ORTHODOX AND LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY.

A VIA MEDIA.

THE Christian church—using that term in its most comprehensive sense—is to-day divided into two great parties. It may, perhaps, be difficult to get a name for each that will satisfy both parties. Those I mean by “orthodox” perhaps would object to the word as misleading and would describe by it what is known in church history as the great movement in the seventeenth century known as orthodoxy. Liberalism does not so much oppose this as ignore it as almost beneath notice. This old traditional orthodoxy is, therefore, dead and need not be here considered. Those who inherit the orthodox tradition call themselves the Positive School, and stand opposed to the Liberal School. This is the real antithesis in Germany, and more or less in this country as well. The outstanding differences between the two schools are not difficult to trace. According to the Positive school, which inherits the orthodox tradition, Christianity is a great cosmic scheme of redemption, the fundamental presupposition of which is the fall of man, and the fundamental fact of which is that Jesus Christ is a Saviour or Redeemer. According to the second, Christianity is an ethical system of teaching or precept, and Jesus Christ is the supreme teacher and moral and spiritual guide. According to the first the important thing about Jesus Christ is what he did; according to the second what he taught. To the one Jesus Christ is supreme be-

cause of the act of atonement accomplished once and once for all on the cross of Calvary; to the other, because of what he revealed in his teachings as to the character of God and the nature of man. To the one the apostle Paul is the expositor *par excellence* of what Christianity is because he sets it forth as a great redemptive scheme; to the other the synoptic Gospels are the supreme authority because they contain, it is presumed, the ethical and spiritual teaching man needs for his guidance. The one believes that Christianity stands or falls with the supremacy of the apostle Paul, the other believes that we have really outgrown the speculations of the apostle Paul, and that we must fall back upon the teaching of Jesus in the first three Gospels.

It is obvious that orthodox or positive Christianity has practically the whole Christian church on its side, past and present. This does not of course settle the question, for in many things the Christian church has been mistaken. But it is well that we should be aware what a radical change is involved in the transfer from the one position to the other. If it were possible to ask any one of the great fathers of the church the question, what is Christianity? the answer would not be doubtful. They would have said, Christianity is the religion of redemption, and what is most vital in it is contained in whatever is essential and permanent in the doctrine of the incarnation and atonement of the superpersonal Son of God. As we know it, and as the church has known it, Christianity is the religion of St. Paul. Such certainly would have been the answer of St. Athanasius, the father who gave shape to the first great creed of the church,—the Nicene, which was formulated in the first ecumenical council assembled at Nicæa in 325 A. D., at the command of Constantine, the first Christian emperor. He would not have understood any Christianity

that had not its fundamental starting point in the incarnation of the Son of God and did not culminate in his death. The essence of Christianity, according to the Nicene conception of it, does not consist in any ethical teaching about God or man, but in God becoming man in Christ in order that man might become God. The same idea would have been given by St. Augustine, the greatest of the fathers of the west, whose teachings made possible the western or Latin church, and whose theology was embodied four centuries later in the Athanasian creed. He would not, perhaps, have put the matter in exactly the same form as did St. Athanasius, but in so far forth as emphasis on the redemptive character of Christianity is concerned the two fathers would have been at one. In the same line of teaching would have been St. Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and indeed all the great theologians of the middle ages. And when we come across the line that separates the ancient from the modern world, and enter the churches of the Reformation, we find essentially the same teaching, that Christianity is a redemptive system having its vital center in the death of the Son of God. Luther, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer, all the heroes of the Reformation, were at one with the pre-Reformation church in so regarding Christianity, however much they may have differed from it in matters not so vital. None of them would have recognized or understood a Christianity whose essence consisted in the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and not in the death of the Son of God on the cross.

It is only in comparatively recent times that the attempt has been made to conceive Christianity as a body of ethical and spiritual teaching, it originated with liberal Christianity which began its course by repudiating the Christ of the church in the interest of the Jesus of the synoptic Gospels, whom it conceived as historical. Its cry was "Back to Jesus." Let us be done with the doctrines of the church;

the Christianity we want and which the world needs is the Christianity which Jesus himself taught in the Galilean villages, and which has come down to us in his parables and precepts. Comparisons were drawn between the creeds of the pre-Reformation and Reformation churches and the teaching of the Master, always to the disparagement of the former in favor of the latter, and the promise was sometimes held out that the ultimate form of Christianity would be what was called the "simple teaching of Jesus." The most important duty was thought to be the return to primitive Christianity, and the wiping out of all the creeds of the intervening centuries as so much useless speculation. And inasmuch as the apostle Paul was the first and arch-offender, in that it was he who led the infant church away from the teaching of Jesus into dependence upon the death of Christ, the first duty was to repudiate the apostle Paul.

Paul's Epistles have thus been the *bête noire* of liberal theologians, and his fundamental blunder was the fall of man. This was put forth in the interest of optimism, and as being in harmony with the doctrine of evolution. It was not seen that it was essentially pessimistic and ran counter to the evolutionary theory, in that it invited us to see as the Christian centuries evolved the progressive obscuration of Christianity by Greek philosophy, and by the other products of secular culture, and not the progressive rational development and ever richer unfolding of the essential truth at the heart of the faith. It is not that the church has not attached importance to the teaching of Jesus, in which is set forth the nature of the kingdom of God, the transformation of the inner life of man which is necessary for entrance into that kingdom, the duty of self-denial, of self-sacrifice, of purity, of forgiveness. All this the church has held and taught was a vital part of Christianity, and must enter into the religion of the future as an integral part of it; but at the same time all branches of the church have main-

tained that the moral and spiritual teachings of Jesus are not so essential to mature Christianity as the doctrine of the death of Christ on the cross. It would seem as if some sure and vital instinct has held the heart of the church true to this central fact; no heresy has been deemed so deadly as a denial of the efficacy of the death of Christ for human salvation. The late Dr. Dale of Birmingham held that the essential Christian gospel is not found in the ethical teachings of the synoptic Gospels; that we must go to the Epistles to find it, for the reason that the essential gospel was something which God had done for man, and not simply moral and spiritual teaching, however pure it might be, which men were to follow and obey. The essential gospel of Christianity is involved in something God has done for man, and not in something said by Jesus to man. And what God has done for man has its culmination in what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary; and hence with a sure instinct the church has followed the apostle Paul rather than the synoptic Gospels. And yet it is not necessary to put the apostle Paul and the teaching of Jesus in opposition and contrast as has so often been done; it is only necessary to see that in the light of the death of Jesus alone can his teaching be seen in its most genuine significance.

