

and easy to believe, or to take a "greatest common measure" of the working faiths of existing Churches and men as representing essential Christianity. That would be almost as fatal as to lower the standard of Christian conduct in order to make it easier for men to practise. It would be the same kind of apostasy and have the same ruinous consequences. But the great Christian verities are so great that they have many aspects. Every one of them was revealed at the first in order to meet certain practical necessities. To-day every one of them is capable of being brought home to the mind of the simplest, if we can find the true points of contact with him.'

And then come these incisive words—for God's sake let us lay them to heart: 'The hardest and deepest thinking that the Churches can put into this matter is essential. The best men will not be put off with any superficial and *ad captandum* treatment. The sooner we realize that the men want thoroughness, reality, and candour, the better will it be for all. Perfunctory teaching by men

who have never felt the cutting edge of the problem will be of no avail with the men who will really be the leaders of the generation after the war. Men who have seen their comrades dissolved by high explosives will want to know what are the reasons for believing in immortality, and what is their present state. Men who have lived in the shambles and putrefaction of the Salient and the trenches at Souchez will want to know how they can remember these things and believe in Almighty Love. They will want to know why prayer in danger gave them such intense relief, and why it seemed so often to be unanswered. They will probably give the Churches a chance again in order to see if they have anything vital and comprehensible to say. If they do not get it from professional teachers of religion, they will take their own road once more. We may be quite sure that most of them will not take their faith on mere authority, or be content with superficialities uttered by men who have never either in body or soul suffered along with them, or with them battled for faith in the wild revel of Sin and Death of these awful years.'

## The Church's Message for To-day.

BY THE REVEREND ARCHIBALD HENDERSON, D.D., PRINCIPAL OF THE UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

THE question is being often asked, 'Have the divided branches of the Church of Christ no message which they can unite in delivering to this war-torn world?' Though they cannot agree as to the terms in which to express their Faith in Jesus Christ, and however differently they interpret their duty to Him, however imperfectly they fulfil it, they are at one in acknowledging Him as the risen and glorified Saviour, the Lord and Judge of all men. It is impossible for any who accept the authority of the New Testament to differ as to this. Some more constantly regard Him as the Prophet, others as the Great High Priest of His people; may not all at such a time as this unite to proclaim Him and to persuade the world to own Him as the King and Lord of all? It was revealed

to the Seer of Patmos that it is the divine purpose which controls and triumphs through the wars and trials of this present world that there shall be established in it 'the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ.' This may seem a pithless commonplace not worth stating because every Christian allows it. But to allow it as a fact is not to accept it as the rule of life. It is well to remind ourselves at such a time of how it is the keynote of our Lord's last command to His Church: 'All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I

have commanded you : and lo, I am with you always, even to the consummation of the age.' His possession of an authority, from which nothing in heaven or on earth is exempted, is not only the ground on which our Lord commands His Church, but on which He requires that all nations of the earth shall be taught obedience to Him. And His presence every day with His disciples is not only for their guidance and support, but that they may call on all nations to acknowledge and serve Him as a present Saviour and Lord. That inevitably raises the question: Who is this who demands that all heaven and earth shall obey Him, ' whatsoever He commands'? The control of winds and sea is as nothing compared with such lordship, for it is 'far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come' (Eph 1<sup>21</sup>).

But our Lord puts recognition of Him, as invested with that authority in heaven and on earth, as the constant duty not only of His Church but of the whole world. Every creature is to learn who He is, and to be taught to keep all His commandments.

The value of His continual presence, even the possibility of it, depends on who He is; and to realize that we must have regard to His life in its eternal oneness. So He taught His disciples when He said, 'I came out from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world and go unto the Father,' and when in prayer to the Father he said, 'I have glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' His life must be thus regarded in its completeness if we are to know Him, and to accept His universal authority. If we consider His life lived on the earth as all His history, it becomes for us a thing of the past; the wonder of His love vanishes if He did not become man and give His life out of love to save sinful and rebellious men; and the power of His Gospel would cease did He not live with authority over all flesh to forgive sin and to give eternal life. His life on earth was, He said, that His disciples should know Him, and in Him should see the Father; but what would that have profited for after generations if they could not as truly know Him for themselves? Is it conceivable that one

