INTELLECTUALISM AND FAITH

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INTELLECTUALISM AND FAITH.

Principal P. T. FORSYTH, M.A., D.D.

I.

One of our Premiers once said that the sterling British mind neither liked nor understood cleverness. How true it is! How fortunate that it is true! We do take to Samuel Johnson; we do not take to Mr George Bernard Shaw. The saying indicates a real source of our peculiar place and power in the world. We have a healthy dread of Intellectualism. We have, of course, the defects of that quality, which are revealed in time of war, whether on the veldt or in the soul. We have a fatal fear of knowledge and of education. We are bewildered as problems grow subtle, and our stupidity turns silliness. But suspicion of the clever is a great quality, rightly taken. Judgment is a greater gift than ability. The world is neither to be understood nor managed by sheer talent, logic, or knowledge. The greatest movements in the world have been irrational, or at least non-logical. And the irrationality of the world, the faith of a principle which flows underneath reason on the one hand, and of a power which rises beyond it on the other, and even seems to reverse it, has done more to keep religion quick and deep than any sense of the world's intelligent nature or consistent course. Faith, which is the greatest power of history, flourishes, and even exults. On the offence of the cross, and the paradox of the spirit.

Is there, then, for Briton or for Christian, a premium on stupidity? Must piety be humdrum? What concord has

faith with dullness? or what fellowship has Christ with the dunces? What enmity has Christ with mind? In what sense must we become fools for Christ's sake?

In the first place, it may be said, no mere fool can see how foolish the world's wisdom is with God. Of course, any fool can gird at a scholar, but it needs an able man to realise the insignificance of mere ability; while the worship of prompt intellect is a sign of intellectual poverty. The pestilent wit is the man who spends himself on wit. The merely clever man has no idea how little cleverness goes for in affairs, how different it is from a powerful sagacity. Cleverness seldom goes with greatness; it is not dramatic enough, for all its love of effect. The course of the world mocks the mere acuteness of man. And, says Pascal, the man who lives for *bons viots* has a bad heart. He meant Gallic wit, and living for salons. For *bons mots*, in the sense of the just, pointed, *frappant* phrase, abound even in the New Testament, and especially in the Gospels.

One thinks in this connection of Christ's dialectic, so easy and so effectual, in His controversies with the religious dunces and quacks of His day, the readiness of His wit, the happy skill of His fence, the deadly stroke, and the ironic parry. One recalls His deft handling of every situation, the aptness of His phrase, and the incisiveness of His epithets. "You solemn mummers!" "You quacks!" "You brood of snakes!" "Tell that fox." We note His paradoxes. His epigrams, His "lose your life to save it," His "serve to rule," His "give to gain." We mark the congenial way in which a witty faith appealed to Him, and fairly mastered Him, in the reply of the Syrophcenician.

His wit is well recognised—His gracious wit and His wounding wit; but He is charged with the lack of humour, of an element so great, if not essential, in humanity as humour. And some of His servants who possessed the gift have thought it stood in their way for His work. But it is not that Jesus had none, but that he had not the Western,

Shakesperean, modern type. He had the type that goes with the prophet's genius, with the genius of Israel, the genius of ethical insight and exaltation, the genius of Isaiah, of Socrates, of Paul, of Pascal He had irony, as all these had. He not only saw the irony of the world, but He exercised upon His foes the lofty irony of God. What was His silence before Pilate? Or "those ninety and nine just persons *that need no repentance*"? It betokens the deepest foundation, and the repose of unearthly power, to be able amid crises to play so freely about life as His insight and irony did. The odd thing is that, while the sunny Shakesperean humour, or the genial humour of daily life, is not felt by most Christian people to be foreign to Christ, or at least to Christian faith, the ironic humour, tending to the bitter, is so felt. As if Jesus was never bitter and sarcastic! How bitter was that, "It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem"! The Bible has much more room for the humour of Carlyle than for that of Scott, for the grim than for the sunny. Nothing could show more clearly than this soft horror of irony and of scorn for the quack, how far the popular Christian mind has gone from the Christ of the Gospels, how the conception of the loving Jesus, being overdriven, has demoralised the Christian public, how false is the mere genial Jesus, or the merely domestic Jesus of fireside faith, how greatly we need to be forced back on the virility, what I might call the firstrate-mindedness, of this passionate Man, on His moral realism, on His sense of law, and holiness, and wrath, and of the bitter shams and incongruities of life—and of the religious life not least. It is not quite wonderful that men like Carlyle and Meredith should have been consumed with contempt for the "parson-opium" of the Victorian Age. We need to be urgently reminded of that in Him which so grasped the eternal verities that He could apply them to each juncture with an incision that made even His own afraid to ask Him any questions.