When the Gospels are properly read they culminate in the death of their central figure. It is not the Epistles of Paul alone that emphasize the death of Jesus. From the very first he has his face set toward Jerusalem where he is to die. The cross is the center of the Gospels no less than of the Epistles. It is therefore a false contrast which liberal Christianity constantly draws between Paul and Jesus. It was a true instinct that enabled the artist to see the "shadow of the cross" in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. For the whole evangelic story has both its meaning and culmination in the cross. Especially is this seen when

the non-Markan source of Matthew and Luke, which the critics call "Q" is separated from the rest of the Gospels. Evidently this is a part of the Gospels of which neither Matthew nor Luke is the author. It is common to them both; they have each of them adapted it to their purposes; it existed before they touched it substantially as it exists now. There are slight variations in the way in which each evangelist quotes this non-Markan source, but they are so slight that there is no doubt that it was the same document from which the two borrowed. Matthew best preserves the language and Luke the order of the original source. It contains no history, has nothing about the death or resurrection of Jesus. It has no record of any miracle wrought by him. It is almost wholly impersonal and ethical. It is the latest form of the "*irreducible minimum*" to which research has driven the higher criticism of the New Testament in its search for the origin of Christianity in the teaching of Jesus. A very high value is attached to it by the liberal critics because of the witness the fragment is supposed to bear to the reality of the life and teaching of Jesus. It is, so the critics tell us, the oldest fragment in the Gospels. It can be separated from the rest of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. For long the critics have been convinced that the Gospel of Mark was the earliest source of our knowledge of Jesus, but now they are as convinced that "Q" antedates anything we have in the Gospels. The great value of this document consists in the fact that it tells us what were the teachings of Jesus. Says Dr. C. H. Gilbert, an American liberal critic, in a recent issue of the *Hibbert Journal*, "Of this teaching the earliest, the most various, and complete collection is that which is designated by the letter 'Q.'" "It is the most authoritative document," he tells us, "on the nature and scope of Christianity" just because it is supposed to be a collection of the words of Jesus. "No part of the New Testament is of the same

weight as the words of Jesus, him out of the fulness of whose spiritual forces the Christian movement sprang." When this non-Markan source is removed from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, what is left behind bears almost as much testimony to the death of Jesus as do the Epistles of Paul. It is dominated by the Pauline point of view, and contains many Pauline elements. The Gospel of Mark is decidedly Pauline, and the Gospel of Mark is the substratum of those of Matthew and Luke. They follow Mark in so far as they relate historical facts, with the exception of the nativity stories which are not in Mark. They vary the story as they tell it, but the substance is Markan. The attempt, therefore, of the liberal critics to put Paul in opposition to Jesus breaks down, for Mark, Matthew and Luke all alike point to the death of Jesus as that on which all rests.

The attempt to find in "Q" the *fons et origo* of Christianity has a long history behind it, and it can be understood only in the light of that history. It is really a part of the controversy between the Roman church and Protestantism that arose with the Reformation, and has been raging ever since. Where is the norm of true Christianity to be found by which to test the various forms of it that arise in the course of its history? The Roman church answers this question by its doctrine of development. There is no fixed norm; it exists in the church itself which was established by Jesus Christ; and the church has the power of declaring from time to time what the true Christianity is. There is at the heart of this claim of the Roman church a profound truth which no branch of Protestantism has yet accepted in its fulness. It is the truth that the church is a living organism,—a growing organization. Every Protestant church is based on the idea that somewhere the norm is to be found—and one sect differs from another according to its answer to the ques-

tion where? All the conflicts of the Protestant sects with one another have been around this one question. Those who claim to stand nearest to the Roman church—the Anglicans—agree with that church in so far as to say that the norm is not to be found in the New Testament, but in the subsequent centuries. A few years ago an influential party of the Church of England presented a petition to the Primate, praying that the variation in doctrine and ritual allowable in the Church of England should be confined to those which have the sanction of the first six centuries. The motive in the movement was to check the Romeward or papal tendencies in the church. The signatories believed that if a law was passed to the effect that no doctrine or ritual be allowed in the church except it had the sanction of the great fathers of the first six centuries, an end would be put to the doctrines and practices of the extreme ritualists, which had their origin in the middle ages. The signatories to this petition expressed special loyalty to the Nicene creed, which was framed in the fourth century. The more liberal clergymen and members of the Church of England delight to call themselves “Nicene men,” and there is an idea in many minds outside of that church that the liberal theology of the present day is a revival of the Greek theology embodied in the Nicene symbol. The watch-word of the Broad Church party for many years has been “Back to Nicæa.” Frederick Denison Maurice gave the start to this tendency many years ago now, in urging the desirability of a fuller study of the early theologians of Alexandria. The advice was followed, and liberal churchmen have found many resemblances between the theological renaissance of the present day and the views of the great fathers of the early Greek church. Certainly there is a freshness and breadth in the writings of Clement, Origin, and Athanasius not to be found in those of Augustine and the Doctors of the middle ages. But that

does not prove that we can return to Alexandrian Christianity and accept the Nicene Creed as our own, any more than we can go back to the ninth century and accept the Athanasian Creed as our own. The attempt to bind the church which is a living organism to any past age is an impossible task.