without all authority in heaven and on earth could be the manifestation of God to men, or the fulfiller of His loving will to them? As Dorner expresses it, 'Christ Himself applies the fruit of His work to successive races of men and the individuals composing them. He is not shut off from this world of ours, remaining at a distance, but continues without intermission in an active relation to His Church during its temporal life, intervening in every moment of time. His love and His action renew their youth in time for every individual, for we who need reconciliation have our life in time. . . . His earthly sacrifice took place indeed but once, but once for all; for issuing from His eternal spirit it is the revelation of an undying love which proves its vitality by perpetually applying its earthly work. Thus He works out of His eternity, while living historically with His Church upon earth.'<sup>1</sup>

It may seem superfluous to emphasize such elementary truths, but no one acquainted with the literature of our time will question the need of their re-affirmation. Apart from hostile literature there is much that is, I believe, meant to be friendly and helpful that is not so, because it ignores the life of the Son of God that was before His self-manifestation on earth, and the divine glory of His present life at the right hand of the 'Father, the Lord of heaven and earth.' We are grateful to every one who enables us more worthily to realize Christ's life on earth; but we cannot regard Jesus Christ as but one of earth's great ones who by their deeds or teachings exercise a posthumous influence, but have no ever-present personal power or authority over their fellow-men. As Dr. Denney says in his last book, 'There is certainly no reconciliation but through the historical Christ; there is no other Christ of whom we know anything whatever. But the historical Christ does not belong to the past. The living Spirit of God makes Him present and eternal; and it is not from Palestine, or from the first century of the Christian era, but here and now, that His reconciling power is felt.'

In the apostolic history and epistles all authority and dominion and power are ascribed to Him—'He is Lord of all.' That is the vitalizing and sustaining truth which our Lord in His parting commission charged His Church to remember, but which, as history shows, it has been most ready to forget. Not in the first generations, to whom His

<sup>1</sup> *System of Christian Doctrine.*

promised presence was a living reality. He was king of their lives, with them all their days. Delitzsch notes that the 2nd Psalm is more frequently quoted in the New Testament than any other. In the early half of the second century, Aristides in his 'Apology' told the Roman Emperor that after Christ's ascension His apostles went unto all the provinces of the inhabited earth and taught His divine majesty (*μεγαλωσύνη*, cp. He 1<sup>4</sup> and 8<sup>1</sup>).<sup>1</sup> But as time passed and Christ did not return, the power of the unseen lost hold of men ; and, confronted with trials from without and strife with heresies within, the Church lost its realization of His promised presence. This is very strikingly manifest in the three great creeds, which, in practically identical terms, baldly state that the Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, 'ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, and from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.' No doubt the living and glorified Christ was the object of the Church's worship ; it sang of Him as 'reigning from the Tree.' Its *Acta Martyrum* in recording their devotion to Christ in life and their fellowship in His death added to the imperial date of their martyrdom the triumphant words *regnante Jesu Christo*. But the silence of the creeds which left an unfilled period between the Ascension and His 'Parousia'—as if He were not with His people all these days—showed the loss of the Church's earlier realization of His presence. If the explanation is offered that the Church framed her earliest creed as her witness to historic fact against Docetism, and her later creeds against the metaphysical subtleties of unbelief, that but emphasizes the evidence that for the Church Christ's presence with her in power had ceased to be the fact on which her very life depended. And the after history shows the inevitable effects of this silence. Some went back to Christ's earthly life when He was visibly present, and built for themselves a faith on His teaching and His work on earth—a faith of the intellect rather than of the heart, dependent not on what Christ wrought in them, but what they did of themselves as His followers—a faith which gradually assumed to itself authority to dictate the only form of a saving belief. Others, regarding the coming of Christ's kingdom as impossible until He visibly returned in glory, discharged themselves from the obligation to obey His command to

evangelize the world. To souls thus craving for a sensibly present and authoritative manifestation from heaven the Church offered itself, and was accepted to fill the place of the Unseen Lord in heaven.

