter of the sketch of their development here given.⁹¹ Dr. Sanday had already indeed more than a quarter of a century ago given them expression quite as clearly and in much the same terms as now; and it may be doubted whether the obligations under which he is inclined generously to recognize that he may stand to Professor Lake and Mr. J. M. Thompson for the formation of his opinions, may not more naturally have been the other way about. Now and then an incidental suggestion comes to us, at least, which leads us to fear that Dr. Sanday may have (like the late Dr. A. B. Davidson for example) been through all these years building worse than he knew.⁹² At all events there is certainly very little of what he has subsequently said about miracles which is not already present, in germ at least, in a passage like the following:⁹³

"Into the philosophy of these marvellous phenomena I do not enter. What is their relation to God's ordinary government of the universe I do not feel competent to say. I do not myself believe that they are in the strict sense 'breaches' of natural law. I believe that if we could see as God sees we should become

tory Times, November 1902); (4) *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, 1907; (5) Sermon on "The meaning of Miracles" in *Miracles: Papers and Sermons contributed to the Guardian*. Edited by H. S. Holland, 1911. (6) Paper at the Middlesbrough Church Congress, October 1912.

⁹¹ P. 17.

⁹² For example we meet in Mr. H. C. Hoskier's *Codex B and its Allies*, 1914, Part I, p. 422, the following: "Many who should have raised their voices against the mischief wrought, have sat by in apathy or have wilfully fostered these heresies. Or, if not wilfully, they have assumed a faltering attitude which caused their own students to misinterpret their master's lessons. Thus we have the spectacle of Thompson and Lake saying to Sanday: 'We learned that from you', and Sanday retorting: 'I never meant to teach you that.'" Only in the case of the nature of Miracles, unfortunately, there was no misinterpretation.

⁹³ No. 9 of *Oxford House Papers*, First Series, on "Free-thinking", 1886.

aware of links and connections, at present hidden from us, binding together the mighty organism of facts and processes into a mysterious, but still harmonious whole. I am also not prepared to say that if the miracles of the New Testament had been described by competent observers in the nineteenth century instead of their actual eye-witnesses in the first, there would not have been a perceptible difference in the narratives. All these concessions I should be willing to make; and I could understand others pressing them further than I should care to press them myself. But on one simple proposition I should take my stand, as a rock of certainty amidst much that is uncertain: *Miracles did actually happen.*"

Here it is already denied that "miracles" are "in the strict sense 'breaches' of natural law"; the All is already spoken of as a closed system, if only we could see it all in all; it is already suggested that observers of the nineteenth century would have described miracles differently; and the strong affirmation that "miracles did actually happen" is already made—in conjunction with the explanation that what happened was not after all "miracles". These are the characteristic features of Dr. Sanday's latest declarations.

A comparison of Dr. Sanday's earlier and later dealing with miracles reveals meanwhile many features which one would think might cause him some embarrassment. Take the Virgin Birth and its attestation, for example. It has been quite common to minimize the attestation to the Virgin Birth. Dr. Sanday has never given way to that temptation. He never could have been capable, for example, of writing such a sentence as this—it is Dr. Rashdall's:⁹⁴ "The only traces of the doctrine in the New Testament are confined to the prefaces to the first and third Gospels, neither of which seems to belong to the two early documents which modern criticism is agreed in regarding as the basis of our existing synoptics"; or of suggesting, as Dr. Rashdall does, that the assured attribution of the third Gospel to Luke lessens its claim on our belief. Such remarks betray a total misapprehension of the meaning and implications of what is called the Two Document Hypothesis of the origin of the Synoptic Gospels. The discovery that these two sources

⁹⁴ *International Journal of Ethics*, January 1897, p. 156.

existed and that they account for a very large part of the contents of the Synoptics, has no tendency to suggest that other portions of the contents of these Gospels, derived from other sources, are inferior either in age or in historical trustworthiness to the material derived from one or the other of these two. The relative originality and historical trustworthiness of this additional material are to be ascertained on their own proper evidence; and Dr. Sanday, for his part, has put himself very fully on record as estimating both the originality and the historical trustworthiness of the Infancy Chapters of Luke very highly indeed.⁹⁵ He points out many and very convincing indications in the narrative itself of its historical value; and he even permits himself (like Sir William Ramsay,⁹⁶ but as he is careful to intimate independently of him) to trace the material here recorded ultimately to Mary herself—an attribution for which he has reasons to give which he considers weighty. “Such an inference”, he very justly remarks,⁹⁷ “would invest the contents of these chapters with high authority.” We are not informed that Dr. Sanday has withdrawn this high estimate of the historical authority of this material.^{97a} One would

⁹⁵ E.g., *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, II, 1899, pp. 643 ff. Cf. also the Sermon on the Virgin Birth printed in *The Expository Times*, xiv, 1903, pp. 296 ff.