We note, further, in the Epistles the extraordinary felicity, pungency, and pregnancy of expression, as well as the acumen

of the dialectic, to say nothing of the sacred pun. We recall Paul's exultation in the irony of the Cross in 1 Cor. i.—the foolishness of God is wiser than men. In many respects the Bible is the wittiest book in the world; it is certainly not the most lucid, matter-of-fact, or simple of feeling. Jesus was not a plain man. We follow up with the brilliant style of many of the Fathers, and no few of the Reformers—to name but Tertullian, Augustine, Zwingli, and Erasmus. And it becomes harder than ever to explain the popular idea that Christian goodness should be monopolised by the dense and the slow of heart, or that the trusty must be the dull. We do not forget, of course, the patience of Christianity with the weak and slow, and its destination for mankind, and not for a cultivated *élite*. These features of it help to explain the association that has grown up. Something is also due to the recent substitution of mere piety for faith, and to the common use of religion as a refuge when we have so spent ourselves on the world as to be fit for nothing else but a rest-cure as we turn to God. No doubt other factors of the situation would emerge if we gave ourselves to its analysis. But that would perhaps be more interesting than useful.

The dunce, of course, will always see in the witty only the acrobatic or the smart. But is there not all the difference in the world between the mind-play of the moral master and that of the mental elf, between swift lambency and nimble coruscation, between the beam of the burning sun and the flash of the manufactured spark, between the lucid and the fulgid, between the lustre of paradoxical truth and the phosphorescence of freakish wit? Do we not all part the man who sparkles like a rich diamond at a chance angle from the other man who crackles like a made-up firework? There is the man whose good points drop from him accidentally while he addresses himself *ad rem* rather than *ad populum*; and there is the man who speaks on commission, and evidently in order to make a setting for the phrases he concocted to fetch the surprise. Is it not one thing to hunt for epigrams and antitheses, and

another to see all things set one against another, and so deeply to read the paradox of existence as to be able to be briefly just to it only by phrases that compass two worlds? Is it not one thing to play the fool, and another to recognise our human need of nonsense—as Hazlitt was the first to note that Shakespeare did? Is it superfluous to point out that intellectual agility is one thing and moral acumen quite another, that mental vivacity is not effective grasp, that the keenest sight will not do the work of insight, and that we live by insight and not by sight? Carlyle speaks of Mrs Mill as possessing a great deal of unwise intellect. It is not a rare possession; and it may be the cause of more failure in life than stupidity. What life has chiefly to do with is not a world of truth sharply presented to us, but a world of reality deeply working on us, and intimately experienced in us. And in religion above all things it is with reality we have to do more than with truth. Faith lies far nearer the dramatic sense than the intellectual. It is an act of ours answering a creative action in God—but a pointed issue, a crisis, an epigram of action. Truth may be a matter of vivid perception, but reality is a matter of intimate practical penetration. The God who is denied as an intellectual truth may be worshipped as a moral reality, as every Kantian knows. And faith lives in a vast antinomy.

II.

Such observations open up for us the whole question of the place of mind in faith—either as the play of mind upon an occasion, or the grasp of mind upon reality.

It is frequent to-day to hear a protest against theology, on the ground that it is an intellectualising of what is really a religion of the heart and conscience, that it is the capture of Christianity by an aristocracy of subtle or ingenious intellect. But it might arrest some of this mindlessness if time were taken to ask what theology means in each case. We should then note that there is theology and theology. There is what

may be called a primary theology and a secondary. And they are thus distinct. The one is the statement of faith, the other its exposition. The former belongs to the very nature and conveyance of Christian faith, the other belongs rather to its scientific treatment. The one is verified by experience, the other by thought.