To minister to the same desire the help of the artist was in the Middle Ages called in to picture Christ as He was imagined to have been seen in the days when He dwelt among men, from His birth to His Cross, and even in the bonds of death, thus to stimulate love and devotion to Him. But, as Westcott says, 'The Cross is the symbol not only of death but of triumph also. It has been indeed most disastrous for our whole view of the Gospel that a late age placed upon the Cross the Figure of the dead Christ and that we should have retained it there.' It is significant that a revolt against thus representing the Lord in weakness led to His being pictured as coming for Judgment, and peoples as fleeing before Him, and that representation again being met by representations in speech and art of His mother as intervening to avert His wrath. Faith in a Christ that died is not faith in a dead Christ ; and faith in a coming Judge is not faith in any other than Him who died and lives to save, Him who is with us all the days, 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' Yet through all the past of this Christian era there have been in every generation devout spirit-taught souls living in intimate fellowship with their unseen but not unknown Lord, themselves living witnesses to those around them to a living Christ.

The essential fact of the Reformation was that it brought Christ again before the view of the peoples of Europe. In our own as in other lands, men awoke, seeking to recover touch with some reality in religion. They knew they had lost God ; they said that the Church had lost Him also ; and while that great spiritual recovery was marred by human faults, and, because of these, suffered from divisions and decay, it retained the assurance of the supreme authority of Christ speaking to men in His word, and, by bringing men face to face with Christ as king, created in heart and conscience a very real sense of His immediate and absolute authority. The divine sovereignty of Jesus Christ was for them a reality. And with what soul-subduing reverence it filled them, what dauntless courage, what seriousness of purpose, what unconquerable freedom of conscience, what stoutness of

<sup>1</sup> 'Cambridge Text Studies,' vol. i. No. 1, p. 110.

heart against the world's temptations, what scorn of its lies and deceits, what triumphant superiority to the terrors of death—with what imperturbable calm it clothed them! All that you read of in ordinary histories; but the secret of it was that they were men whose eyes did see the King, the Lord of Hosts, and that by and for Him they lived.

And so the life that comes from the living Christ Himself, and from no other, is the demonstration to every age and to all nations of His supreme authority in heaven and on earth, even as He foretold when He commanded His disciples to teach all nations to keep all the things which He had commanded them; and had before promised: 'I will not leave you orphans: I am coming to you (every day). Yet a short time and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me, because I am living, and ye shall be living. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.'

Thus is He to be taught to all nations as the living and loving Lord to be loved and obeyed—not, however, as in these days one reads and hears, as one set in contrast with an Almighty God for whom men have no desire or need.

There cannot be two supreme authorities in heaven and on earth. The kingdom of heaven is not divided against itself. All authority has been given to the exalted Christ that all should be brought into subjection under Him to the glory of God the Father. In Him men find a 'leader and commander' of whose authority there can be no question, and in whose loving friendship there is surest confidence—One whose word is with power to enable them to render the obedience it commands. Let none, therefore, be too greatly concerned because many seeking a Captain of Salvation turn from the churches. The purest church cannot be to them the Christ they seek; if they surrender their hearts to Him to keep whatsoever He commands, they will not be long in joining the ranks of those who love and serve Him also. Let the churches cast away every enfeebling fear and restraining form, and proclaim joyously a triumphant and all-conquering Christ as Lord of all, and willing peoples shall gather to His power. Above all other means let them, by all their members, exhibit the saving and renewing power of Christ's

service in their lives and they will recruit their tens of thousands.

Professor Case of Chicago closes his recent informing book on *The Evolution of Christianity* with these words: 'In the last analysis Christianity owed its triumphs to the activity of loyal individuals who not only answered the call of God as they heard it in their own lives, or discerned it in the pages of history, but who learned, consciously or unconsciously, to read the divine will in the signs of the times. They were sensitive to the religious forces within their environment, and so drew inspiration from its life and responded to its needs by conserving, heightening, and supplementing current religious values. Under the guidance of these individuals the genius of the new religion is disclosed in their expanding life. If Christians to-day would be true successors of those ancient worthies, they, too, must make religion an affair of life and growth commensurate with the needs of the present generation.'