⁹⁶ *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem? A Study on the Credibility of St. Luke.* 1898.

⁹⁷ P. 644 and note.

^{97a} He has perhaps somewhat modified it in the sermon on “The Meaning of Miracles”, printed in *Miracles*, edited by Dr. Holland, 1911, where however he still presents a rapid but telling summary of evidence for the historical trustworthiness of the Infancy chapters of both Matthew and Luke. The very cautious conclusion runs (pp. 14f.): “I would not myself deny that the imagination has been at work somewhat freely in these opening sections of both the First and Third Gospels; it would be precarious to lay great stress on more than the points that the two authorities have in common—the birth at Bethlehem, the birth before conjugal union, the name Jesus, the home at Nazareth.” Here we have probably the low-water mark of his growing skepticism prior to the Paper at Middlesbrough—after which he tells us that his progress has been rapid. He still apparently affirms “the birth before conjugal union” as credibly attested. But he had not yet apparently attached himself to “the school whose watchword is ‘the supernatural without miracle’” (p. 16).

think, however, that the maintenance of it would cause him some embarrassment in the face of his present statement: "I believe most emphatically in His Supernatural Birth; but I cannot so easily bring myself to think that His Birth was (as I should regard it) unnatural." What is it that Dr. Sanday supposes that Mary could and did bear witness to with respect to the extraordinary birth of her son? Precisely the one thing which Mary was competent to testify to with conviction and full knowledge—with indubitable weight—is what Dr. Sanday here calls the "unnatural birth"; and that is precisely the thing she does testify to, if this narrative has any validity at all as the vehicle of her witness; and we cannot be surprised that a precise assertion of it from her lips is embodied in the narrative: "I know not a man" (Lk. i. 34). The only thing that Dr. Sanday is prepared to accept now on Mary's testimony is just the thing that Mary had no competency to attest as a witness: that the Holy Spirit was so far concerned in this birth as to sanctify the product, so that It should be holy. What Mary was competent to attest—he refuses to believe: what she was not competent to attest—is all that he will believe. Phenomena like this increase our difficulty in crediting that Dr. Sanday's opinions as to miracles are the pure result of his critical examination of the evidence.

Let us take another example even more startling. Dr. Sanday seems still to profess readiness to accept any miracle adequately attested. In adequate attestation, he gives us to understand, first-handedness holds with him a primary place. "For instance, whenever we have the direct evidence of St. Paul, that evidence is immediate and cannot be questioned."⁹⁸ He suggests that the only miracles receiving such first-hand attestation are of the class called by him *supra naturam* in contrast with those which he calls *contra naturam*,—that is to say they are such as are wrought through the medium of natural forces, not independently of

⁹⁸ *Bishop Gore's Challenge*, etc., p. 24.

them. It is not immediately apparent on what grounds he bases this opinion. Paul, for example, in his references to miracles speaks quite generally⁹⁹ and Paul is not the only first-hand witness. Dr. Sanday does not doubt, for instance, that Luke was both Paul's companion and the author of the Book of Acts: and in that case it is hard to deny to Luke recognition as a first-hand witness to miracles, Paul's and others'. On Paul's and Luke's testimony we may be sure, and Dr. Sanday is sure, that miracles happened in the early days of the Church.¹⁰⁰ The miracles to which Luke testifies, however, are not all of the sort that Dr. Sanday calls *supra naturam*. But Luke testifies not only to the miracles of the early Christians but to miracles wrought by Jesus, and though he does not pretend to have himself witnessed any of these, as Paul's companion he enjoyed excellent opportunities of informing himself on first-hand authority of what really happened (as say with respect to the resurrection of Jesus), and we can hardly doubt, on his testimony alone, that Jesus Himself as well as His followers worked miracles,—and Dr. Sanday does not doubt it. If Luke is not technically a first-hand witness that fault, to all who believe, with Dr. Sanday,¹⁰¹ that the Fourth Gospel is the work of an eye-witness, is fully cured by the testimony of John. We can moreover get behind Luke. As Dr. Sanday himself points out,¹⁰² each of the chief documents which underlie Luke, the Narrative Source, the Discourse Source, and the so-called Special Source, testifies to abounding miracles wrought by Jesus. And, as Dr. Sanday again himself points out,¹⁰³ the distinction which he draws between *supra naturam* and *contra naturam* miracles "certainly was not present to the mind of the Biblical historians, and miracles of the one class are not inferior in attestation to those of

⁹⁹ Cf. the passages; Roms. xv. 18, 19; 2 Cor. xii. 12; 1 Cor. xii. 6, 8, 10, xiv. 7, 5, 19; Gal. iii. 8, cited in *The Expository Times*, xiv. p. 62. Cf. the *Church Congress at Middlesbrough*, p. 183.