The non-sacerdotal or non-episcopal churches of the Reformation have sought for the norm of Christianity in the New Testament. Not at once indeed was this position taken. The Confession of Augsburg, the creed of the Lutheran church, which was drawn up by the Reformers themselves, fixed the limit beyond which genuine Christianity was not to be found at the fourth century. But all forms of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism have planted themselves on the New Testament. This is final, they said. To this law and testimony all must conform. The theology which alone can be a foundation of the church must be a Biblical theology. At first, all of the New Testament was supposed to be binding on the church; but it was soon discovered that the Epistles of Paul contained the germ of the errors into which the church had fallen, and therefore if the church was to be founded on pure doctrine it must find its basis in the Gospels only. Persecuted in this city those in search of the true norm of Christianity found that they must flee into another,—they must go still farther back. The higher criticism was born and introduced a new element into the problem. The Gospel of John was found not to be above suspicion. It was clearly seen not to be a biography of Jesus, and what was demanded by this party was a Christianity which Jesus himself preached, and certainly that was not found in the Gospel of John, which was manifestly a theological treatise based on the theology of Alexandria. The cry was "Back to Jesus," just as the cry of the Anglicans had been "Back to Nicæa." The real Jesus was to be found in the

synoptics, and most diligently have the synoptics been searched for the purpose of discovering this "real" Jesus. For a while the idea that the synoptics were the final resting-place of the church seemed to satisfy all parties, but soon it was discovered that the search could no more stop there than in the Nicene creed. The chief agent in making the discovery has been, of course, the higher criticism, as soon as it was applied to the solution of the synoptic problem.

It was some time before Christian scholars could bring themselves to apply the same methods of criticism which have proved so fruitful in the case of the Old Testament to the New. The feeling has been that the New Testament is a different kind of book from the Old, and consequently must be treated differently. The reason for that feeling doubtless was that the central figure of the New Testament is wholly different from any of the characters of the Old,—that they were human, and he divine,—and therefore the literature that deals with him must not be treated in the same way as the literature that deals with them. Very slowly has the conviction worked itself into the heart of Christian scholars that so far as methods of criticism are concerned there is really no difference between the Testaments, that not even a blank leaf separates them, and that the younger scripture is comprehended in the scope of the literature of the Hebrew people, that it is a natural product of the human mind, just as truly as the Old Testament is, carrying to their legitimate conclusions the ideas of the elder scripture. Not designedly indeed, but really though unconsciously, the purpose of the criticism of the New Testament, especially in Germany, has been to undermine the doctrine of the divinity of its central figure and to discover a human Jesus. The presupposition of the study has been that a thick accretion of tradition and superstition has gathered around his name, and the object of the criti-

cism has been to peel this off and to get at the realistic human figure. The triumph of the study would have been the denuding from the supernatural Christ of the church of all miraculous elements, and the reconstruction of the earthly history of the man Jesus. The supernatural features with which the Gospels clothe the figure the critics were convinced were not historical. One by one they were set aside—not only the manner in which he entered the world and left it, but all the deeds attributed to him that proved his divinity. The critic has been in search of a purely human Jesus and in “Q” he professes to have found him; for here is only impersonal and ethical teaching with no death on the cross and no resurrection from the dead.

But the Christ of the church is not such a Jesus. The important question is whether the Christian church can make the great change of belief which the acceptance of such a Jesus would involve and remain the Christian church. If the critic's evidence for his thesis is so overwhelming that it must be accepted—well, then it must; but it is important that the churches of Christendom should realize the kind of Jesus the critics are presenting them with, and the vast revolution in belief which it involves. It has often been remarked that all of Christianity was involved in the controversy between Athanasius and Arius, and that the victory gained at Nicæa was a victory for Christianity itself. But here would seem to be even a greater issue. Christianity from the beginning has been conceived as a redemptive scheme, the good news of a divine being coming down from heaven to rescue fallen man, the Christ or Saviour not being a member of the fallen race, but apart from it and superior to it. To make the Christ or Saviour a member of the race, no matter how specially endowed with moral and spiritual qualities, is to alter the whole conception and to tear out the heart of the evangelic story. The Christian church has never yet consented to put its Christ into the

same category as the prophets of the Old Testament or the philosophers of Greece, but this is just what will have to be done if the Jesus of the critics is to be accepted as the Christ. Here are the words of the critic already quoted: "They [the hundred verses more or less that make up the document called 'Q'] present Jesus as a great spiritual prophet, as one who was in the line of Isaiah and Jeremiah." It is true that Dr. Gilbert adds that Jesus is presented as the master of Isaiah and Jeremiah, but he is superior to them in the same way as Aristotle is superior to all others in the realm of philosophy. As the Stagirite is "master of them who know in the realm of philosophy, then he who spoke the words of 'Q' is master of all who know in the realm of ethics and religion." No one doubts that Aristotle was a man, strictly within the human range, as much so as any of those with whom he is compared, and no one doubts that Isaiah and Jeremiah were human beings. The root idea of "Q" as Dr. Gilbert reads it is that Jesus was a teacher, not a Redeemer or Saviour as the Christian church has all along conceived him. As a teacher he spoke "winged words" indeed, but he does nothing as a Redeemer or Saviour. No words of "Q" lead up to anything "generically different from the conception of a prophet, or beyond that of the supreme and final prophet." Nor is Dr. Gilbert alone in this. Says a brother critic, Prof. S. J. Case, "The Jesus of liberal theology is not a supernatural person, at least not in any real sense of that term as understood by the traditional Christology" (*The Historicity of Jesus*, p. 151). "Jesus can best and most truly be known as a man among men. The religion which has Jesus for its object is to be sharply distinguished from the personal religion of Jesus." It is now believed by the liberals that he did not set himself forward as an object of worship and reverence, but that his primary concern was to point men directly to God, the God whom he himself