Our first task in life is not to see a clear truth but to grasp an actual situation. We have not to perceive so much as to realise. We have not to watch the procession but to march in it. Religion especially has to do only in a secondary way with truths, statements, aspects, and co-ordinations, however clear or however pointed. With all the scientific side of things, with the way things lie, its concern is secondary. But it has in the first degree to grasp and deal with the way things work, with a practical situation, with the reality involved in our personal situation, historic and bequeathed, or experienced and intimate. And as that is a moral and actual situation of life, and not a scientific construction of truth, the intelligence required for life, and for the faith which rules life, is not intellectual, and not academic, but it is active and sagacious. The great matter is not the intellect but the understanding. Who speaks of Scott's or Shakespeare's intellect? It is their understanding, their grasp of life, that tells. Many a man who is slow in his wits has a wonderful power of gauging an actual situation. Many a man devoid either of science, taste, or the faculty of expression yet has the understanding that bottoms affairs, masters life, and commands his fellows. He is of the quiet, awkward men who do things. He has the instinct for what matters and the capacity for what rules. If he have not pathetic humour, or Gallic wit, he may have ethical humour, dry humour, or even the irony of the prophet. With such minds the chief use of the intelligence as the servant of personality is not in adjusting facts but in weighing them. We use our mind better in asking sin's weight than its origin. Our mind is there not to give us a centre but to lead us to a spring. It does not give us our

bearings so much as couple us up with our source of power. The intellect is, for the purposes of life, an organ of estimate, far more than of mere cognisance. It makes value judgments (as the phrase goes). It assesses things rather than places them. And it sees in them a value which may be in ironical contrast with their actual place. That is its great function for *life*—appraisement, and not orientation. And the order of mind that runs to that use of the intelligence is the order that effects most, whether in history or in faith. But intellectualism on the other hand is intellect detached, acting outside life without being morally involved or committed, without practical judgment or grasp of complete situations. It is intellect either at play, or at mere exercise, or on parade. It is at sport, gymnastics, or pose, rather than at actual work among things. It is the literary rather than the parliamentary intellect. It loves to criticise from platforms but not to act on committees. And that is the cleverness, superior and doctrinaire, or elfish and irresponsible, which is so alien both to our national and Christian temper. Would, indeed, that our intelligence had more alert play and abandon about it! Would we were less dense, dour, or grim I Would we could laugh at our enthusiasms a little without losing them, and be intensely in earnest without taking ourselves so very seriously! Would that we were less the victims of the merely serious, and more of the truly sagacious! But only so long as that improvement is not secured at the cost of moral judgment, practical insight, and command of affairs.

It is not with truth that our intellect has chiefly to do, I repeat, but with reality. And reality is in the nature of action. It has to do with experience more than thought. We study, not in order to become pedants, but to go into action properly equipped. To cope with final reality and be adequate to it, our intelligence must be capable father than clever, ethical in its nature rather than rational, experienced more than able, theological and not theosophic. The question we have first to meet is one which so many people will do

anything rather than face. It is, "Where are we?" As business people we take stock and balance books periodically; as religious people there is nothing we shirk more. And that question does not mean, "What is man's place in the cosmos?" (which, as it keeps us from self-examination, is a very marketable line of inquiry), but, "What is our actual moral condition with reality? How is it with our soul?" (an inquisition which, as it makes us take ourselves in hand, has not ready sale). The question is, What is our actual, habitual, personal relation to the last reality? How do we grasp that with which, as living souls, we have chiefly, radically, and eternally to do? It is dreadful how little fear we feel before that to-day. If there is anything more formidable it is the way some pietisms can fondle it. But no nimbleness of apprehension can seize it, no alert ability can handle it, nor indeed welcome it. And accordingly some desperately or idly think that what cleverness cannot do here must be done by ignorance, that the good man need know little, that he may bungle the utterance of what he knows, and that the true illuminate must be illiterate. This is a delusion so current in religion because religion has to do with the greatest of actual situations and realities for all men, therefore with a region where the race is not to the swift, and mere mind is absurdly at fault. But for all that there was never a great thing done yet by a stupid or ignorant man. If the great thing was done it was done by one who had enough intelligence to grasp the situation, who had the practical wit to grasp with two hands its opposing sides, and who had enough practical knowledge to cope with it. Many great things have been done by illiterates, but none by fools. There is no beatitude for the dunce.

Every ray of intellectual light we have is to force, and enable us the better to put, the question, "Where am I?" "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It is not a question, "What do I hold?" but, "How do I behave to what holds me?" It is not, "What can I make of the world?" but,