'Signs of the times' are not wanting surely in the dissatisfaction and unrest of a world conscious of its emptiness and crying for reality in religion, in the gathering of nations from all ends of the earth in recognition of the brotherhood of peoples great and small, in defence of truth and right, of humanity and freedom. It is true these include nations which do not acknowledge Christ as King; but they have acknowledged that law which He has written on their hearts, and to which He appealed.

This is not only a sign of readiness in obedience to divine ideals and a promise of better things for some league of nations—which if it is to have any real and increasing power must be based on moral authority—it is a summons to the Church to arise and go forth to all nations with the Gospel of Christ's kingly authority in heaven and on earth to teach them to keep whatsoever He has commanded, assuredly seeing that He is Himself working by His spirit within them and is drawing them to Himself.

There are signs of the times demanding of the divided churches consideration of their relation to one another as that affects their relation to the world. 'The sole Kingship of Christ,' Dorner wrote fifty years ago, 'is, first of all, the true foundation of the unity of the Church; for that unity sufficiently exists where, and so far as, all submit themselves to His leading, His will as expressed in

word and sacrament. No less is it the true foundation of the freedom of the Church, for example, in relation to the State, which has no authority over its principle.' It is impossible for the divided branches of the Church to ignore and disobey the call for unity. And as it is their duty to learn from all that goes on before their eyes under Christ's government in the world, they may surely in these days take a lesson as to the value in

spiritual as in earthly warfare of 'Unity of Command.' And herein they have the peculiar advantage that there can be no other King but Him unto whom, for His Church's sake, has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. The Church must recover the loyal reverence of her first days for the supreme authority of the ever-present Lord if she is to teach the nations to observe all that He has commanded.

## Literature.

### JAMES HOPE MOULTON.

*JAMES HOPE MOULTON*, by his Brother (Sharp; 5s. net). It is not a long biography, but it is enough. Every word is well chosen. A truly great man is made known to the world—a scholar, a gentleman, a saint.

Three personal characteristics are singled out—his humility, his moral passion, and his ministry of reconciliation. His ministry of reconciliation was exercised (1) between Scholarship and Evangelism; (2) between Churches; (3) between Religions; and (4) between Men of all Types. Then this is quoted from Professor Peake's appreciation in the *Classical Review*: 'Straight, clean, magnanimous, generous, unselfish, and free from littleness and jealousy, he was a friend and colleague in whom one could wholly trust; virile in character and of irreproachable integrity, he was womanly in his tenderness, full of sympathy for the suffering and gentleness to the weak. His ample and varied learning raised no barrier between him and the illiterate, and the ministry he delighted to render them was neither spoiled by condescension nor chilled by aloofness. He could, and sometimes did, hit hard in controversy, but never below the belt. He had, like the rest of us, his intellectual limitations. In his case it was especially his unsympathetic attitude towards philosophy, and perhaps one might add an occasional tendency to fancifulness in his treatment of history. But his range was wide, and on his own ground he was a great master.'

Most men are content to overtake one department of knowledge. Two studies supremely attracted Moulton—the Grammar of New Testa-

ment Greek and the Religion of Zoroaster. And he mastered both. For 'thoroughly' was his motto from his schooldays till his death.

We congratulate the biographer on a most readable biography. There is much about Deissmann in it, which shall be passed over. But this of Deissmann's about the first volume of the *New Testament Grammar* may be quoted: 'The notion that a grammar can only be solid if it is tedious, is altogether destroyed by these Prolegomena. One can really *read* Moulton; we are not stifled in the dense atmosphere of exegetical wranglings, nor drowned in a flood of quotations. Everywhere the main facts and the main problems are keenly perceived and clearly formulated.' Elsewhere the editor himself says: 'Perhaps there was nothing which astonished the outsider more than the fact that J. H. Moulton's work was always interesting and usually piquant. To adapt the famous phrase of Junius, learning and dullness have so often and so long been received for synonymous terms that the reverse of the proposition has grown into credit, and every man who makes himself interesting to the crowd is taken to be one of little learning. It was no small achievement of my brother's that he made it clear that the profoundest scholarship could be expressed in a form which was interesting and arresting.'

This was one of the services which James Hope Moulton rendered to his day and generation.

### LATIN CHRISTIANITY.

It is a terrible commentary on the sectarianism of the Church that a history of *The Evolution of Latin Christianity* can be written by so able and