worshipped. The author quotes Harnack, the leader of the liberals. "He desired no further belief in his person and no other attachment to it than is contained in the keeping of his commandments. . . . This feeling, praying, working, struggling, and suffering individual is a man who in the face of his God also associates himself with other men." (*What is Christianity*, p. 125.) The method in which the liberal critics defend the historicity of Jesus involves the same thing. It is significant that theologians of strict orthodoxy stand aloof from the discussion of this question as though it does not concern them. The old controversy was between liberal and orthodox, and it may be said that the latter is not altogether displeased to see his old enemy attacked. It had been gaining a victory all through the last century, and doubtless was beginning to think that it was master of the field. But the triumph is really a defeat, for it means the destruction of Christianity as Christianity has been known in all ages of its history. Professor von Soden, for example, in his pamphlet *Hat Jesus gelebt?* maintains that we are as little justified in asking whether Jesus lived as we would be in putting the same question with regard to Socrates or Alexander, and easily shows how absurd it would be to entertain any such doubt or to ask any such question. The Jesus whom Dr. Gilbert and Professors von Soden and Harnack and the critics generally would commend to us is not the Christ the Christian church has all along believed in, and it is not the Christ it believes in today. If Jesus was a man as Socrates, Alexander, Isaiah, and Jeremiah were men, then the whole Christian world has been under a delusion. The discovery that Jesus was a man merely as those named were men, would be regarded as destructive of Christianity just as would be the discovery that Jesus never lived at all. It would be the destruction of Christianity as Christianity has been understood by the great saints and theologians

of the past, and as it is understood today by the Greek Church, by the Lutheran Church, by the Congregational churches of all lands, and by all branches of the Presbyterian Church.

The evidence is lacking that "Q" is the utterance of an individual Jesus. The greatest part of it is made up of ethical teaching which might have come from a Hebrew prophet. It is Hebrew ethics at their best. There is nothing that might not have come from a Hebrew prophet, and there is no personal claim put forth by the speaker. There is nothing against the supposition that the teaching was put into the mouth of Jesus by those who worshiped him as a God. Suppose that the story of a historical Jesus did not arise until after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D. Then there would be need of something to take the place of the old Jewish hierarchy in the new religion. The new faith would have to speak with the voice of authority, just as there would have to be something in it which would take the place of the stories of the suffering and dying gods of the East which had flooded the whole Greco-Roman world. To put teaching into the mouth of some hero or prophet or Messiah of the past was the universal custom of the time, and was not considered reprehensible as we would consider it today. The whole Old Testament is the evidence of this fact, for almost all of it is pseudepigraphic. It is not our business either to approve or condemn the literary practice of the first or second century, but simply to understand it; this in any case was what the evangelists Matthew and Luke did with the document the critics call "Q"; what they put into their Gospels was borrowed from somewhere. Dr. Gerald Friedländer in his *Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount*, shows that the precepts of the sermon and the petitions of the Lord's prayer are derived from the Old Testament. Professor Pfeiderer shows that Matt. xi. 25ff, on which the

liberal critics depend for proof of the personal note which is absent from all the rest of "Q", is part of a Christological hymn which betrays its ecclesiastical origin in its artistic metrical form. "The artistic arrangement of strophes in something like a sonnet-like form points to the moulding hand of the church." And the contents of the passage show that it was derived from earlier utterances from Paul, Cor. i. 19, "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." And Paul's thought was a familiar one in all the mystery institutions of antiquity, that it is only to specially endowed persons or specially prepared persons, initiated ones, that the higher truths were revealed. "It is just this specifically Pauline thought—that the true knowledge of God and of Christ is hidden from the natural man and only revealed to the mind of man by the Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of the Son of God—which the Evangelist makes (verse 22) Jesus himself express in words which are so strongly distinguished by their dogmatic character from Jesus's usual manner of speaking in the synoptic Gospels, and have such a remarkable affinity with the Pauline and Johannine theology (John i. 18; x. 5; xii. 3; xvii. 10) that one can hardly avoid the impression that we have here, not so much a saying of Jesus himself, as a Christological confession of the apostolic community in the form of a solemn liturgical hymn." (*Primitive Christianity*, II, p. 144). As elsewhere in the New Testament the critics fail to find the *fons et origo* of Christianity in "Q." If there is no death and resurrection of Jesus in "Q" there is no Christianity in it as Christianity has been understood in all the ages of its history, there is only Jewish ethics.

The one fallacy that runs through the whole liberal criticism of orthodox Christianity is the supposition that nothing can be true that is not historically true. The pre-

supposition of the Pauline conception of redemption is the fall of man; but science has proved that man never fell, and besides, it is said, there is no mention of a fall in the teaching of Jesus. But is the fall of man something that can be taught by science? What an immense assumption it is that it was a fact of science which the Spirit of Truth was wishful to teach in the story of the Garden of Eden! Suppose that there is much more in the old dogmas of the church than even the devoted believers in them imagine? Suppose that Paul, when he said "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," did not refer to anything that took place on the plane of history? Suppose that he knew quite as well as the modern tyro in science that man was not created perfect in body and mind? Suppose that the old story of the fall did not mean what the seventeenth century divines imagined? Suppose that it is an allegory or symbol having a spiritual or esoteric meaning, that the sphere with which it deals is the super-historical sphere—a very real sphere to the apostle Paul—that the fall denotes, therefore, a fact in the spiritual life of man, not only of the first man, but of every man. The inference drawn by many in our day that the ancient writers who told the story of the fall were either fools for giving such idle tales, or men who did not know what they were talking about, because, forsooth, they were ignorant of the story of physical science—was too hasty. Perhaps these men were wiser than our modern theologian or man of science. Perhaps the story enshrines some deep-seated reality which is borne witness to by human experience. This would seem likely, because the story has satisfied the needs of multitudes of men and women, and these not the weakest of the race, but some of the strongest both intellectually and spiritually. These men and women have believed the story, not because in going back into the centuries they have come upon a perfect man, but because

looking within they have come upon certain facts of spiritual experience which the old story seemed to explain. Perhaps the ancient authors had not the remotest intention of teaching anything about man's first condition on the planet. Be that as it may, these facts of inner spiritual experience are as open to us as they were to him, and we should read the old story in the light of them and not in the light of any facts of physical science.