"How do I stand to what is given me in a world?" It is not, "What do I know?" but, "How far do I realise that I am known?" It is not, "How do I conceive the divine truth of the world?" but, "How do I meet the divine action in the world?" Not, "Do I see the cohesion of God's great truth?" but, "Do I gauge and answer the bearing of God's eternal act?" Not, "How do I feel about God?" but, "What dealings have I with Him?" Our first concern is not with the riddle of the Universe: it is with the tragedy of the Universe. And, in faith's name at least, we may only complain about poverty of intellect if it leave the Church unfit to grasp the moral dimensions of that tragedy, and therefore to gauge its gravity, or its redress—which things it sometimes seems slowly, and often incompetently, even flippantly, ceasing to do. It is here that concern for a theological religion (as distinct from a theosophic) becomes of prime urgency for a Church that claims to know where it is, or to gauge the moral world. For what is theology (as based on revelation) but a spiritual grasp of the moral, the human, tragedy, in God's terms and with God's power. So when I hear it charged that the theologians wish to make faith the victim of intellect, I want to carry the war into the other camp. The complaint we have to make is that the modern world is becoming the victim of intellectualism for lack of theological faith. And under a shell of ethical interest it is becoming hollow in moral power and judgment, for want of a moral theology.

This may readily seem to such victims one of the paradoxes by which ingenuity amuses itself at the cost of seriousness. So little do they realise their situation, so slight is their world. But I will try to make the statement good.

III.

A favourite form of that reaction from serious faith which makes the amateur dislike of theology is this. It falls back from Christ the Victim and Atoner of the world's moral

tragedy upon Jesus the Teacher of spiritual wisdom. It disowns, sometimes with cheap anger, the sophistication of this loving and devoted Jesus by the intellectualism of the divinity schools. It dismisses the cry of the conscience for a day's-man, and explains it away as an extravagant perversion of the natural ache of finitude, produced by a tradition of monastic self-torment. The need of an Atonement it gets rid of by tracing it to crude Jewish notions about sacrifice, aggravated by pagan mollifications, and accentuated by medieeval jurisprudence, with its ideas of compounding for the damage of an offence. And it recurs to those simple interests of the heart which (it says) are so warmly and really met by the words of the Master. (For St Paul we may note that Christ was his Owner, but for modern self-respect He is only our Master, when He passes beyond our Brother.) It has recourse, therefore, to the teaching of Jesus. And my case is, that in doing so it retires from the living present we experience to the remote past of which we learn, from the living, reconciling Christ to the merely historic and hortatory Jesus. It leaves the region of spiritual reality and moral experience in the classic protagonists of the conscience, and it succumbs in the name of history to the intellectualism which has been the note of orthodoxy and the death of religion. The cry for the simple teaching of Jesus, the simple religion of Jesus, is a piece of fatal intellectualism and orthodoxy. That is the absurd statement I have to try to make good.

What I am saying is that every denial of the central, final, crucial, and saving value of Christ's death, both for His life and ours, is based on this vicious, intellectualist, and gnomic idea of revelation. Sooner or later it reduces Christ to a teacher. It denounces doctrine in the interest of the doctrinaire. And I will put it thus. I will suppose that you recognise that Jesus came to deal with the conscience and its sin, and not merely with the heart and its aches. He had to do with our tragic guilt more than our tragic lot. You then go on to say that He did so deal with sin by telling us (with

supreme impressiveness) of a loving, forgiving God instead of a holy, judging, redeeming God. He makes statements, with convincing magnetism, of a loving God who is ever ready to forgive when we repent. He does this, instead of really bringing a God who is carrying our sin, meeting His own judgment, actually redeeming, and creating repentance in the process. You say that Jesus replied to our laborious morbid concern about our soul by telling us of a better way, urging us to take it, promising us Divine help in taking it, and assuring us of its safety, with all the force of a most earnest personality. Now, what is that but intellectualism? It declares that our case can be met by something in the way of fervid information, by something urgently exhibitory, by the goodness of God being made to pass vividly before us, by something we are sublimely told about God; that is, by certain statements, certain truths which Jesus supremely, and even authoritatively, declared as His convictions. But wherever you have salvation by truth or truths, however warmly opened up or kindly declared, there you have intellectualism. It does not matter whether the truths be simple or complex, whether they are those of a gnomic sage or of a reasoned system. If the prophet has no more than his intuition to give us, backed by his character, if he do no more than avouch his experience, and if he do not give us himself, or his deed, in a real, positive, and effective sense, then it is but statement he can give us, however luminous, however glowing. It is a statement of his experience or conviction of God. Now our experience we can but state or express. We cannot transfer it. It can only be created in others at the same source—unless it be the mere epidemic of a crowd—and all we can do is to bring men to that source with a certain will to believe. Therefore it is that we preach not ourselves but Christ—Christ, and not our experience of Him—not even the religious experiences of Jesus Himself. For we should then be saved, not by Jesus, but by the teaching, the testimony, the recorded insights and impressions of Jesus, not by the truth which is Jesus, or which He achieved,

but by the truth which (rightly or wrongly) impressed and engrossed Jesus, according to His statement. And it makes no difference to the case whether the doctrine be gnomic or dialectic, sententious or systematic, nor whether the statement be scientific or sympathetic, cold fact or hot gospeling. It is dogmatic all the same. It is salvation by statement winged by personality, by doctrine incandescent in a prophet. It says that Christ's testimony of God was quite parallel to the testimony of Christ by Apostles or Fathers. In principle there is no difference whether the doctrine be the Sermon on the Mount or the Athanasian Creed.