¹⁰⁰ *The Expository Times*, as cited, pp. 64 ff.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

the other". These historians, indeed, in the most trustworthy accounts of His teaching which they have transmitted to us, represent Jesus as Himself bearing witness to His own miracle-working. There are no better attested sayings of our Lord's than those in which He pronounces woes upon Bethsaida and Chorazin (Mat. xi. 21, Lk. x. 13), replies to John the Baptist's inquiry as to who He was (Mat. xi. 5, Lk. vii. 22) and speaks of a faith which can remove mountains (Mat. xvii. 20, Lk. xvii. 6). Each of these saying includes a direct claim on our Lord's part to be a miracle-worker, and the only two of them which intimate the nature of His miracles, intimate that they included "nature miracles", Dr. Sanday's *contra-naturam* miracles. If it is unreasonable to doubt that these are genuine sayings of our Lord,—and surely Dr. Sanday will not doubt that¹⁰⁴—we seem to have our Lord's own witness to the fact that He wrought "nature miracles".

Dr. Sanday is indeed so deeply committed to this conclusion that we can only wonder at the extreme embarrassment into which he has brought himself by his denial that our Lord nevertheless wrought any miracles *contra naturam*. The narrative of our Lord's Temptation and its implications Dr. Sanday has by repeated and searching critical examinations of it made peculiarly his own. This narrative, he strongly holds, presents evidence that our Lord claimed to work miracles and really did work miracles which Dr. Sanday ventures to characterize as "quite stringent", indeed "as stringent as a proposition of Euclid."¹⁰⁵ For this account of the Temptation, he argues,¹⁰⁶ is of such a kind

¹⁰⁴ See what Dr. Sanday says in the paper at the Church Congress at Middlesbrough on Mat. xi. 21; Lk. x. 13, and in *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 224, on Mat. xvii. 20; Lk. xvii. 6. Cf. also what Dr. Headlam says in his paper at the Church Congress at Middlesbrough (p. 187) on Mat. xi. 21; Lk. x. 17, and Mat. xi. 5; Lk. vii. 32.

¹⁰⁵ *The Expository Times*, xiv, p. 63 f.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*: the argument here is repeated from Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, ii. p. 624 b, where it is more expanded: cf. also pp. 612 f.

and contains features of such a character as to make it intrinsically certain that it could not have been invented, but "must have come from our Lord Himself and no other". "But the story of the Temptation," he proceeds, "all turns on the assumption of the power of working miracles. All three temptations have for their object to induce Him to work miracles for purposes other than those for which He was prepared to work them. The story would be null and void if He worked no miracles at all." That is to say our Lord Himself bears witness in the account of the Temptation which He, and no other, *must* have given and therefore actually did give, that He was conscious of the power to work miracles, and did work them on all proper occasions. Here is stringent evidence indeed, independent of all inquiry into "sources": the narrative in itself bears convincing testimony to its authenticity as a personal witness of our Lord's own; and this witness is to His miracle-working. The point now to be pressed is that this stringent witness of our Lord's own to His miracle-working concerns particularly "nature miracles", miracles *contra naturam*. The making of the stones into bread is as distinctly a nature miracle, for example, as the multiplication of the loaves and fishes which Dr. Sanday refuses to believe happened, on this precise ground. How can Dr. Sanday insist, then, that "nature miracles" did not happen and could not happen? Has he convicted our Lord of falsehood to the nature and extent of His powers—transmuted Him into an empty boaster in the accounts He gives of Himself? Or does he wish to abandon his elaborate proof of the necessary origin of the account of the Temptation in our Lord's own report? One thing stands out with great clearness. Dr. Sanday's rejection of "nature miracles" does not rest on critical grounds. His most elaborate, thorough and characteristic essays in criticism accredit them. If he refuses to believe that such miracles occurred he can ground his refusal in nothing but an *a priori* pronouncement that such miracles are impossible.

This having been said, everything has been said. Dr. Sanday has given his life to the study of criticism. At the end of the day he casts criticism and all its findings out of the window and falls back on a bald anti-supernaturalistic pre-conception. All his suggestions are dictated not by the facts as ascertained by critical inquiry, but by a philosophical principle assumed at the outset. The underlying motive seems to be, as Mr. Knox would say,¹⁰⁷ to make Christianity easy "for Jones to swallow". It is not of the ascertainment of the pure truth that Dr. Sanday seems to be thinking at the bottom of his mind, but of the placating of "the modern mind" and the adjustment of Christianity to its ingrained point of view. He seems to value his suggestions looking to the substitution of an unmiraculous Christianity for the supernatural Christianity hitherto believed in by men, because by them Christianity would be made more acceptable to "the modern mind". He tells us with charming *naïveté*.¹⁰⁸

"What they would mean is that the greatest of all stumbling-blocks to the modern mind is removed, and that the beautiful regularity that we see around us now has been, and will be, the law of the Divine action from the beginning to the end of time. There has been just this one little submerged rock in our navigation of the universe. If we look at it from a cosmical standpoint, how infinitesimal does it seem! And yet that one little rock has been the cause of many a shipwreck of faith. If it is really taken out of the way, the whole expanse of the ocean of thought will be open and free.