Every man feels within himself that he has fallen below the standard which he has set up for himself; he has not been the man he ought to have been. Theologians have called this fact of universal experience the sense of sin, and nothing is so wide spread as this sense of sin. It is not confined to Christian lands, therefore it cannot be the product of Christian theology. It must be something innate, something that belongs to man as man, as an inhabitant of this planet. It does seem that man could be better and greater than he is now, that his ideal is higher than his real. Wherever man is found he seems discontented with himself, as though he had fallen from some high estate. His reach always exceeds his grasp; he is always attempting more than he can accomplish, beginning tasks he cannot end. The soul of man is never satisfied with any achievements; it always aims at more than it can perform, always imagines more than it can accomplish, as though it had come from a higher realm and was greater than it seems. If we look deeply into the soul of any earnest man we shall find this in proportion to his earnestness. The apostle Paul found a contradiction in his nature,—while he was obedient to the law of God after the inward man there was another law in his members that brought him into captivity to the law of sin and death. The apostle of science, Thomas Henry Huxley, found the same thing—the course of cosmic evolution setting in one direction and man setting himself against it in another direction. What

is the explanation of the fact that man is in incessant conflict with himself? It would be explained were it true that the soul, the real man within, is not the product of cosmic evolution, but has come from a higher world into this lower one, that man is really a spiritual being or immortal essence tabernacling in mortal flesh.

Suppose that it were true what religious faith in every age and land has affirmed, that the soul of man has come from afar, from God who is its true home, and that here it has no abiding dwelling place, and is moving about, as Wordsworth expresses it, in worlds not realized? That would explain all these spiritual experiences just mentioned. How would it be possible to express such a truth otherwise than by saying that man has fallen from some higher world, that this world in which he is now is not his true home, and that here he is not living his true life? That is exactly what the apostle Paul means by "death," that man's condition in this world is a state of separation from the divine consciousness in a higher world. He means that man fell from that high estate when he came into this world of matter and form. The soul came from this upper realm, and this upper realm is the true home of the soul for which it yearns. The essence of the fall of man was the awakening within man of a desire for a separate life. How shall we speak of the soul in its own celestial home before it became incarnate in mortal guise? If we do speak at all of it it must be in the language of symbol and parable, for on such a theme the literal truth will not be possible for us. And what better symbol or parable could be found than that of Eden, if only we remember that no garden of earth is meant, no condition of physical perfection, but the soul's home in God. Its consciousness was one with the divine consciousness; it had no will separate from the will of God. What a confirmation of the Pauline doctrine of the fall is the one fact that comes out of every

scripture and every mythology the world over,—that the man that is, is a degeneration of the man that was. In Plato we have allegory upon allegory describing the soul of man before the fall in its heavenly home, and its condition in this lower world. The soul here is like a dweller in an underground den, with chains on legs and arms and neck, sitting with back to the light, seeing nothing but the shadows of things passing before it on a wall in front. Or it is, as it were, living at the bottom of the sea. And the great master tries to describe what a wondrous world would meet the eye could the soul come to the surface as fish sometimes come to the surface of the sea.—“A world whose mountains, stones, our emeralds, and sardonyxes, and jaspers, being but chips from them—a sun ever shining, never dimmed,

“All that is most beauteous imagined there,
In happier beauty, more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams,
Climes which the sun who sheds the brightest ray
Earth knows is all unworthy to survey.”

The world, in fine, of the unfallen soul where, as Plato expresses it, are “Temples and sacred places in which the gods really dwell, and the denizens of this radiant world hear the voices of the gods, and receive their answers, and are conscious of them and hold converse with them;” and they see, continues Plato, “the sun, moon, and stars, as they really are, and their other blessedness is of a piece with this” (Churton Collins, *Poetry and Criticism*, pp. 268-9).

We have an echo of this Platonic doctrine in Paul’s declaration, “For you died, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Col. iii. 3). The “dead” of Paul were those who had fallen from the plane of true being, this higher realm of which Plato speaks, into the realm of matter and form. This is the natural condition of man in this world. There

is indeed no historic fall—science has set that aside—but Paul's doctrine still stands as the fundamental presupposition of the doctrine of redemption of which the New Testament is full.

Now what is true of the doctrine of the fall is true of the orthodox system as a whole. That system in its entirety constitutes one of the most complete and impressive products of the human mind. Hebrew prophetism, Greek philosophy and Oriental mysticism furnished the materials for it. Its central feature is the story of the deliverer who is to undo the ruin of the fall. A promise was given close upon that catastrophe by God himself that a deliverer would come in his own good time, who would redeem at least some of the children of Adam, and restore them to their original condition. There was a long preparation for his coming, and a long expectation on the part of the people. Finally the long looked-for era dawned, and an angel was sent to announce the advent. Strange stars were seen in the east heralding the approach of the wondrous child, and a heavenly choir sang anthems when he was born. His birth was of course supernatural as was fitting the work he had to do, and in his boyhood he showed marvelous wisdom. First of all he set himself to conquer the evil power of the universe for himself, to gain self-mastery and self-conquest. Then he set out in the plenitude of his strength, mighty in the kingship of his own nature, to conquer the evil of the world. No need to linger over the well-known story; it is known to all. The Christ at last is put to death as a sacrifice for the sin of the race. He is not a mere martyr to his convictions. He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. And this is witnessed by his resurrection from the dead, and by his ascent to heaven and taking his place at the right hand of God. And the stupendous drama was to close by his second advent to earth at the end of the age, when he

would reign over a renovated earth in a perfect kingdom of God.

Now it is easy to marshal proofs to show that this story is not historical. Of course it is not. The critic has no difficulty in showing that all the supernatural features of the story are hundreds even thousands of years older than our era, which proves that we are not dealing with literal facts, but are in the presence of a story which the world has repeated to itself over and over again. It differs from many other myths in being "circumstantial enough and sober enough in tone to pass for an account of facts, and yet loaded with enough miracle, poetry, and submerged wisdom to take the place of a moral philosophy and present what seemed at the time an adequate ideal to the heart" (Professor Santayana). What heart can remain unmoved when it contemplates the millions that have found refuge in it, guidance in a perplexing world, strength and courage in days of weakness, solace in affliction and comfort in death. And it is true, though not historically true. Religious truth if it is to be taught at all must be taught by means of symbols. The history of these symbols is the history of the soul of man. The enlightenment which has made the discovery that the system is not historically true is not half enlightened enough. Indeed it takes little enlightenment to see that it is incompatible with the facts of science and history; it takes more enlightenment to grasp the moral facts of man's life from which it sprang, its ideal or true meaning, and its proper function in the world. It brings us face to face with the mystery and pathos of the life of man on earth. Far better than to point out the incompatibility of the scheme with the world as science and history disclose it, is to honor the unconscious piety that produced it, and to understand the deep religious needs it embodies and meets.