But surely, it is objected, one of these is ethical, the other metaphysical. But the one is as ethical as the other at root, when we consider that their real matter and shaping interest is salvation. And when we consider their form or method, each is doctrinaire. Each is in the form of statement, of preaching, of theology rather than religion. In each we face a mirror of God and not God's gift of Himself. Each assumes the mode of statement congenial to its place and hour. Athanasius did not teach metaphysics; he taught the Gospel; but he did it in the language of metaphysics. But, allowing for the metaphysics, that is what the Sermon on the Mount is. It is statement and appeal—it is not action. It is mere preaching, it is not saving. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus speaks as yet but as a religious sage, *i.e.* as a saintly moral theologian, rather than as personal Redeemer. He speaks about life, conduct, and God; He does not mediate them. In the Sermon He faces men as a prophet; in the Cross He comes to grips with them as a Saviour.

Truth or truths about the spiritual life, if they stand alone, are intellectualist however impressive, or, to use a word fitter in some ways, they are {esthetic however penetrating. They may produce the certainty of knowledge but not of salvation. The speaker is not the object, he only has his eye on the object, with more or less power and veracity. He is a percipient rather than an agent, a hearer rather than a doer, or, as

it would be put in the language of art, an aesthete rather than a poet, a seer rather than a maker. He is a reporter of his convictions rather than a creator of reality. His person is not the life, but only points to it or mirrors it. His personality may be a great dynamic for his principle, but it is not itself God in a gift, the Resurrection and the Life. He may talk of the living God with extraordinary power, but he is not God in life. He is still the preacher, the helper, he is not the Saviour. He is God's organ for effect, but he is not with us and in us as Life. He has something to tell us which has a great influence in making us; but it is not he that makes us, it is we ourselves, with his help. He is not the new Creator.

For those who would take this line in New Testament criticism the great effort is to get back as closely as possible to what Jesus really said. If we had that in its original form (it is held) we should have the best and greatest that He brought. The value of His personality was to give wings to His message, to feather His arrows of light. That message would be the real revelation, which therefore would not be in Himself but in His truth. His report. What is communicated to us is not God but doctrine, or even enthusiasm, about God. We receive lofty, urgent, or gracious exhortation on that basis, and deep impressions from a prophetic personality. Imaginative intellectualism and impressive conviction on the supreme subject is all we then should have. The revelation is in the doctrine, not in the historic person, facts, or acts. That is the point. And that is the bane of orthodoxy. No facts of revelation have then special value as facts, but only as they are incidental to the activity of Jesus as a Teacher who drew death down on Himself by the unpopularity of His momentous doctrine and the courage of its expression.

And this intellectualism, this orthodoxy (aphoristic or systematic), runs through much that is known as up-to-date theology. Modernism, dropping much even of the teaching of Jesus, and almost indifferent to His history, seeks to keep the Church alive on its dogmas taken as ideas, on truth

emptied of the person yet treated as the power. But, however modem, that theology is simply exchanging old lamps, old clothes, old views for new. For it is a case of views or truths either way, new or old, narrow or broad; and it is not a case of act and deed in the heart of universal reality. The Cross appears as an exhibition, an object-lesson, an enacted statement, a crowning testimony, and not as a final achievement for the race. God reveals Himself in truths rather than in acts, in divine doctrine rather than in divine deed, in statements rather than in history, in instructive activity rather than in a sacramental or a creative act. His object is the most effective publication of His truth. His organ is the most gifted seer rather than the most effectual doer. And, where Jesus is the organ, salvation is through the impression He makes by His martyr death rather than by the work He achieves, and the world-crisis He solves, by His redeeming will. Jesus is the great figure in the history of religion rather than the great power in the religion of history. He talks aptly to the nature of the religious soul, but He does not handle aptly the total and eternal situation of the moral soul in the universe, nor deal with it for good and all. He speaks to the need of the heart; but He does not assure us that He is its food, and that He has the final disposal of a universe which is warranted to fill the heart's needs, and not flout them, at last. He is simply convinced in the deepest way that all things work together for good to them that love; He is not the guarantee of it, the ground of it—Himself the agent and anticipation of it. He appears in history, but is He the focus of the historic crisis, of the Lord's one controversy with man? In Him God reveals Himself to history, rather than in history, and through it. His revelation inspires action in us rather than forms the decisive action by God. His person preaches to us rather than re-creates us. Jesus diagnoses the soul's deep condition and prescribes for it, rather than determines its final destiny. He speaks powerfully to the question rather than takes command of the situation. His work is aesthetic rather than dramatic.