But what if that "one little submerged rock" is just Christianity? Does it not fall strangely upon our ears, to hear a Christian theologian speak thus belittlingly of the whole supernatural element in Christianity? When Dr. Sanday read that amazing paper on Miracles at the Church Congress at Middlesbrough (in 1912) in which he preadumbrated all that he has since said, there were those on the platform with him who, had he only been willing to hearken to them, could have corrected his deflected points of view. Dr.

¹⁰⁷ *Some Loose Stones*, 1913, pp. 9 ff.

¹⁰⁸ *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, etc., p. 30.

Headlam, for instance, warned him already of the untenableness of his division of miracles into two classes—he called them then “the supernatural” and “the abnormal”—in point of both nature and attestation. Dr. Strong rebuked beforehand his belittling of the issue and pointed out clearly that the real issue raised is just that between Christianity and “some form of mechanical naturalism”. He said:¹⁰⁹

“The question of miracles is not a question of detail, or one that can be neglected in the interest of practical or spiritual religion. It is one form of the question whether God made and governs the world, and to decide this negatively is to adopt some form of mechanical naturalism.”

And Canon Carnegie pronounced already the final judgment upon the whole matter:¹¹⁰

“A non-miraculous Christianity might have a future before it; on that I express no opinion; but it would have no past behind it to which it could look for guidance and encouragement. I cannot regard it as a legitimate development of the old Christianity. It is a new religion constituted on a completely different basis, and involving principles and motives of a completely different character.”

There are in point of fact unnaturally bound together in the Church of England to-day three different and necessarily antagonistic systems of religion. The Bishop of Oxford takes some account of them in his survey of the state of the Church,¹¹¹ but does not seem adequately to feel their essential opposition to one another. According to him the Church of England is brought into peril to-day by three tendencies which are driving to intolerable excesses points of view in themselves mutually tolerable: Catholic, Evangelical and Modernist need only avoid pushing things to such extremes and all will be well. It is a great mistake, however, to imagine that it is only in extreme applications of the warring principles that the strange combination of such contradictory elements in a single body becomes an intolerable evil. Sacerdotalism, Evangelicalism, Naturalism

¹⁰⁹ P. 181.

¹¹⁰ P. 194.

¹¹¹ *The Basis*, etc., p. 30.

are not complementary elements in one whole of truth but stand related as precise contradictions in their fundamental principles. No doubt there is a larger body of truth held in common between Sacerdotalism and Evangelicalism than between either and Naturalism, and these may therefore seem in their common opposition to Naturalism to draw together. Supernaturalism for instance,—which is the very breath of life of any operative religion for sinners—is common ground between them. But this agreement in certain fundamental truths does not void their contradiction at vital points, although it may explain how Dr. Headlam, for example, can argue that it is an exaggeration to speak of them as two different religious systems.¹¹² In his survey Dr. Headlam strangely omits all consideration of the Naturalism which is rampant in the Church of England—and not in the Church of England alone among the churches—and which undoubtedly is a religion in its very essence distinct from anything that can by any legitimate extension of language be called Christianity.

What is happening in the Church of England at the moment is an attempt on the part of Sacerdotalism to suppress Evangelicalism and to extrude Naturalism. In this Sacerdotalism is only showing that it is coming to ever purer consciousness of its own essential nature. That it should assert itself and endeavor to free itself from the constant irritation of contact within the same organization of contradictory systems of religion is only natural and is to be commended. It is a pity that it should have been left to it to demand the exclusion of Naturalism from a church claiming the Christian name. It is to be hoped that Evangelicalism will after a while awake to its responsibilities and to its strength, and take over the task of freeing the Church of England from such destructive error. It does not seem as if that day had yet come: Sacerdotalism appears rather to be in a position to threaten it along with Naturalism. This undoubtedly brings with it

¹¹² *The Church Quarterly Review*, April 1914, p. 156.

a great peril: for no error could be more fatal than for Evangelicalism, under the sting of the common assault made upon them both by Sacerdotalism, to make common cause with Naturalism. What is needed above everything else in the Church of England is that Evangelicals—who after all constitute the only legitimate Church of England—should recover their self-consciousness and assert themselves; no longer seeking as “good churchmen” to conciliate the Sacerdotalists or as “men of open mind” to conciliate the Liberals, but as faithful stewards of the saving gospel to please the Master. There is an application here too of the saying: “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”

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