All this should warn us not to be too hasty in throwing

aside the stories of the virgin birth and physical resurrection, because they are not historical. One of the reasons why orthodox Christianity has been under the shadow within recent years and why liberal Christianity has flourished is the fact that the stories of the supernatural birth and miraculous resurrection have been discredited. They have been discovered to be legends or myths; and the effect of that discovery has been the reducing of Christianity from the religion of redemption to an ethical system. The doctrines of incarnation and atonement have been supposed to rest upon these stories, and when the foundation is taken away the building falls. But if Paul's doctrine of the fall still stands in spite of the triumph of the doctrine of evolution, his doctrine of redemption may also stand in spite of the fact that no educated person can any longer believe in the virgin birth and physical resurrection as historical facts. All the liberal critics are agreed that these two stories are not historical. If nothing can be vital in Christianity but what is left historical by the critics, then we are indeed in a parlous state, for it is very little they do leave us as historical. All that has made Christianity the religion of redemption they have surrendered. Is nothing real but what is historical? There is a type of mind that seems unable to understand that any story can be true, or of any value to the world, unless it be literally and historically true. But surely this is a shallow way of thinking which does not understand the working of the human mind, and does not look deeply into the nature of the myth which has enshrined some of the greatest truths of the world. The great master of myth was Plato, and when he wished to deal with the transcendent realities of life and religion—God, the soul, the good—transcendent because they cannot be realized adequately in experience, overleaping as they do, the limits of all possible experience—he used the myth, and not the language and method of

science. That is because these truths are ideals of the reason and not of the logical understanding (to use the language of Kant) and cannot find their satisfaction in the details of actual life, as the latter can, but which are really aspirations and efforts after the ultimate reality. Myth, therefore, is the only method in which religion can teach its great truths, for the reason that these truths can never find either scientific proof or full embodiment. Man must however live and act as though they had both, otherwise his life and action have no basis and no stimulus. In reality, the ideas of the reason,—the concept of the soul, of God, of a God who is wise and good, of a universe that is intelligible,—never can have any concrete embodiment; it is the function of the myth to represent them as having concrete form. These representations are not true in the sense that the light they give

"Never was on sea or land,"

yet they are

"The fountain light of all our day,
A master light of all our seeing."

They

"Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence."

They are

"truths that wake
To perish never. . . ."

Let me use the words of the accomplished author of *The Myths of Plato*, Prof. J. A. Stewart, to make my meaning clear: "When a man asks himself, as he must, for the reason of the hope in which he struggles on in the ways prescribed by his faculties, he is fain to answer, 'Because I am an immortal soul, created with these faculties by a wise and good God, under whose government I live in a universe

which is his finished work.' This answer, according to Plato, as I read him, is the natural and legitimate expression of the 'sweet hope which guides the wayward thought of mortal men,' and the expression reacts on—gives strength and steadiness to—that which it expresses. It is a 'true answer' in the sense that man's life would come to naught if he did not act and think as if it were true. But soul, cosmos as completed system of the good, and God are not particular objects presented, along with other particular objects, in sensible experience. This the scientific understanding fails to grasp. When it tries to deal with them,—and it is ready enough to make the venture—it must needs envisage them, *more suo*, as though they were particular objects which could be brought under its categories in sensible experience. Then the question arises, Where are they? And the answer comes sooner or later, They are nowhere to be found. Thus science 'chills the sweet hope in which man lives,' by bringing the natural expression into discredit" (*Myths of Plato*, pp. 49-50). Because the ideas of reason which are the presuppositions of religion are aims, aspirations, ideals, and never can be embodied adequately in historical experience, Professor Santayana is justified in thus expressing himself: "Religious doctrines would do well to withdraw their pretension to be dealing with matters of fact. That pretension is not only the source of the conflicts of religion with science and of the vain and bitter conflicts of sects; it is also the cause of the impurity and incoherence of religion in the soul, when it seeks its sanctions in the sphere of reality, and forgets that its proper function is to express the ideal. For the dignity of religion, like that of poetry and of every moral ideal, lies precisely in its ideal adequacy, in its fit rendering of the meanings and values of life, in its anticipation of perfection; so that the excellence of religion is due to an idealization of experience which, while making

religion noble if treated as poetry, makes it necessarily false if treated as science. Its function is rather to draw from reality materials for an image of that ideal to which reality ought to conform, and to make us citizens, by anticipation, in the world we crave." (*Poetry and Religion*, pp. 5-6.) What is vital in Christianity, just because it is the religion of redemption, is not found in any historical facts. It is transcendent, that is to say, it overleaps the limits of all possible experience, and can find adequate expression only by means of myth and legend such as the critics tell us the stories of the virgin birth and physical resurrection are. These myths or legends, however, are not the foundation of the doctrines of incarnation and atonement which constitute the essence of the faith; they are, on the contrary, their product, and they can and will live when these stories are everywhere admitted to be legends or myths. To cast them away as valueless because they are myths or legends is to empty the most precious parts of the New Testament into the sea.

We have seen that the story of the fall cannot be historical. It is the symbol of a timeless fact in the history of man, taking place in every soul of the race—all the more true because not historically true. Its meaning is cosmic rather than historic. The story is not the foundation of the truth; the truth is the foundation of the story. Many other stories in other religions symbolize the same truth, but the truth is independent of them all and would stand were they all proved legends or myths. The pre-supposition of the Pauline doctrine of redemption, therefore, is not set aside with the discovery that there never was a historic Adam. We cannot tell whether Paul attached strict historicity to the Genesis story, but one thing is clear, such historicity is not necessary to the interpretation he gave it. By "Adam" Paul meant the man of flesh as distinguished from the man of spirit whom he symbolized

by "Christ." The question of the historicity of either Adam or Christ is a comparatively unimportant one; what is important is that he regarded both as factors in a cosmic process of development. Paul's great interest, all admit, was not the historic Jesus, but the heavenly Christ. He regarded the career of the historic Jesus as a mere episode in a life that was cosmic or universal, lived on a plane above the historical. The "Jesus Christ" of Paul has little resemblance to the partly historicized figure of the synoptic Gospels. He is a mystic being who was revealed within the soul of the apostle and who dwelt there as an abiding presence. He was a being who could be formed within the soul of the members of the church or community. It is difficult to believe that the churches or communities to whom Paul preached his view of a spiritual Christ revealed to him by his own ecstatic experiences and visions were derived from the church of Jerusalem of which Peter and James and John were the founders, and which were organized around the story of an historic Jesus. Paul was at open variance with these apostles and spoke of them as "pillar apostles" not in a very complimentary way. In the letters of Paul we are introduced to communities or churches entirely different from those which took the synoptic Gospels as their inspiration and guides. Paul does not follow the synoptic tradition. He follows a Christ of his own and speaks of his own gospel. To Paul the views of the "pillar apostles" seemed materialistic.

It is difficult to believe that there were any such record of the life and teaching of Jesus in existence as the synoptic Gospels contain in the possession of the church at Jerusalem; for with an authority such a record would imply, how could Paul have had any chance of successfully withstanding the "pillar apostles," or of persuading the communities or churches formed by them to leave them and

follow him? Paul's Epistles bear witness to churches or communities which had been long in existence when he visited them. He has no affinity with churches or communities that were based upon the tradition of a historical Jesus such as we have in the synoptic Gospels; but he has a very close affinity with those other churches or communities which believed in a mystic Christ, and whose technical terms were all derived from the Gnosticism which recent research has shown to be pre-Christian. Paul was not converted to a belief in a historical Jesus; he was changed from being an official persecutor of the messianic sects to a preacher of a mystic Christ or spiritual messiahship, which he did not derive from man. The Christ he preached was born of his own immediate experience and revelations. He did not go through the cities of the Mediterranean, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse, and the province of Galatia, proclaiming that a great teacher had appeared in Palestine, and quoting from his teachings. His Epistles being witness, Paul lived in a different world from the Evangelists, and dealt with different subjects. The "Jesus Christ" with whom Paul deals in his Epistles is one who never did anything, never wrought a miracle, never performed a deed of mercy, and never uttered a word of teaching, but simply died and rose from the dead. That is to say, the Christ of the Pauline letters is not the Jesus of the Gospel story. The incidents of the Gospels are not the mental and spiritual background of his words and phrases, and give no clue to his meaning. What emerges clear as daylight from Paul's Epistles is that the churches or communities he established as well as those he found already established when going on his missionary journeys, were not communities organized around a historical Jesus; they were of a mystic nature resembling the Therapeutae of whom Philo speaks, or the Essenes, people devoted to the cultivation of the life of contemplation and of union with

God. It is not an unlikely assumption that it was with one of those communities that Paul spent his time after his conversion, and that it was the light and inspiration he received from that source which emboldened him to be the apostle he afterwards became. What we have in the synoptic Gospels is, in parts, teaching inferior, that is, lower in spiritual tone and insight than that current in the mystic sects to which Paul belonged and ministered. They believed in a Saviour who was a heavenly being; belief in the Logos was a fundamental part of their creed.

Paul's real background is the teachers of Greece and not the synoptic Gospels—the teachers of Greece as modified by the wisdom of Egypt. No one can read his Epistles with any degree of attention without seeing that Paul was a Jew who was greatly influenced by the mystical sects that had come in like a flood from the east and spread all over the Greco-Roman world in the first century of our era and before, and had profoundly modified the philosophy that had come from Greece. This amalgam, made up of Hellenism, Judaism, and Oriental mysticism, has received the name of Gnosticism. It was a very wide-spread tendency in the centuries preceding the beginning of our era, and assumed many different forms, so much so that it is difficult sometimes to see the common resemblance. Paul's language which was not derived from the synoptic tradition bears a close resemblance to the terms used in these various Gnostic sects scattered all over the East. Their teachings were termed "mysteries," and Paul speaks of "the mystery which was hid from ages and generations being now made manifest to the saints," of "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden mystery which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Instead of the letters of Paul being moulded upon the Gospel story, containing quotation and reference to miracle and parable and precept, they are saturated with the language of Gnos-

ticism, and repeat on almost every page the terms in common use in the mystery sects of his time. Especially is there a close resemblance between Paul's language and that of the literature of Hermes the Thrice Greatest, which is the key to the wisdom of Egypt, and which takes us back to the best in the mystery traditions of antiquity. The theme of all the treatises of that body of literature is the man-doctrine, the man-mystery, or man-myth. Briefly put it is the story of the descent of man from his heavenly home, and then his return to that state of glory after having mastered the powers of evil. There is nothing so ancient as this man-doctrine; it is lost in the mists of antiquity, and in the centuries immediately preceding our era it was a well developed doctrine in the whole Greco-Roman world. It was the jealously guarded secret of every mystery institution of the ancient world. It is a great hindrance to the understanding of the New Testament, especially the Epistles of Paul, that this man-doctrine of the ancient mystery institutions of antiquity as it is taught in the Sermons of the Thrice Greatest Hermes, is so little known. Perhaps this is not to be wondered at when we remember how recent is the discovery of the writings, and what a prejudice has been raised against them on account of their resemblance to the New Testament, as though they were worthless imitations of it. Professor Flinders Petrie in his *Personal Religion in Egypt Before Christianity* rightly says that as the treatises of Thrice Greatest Hermes are clearly earlier than the apostolic age, they are among the most needful for the understanding of the modes of thought of that time. The apostle Paul cannot be understood without an acquaintance with the sermons of Thrice Greatest Hermes. Here are found the terms which the apostle is constantly using. Paul has been a writer difficult to understand because he does not define his terms. But why should he define them when

he was using the terms of his predecessors and contemporaries well known to those to whom he wrote? In his Epistles we have echoes of what was taught in Egypt and Greece two or three hundred years before, which has come down to us in this body of literature. The apostle and the author of these treatises, are evidently, as Charlotte E. Woods rightly says in *The Gospel of Righteousness*, treating of the same deep mysteries and are anxious to make known the same spiritual truths.

When two writers use the same terms it is evident that they are dealing with the same theme. And the theme of both is the spiritual story of man—the eternal process or progress of man toward divinity. This is redemption; and redemption, no one needs to be told, is the theme of Paul. The goal of this process or progress is Christhood. In the literature of Hermes is set forth with Oriental imagery and symbol which often obscure by their abundance and splendor, the story of man which in the New Testament is the story of the Christ. It was the claim of the second century Gnostics that Christianity was none other than the consummation of the inner doctrine of the mystery institutions of all the nations. The end of them all was the revelation of the mystery of man which was hid, as Paul says, from ages and generations. And it is the same story that is taught in the Gospel records by means of a symbolic life. In the history and person of Christ we are to see a living prophetic picture of the final development of man. In Christ every man, therefore, possesses both the guarantee and the representation of his own destined perfection. In the Gospel story we are to see the birth of this inner man or Christ, his growth, his conflict with the lower nature, his gradual mastery of all lower forces, and his final triumph and glorification.

There was not, therefore, such a sudden break as has been supposed between paganism and Christianity; the lat-

ter did not come upon the world suddenly and miraculously like the rise of the sun at midnight; the two blended into each other with almost insensible gradations. There was, in this sense, a Christianity before Jesus, and all the characteristic ideas and terms such as we find in the pages of Paul and John,—Logos, Saviour, only-begotten, second birth, resurrection, mystery, etc., were in use in the pre-Christian Hermetic literature of Egypt. Plato taught that there were original patterns or models of all natural objects, existing in the divine mind prior to their creation. Especially was there an archetypal man. In one of the Hermetic books we have this text: "All-Father Mind, being life and light, did bring forth man co-equal to himself" (*Corpus Hermeticum*, I, li). This is essentially Platonic, for this "man" is not any actual man, but the archetypal or prototypal man, "the spiritual prototype of humanity and of every individual man." This archetypal man is very real though unhistorical. The idea or plan or model of an organ, a house, a steam-engine, is prior to its existence as a material fact, and is the real cause of its existence as a material fact. As there is an ideal leaf according to which the actual leaf is formed, so there is an ideal or archetypal man according to which every man is formed. Physical science emphasizes this fact in its doctrine of conformity to type. It is the ideal of the animal or plant that determines the direction of the particles that make and build up the animal or plant. The potential or archetypal oak within the acorn causes the entire growth of the tree. This enables us to understand the immanence of Christ as Paul conceived of it. Philo wrote with no knowledge of Christianity, "The first Son of God is the divine image or model of all else, the original species, the archetypal idea, the first measure of the universe, the heavenly man." The Kabbala teaches that the first account of the creation in Genesis refers, not to the creation of the actual world, but

to the perfect ideal world and to the ideal man. It was in the atmosphere of this ancient teaching that Paul lived. This is the key to his Christology. It is the missing link between him and his spiritual progenitors. Christ is the image and likeness of God, the divine pattern or archetype after which man's nature was fashioned. It is God's life in man, so that God not only dwells in man, but is the very basis and ideal of his being. When Paul said, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ," he was not pointing to a historical Jesus, but to Christ, the archetypal man, who evolves within man.

The first great process in the manifestation of the divine life is that of involution. Spirit, the active principle, descends into matter, the receptive principle, and endows it with the qualities which we observe it is now possessed of. This endowment or descent is symbolized in the New Testament by the death of Christ. After his death his body according to the ancient symbolism is dismembered or scattered. "Now," says Paul, "ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," which means that Christ dies and comes to life again in the souls of men. The fullest truth about human life is that it is the evolution of the archetypal man. The deepest mystery of creation is that it is the sacrifice of God himself, the Calvary of Deity. The cross did not mean to Paul merely or solely the death by crucifixion of the man Jesus. In the ancient world there was no symbol so wide spread as the symbol of the cross. It is obvious that it could not mean the death of Jesus which was a local happening; it meant the sacrifice of God in creation, the world-passion, Deity laying down his life in the universe of matter and form. And to Paul the cross was the symbol of this heart-moving conception. It was the power of God and the wisdom of God. The interpretation of Paul's determination not to know anything among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified

which makes him mean only that he would know nothing but the historical fact of the death of Jesus upon the cross of Golgotha eviscerates his message of all real content. The cross is the ground plan of the universe. To know the cross from this higher standpoint is to know all there is to know; there is nothing beyond it. This was the mystery hid from ages and generations but now made manifest. The divine sufferer was not a Jewish teacher merely, who by his revolutionary opinions proclaimed in the teeth of the authorities of his country and time had brought upon himself the death penalty. All this was but the symbol of a profound mystery which opened up the heart of Deity himself to the gaze of the world. The divine sufferer was God himself who in creating the universe sacrificed himself for it. The cross, therefore, represents the greatest of all sacrifices, not something that happened once, and once for all, but something that is eternal and timeless, the sacrifice of God in his own creation that could not be unless he poured his own life into it, and restricted himself within its forms and substance. Great is the mystery of the cross, unthinkable in its magnitude is this sacrifice, for it means nothing less than the identification of the infinite with the finite in its lowest forms. Here is the profoundest mystery open to human contemplation, to speak or think of which is possible only in forms of symbol and parable. The literal truth is too vast, too mysterious, too sublime to be made known to human comprehension. It is the mystery before which we are told the angels veil their faces; and to gain a single glimpse into it one may well surrender all other knowledge and determine, as Paul did, to know nothing else. Creation is nothing other than God's primal and continual self-revelation; it is the great Father coming down and voluntarily incarnating himself for us and for our salvation. The cross of Jesus is the parable of this infinitely larger truth. It testifies to the perpetual sacrifice

of Deity himself within his own universe. It is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, that is to say, prior to human history, the emblem of divine body and blood voluntarily sacrificed in outward physical nature and entombed deep in the lower consciousness of man destined one day to rise from the dead in power and great glory.

K. C. ANDERSON.

DUNDEE, SCOTLAND.