The anti-theologians are thus the intellectualists—only they intellectualise in saws instead of systems, and by maxim rather than method.

The cure for this intellectualism, whether old or new, orthodox or rationalist, drastic or dreamy, is history—but history treated religiously not scientifically, morally not psychologically, and answered by faith and not mere assent, history as *Geschichte* and not mere *Historie*. It is history as the soil and series of revelation. It is a history whose old Jesus is our Eternal Christ—the Lord the Spirit. The prominent thing in Christianity is not a seer's eternal truth but a Person's eternal deed and gift. It is not the doctrine but the Cross. In the beginning was the endless Act. And the Cross is here taken not as the closing incident of the martyr life of Jesus, but, first, as the supreme action of the Son of God, and the supreme crisis of man's fate, and, second, as the eternal act of a Person thus present with us still. Revelation is only Christian as redemption, and not as mere manifestation. It does not say things, it does them. Its effect is not a belief, nor a school, nor a mood of mind, but a faith, a church, and a kingdom, all living only because Jesus Christ lives in them in this eternal act. The great historic act leaves for its great historic product a living society in which it "functions." Its first-fruits are not theologians but believers, not disciples but a church of active confessors. Its answer is not the mere resonance of assent but the response of faith, not impression but regeneration, not mere correspondency but commerce with God. We are not Christ's disciples merely, but His subjects. And we are not so much Christ's subjects even, but His property, by conquest, by purchase, by redemption—phrase it as you will. In living faith we are not simply loyal; we are in no respect our own. Loyalty is but one aspect of faith and quite incomplete. Loyalty mostly means fidelity to a king who yet has no business in our conscience. But the kingship of Jesus is much more Oriental than that. He sits, by a right He created, on the throne of conscience, in absolute

command of our whole moral self. It is His, for He made it in our new creation. We are not quickened but changed. You may have the most impressive addresses for the deepening or quickening of the spiritual life, yet they are all but flushes brought to our face till Jesus Christ enter our history for good at its core and crisis, live in our heart by faith, and Himself become our new life. They are but impressionist, not sacramental. The way the Church invites this seer or that to lift or revive it on some particular occasion may or may not be wise and proper, but it is a confession of the absence of this life, and of a starved preoccupation with views and interests rather than facts and powers, with impression rather than regeneration.

I know that some feel the inadequacy and the danger of the mere teaching of Jesus, but, as they will do anything rather than call themselves His δοῦλοι, and take that yoke of the Cross which has made theologians of the most thorough Christians, they seek to escape from their rationalism by going behind the doctrine of Jesus to His life and character, as revealed by a scientific historicism in the Synoptics. (Scientific historicism—it may be observed in passing—when it is made the basis of faith, is a piece of intellectualism or mind-worship.) They view Him either as a powerful example, or as an aesthetic source of the deepest impressions—only not as absolute Redeemer and rightful Owner of our wills.[1] It is in vain, however, that we seek to escape the intellectualism of Jesus the doctrinaire by the impression of Jesus the hero or saint. Ethical magnetism will not deliver us from the bondage to mere knowledge, nor from the cult of the religious genius and hi§ illumination. The choice between Jesus the prophet and Christ the Redeemer is in the long run imperative and sharp. If He preach by His character, it is yet but preaching, so long as we are preoccupied with His life, so long as His person is

1 I do not think Hermann's noble and vivid picture of the action on us of the inner life of Jesus really lifts us above profound moral impressionism; it does not give the regeneration.

not consummated in the saving act of a death which has its chief value for God, and is decisive for eternal human fate. Did we regard Him as the complete saint, and the divinest lover of His kind. He would yet be but one *from whom we learned* and not one *in whom we believed*—believed in the serious sense of putting our souls into His hands for ever as the hands of God, which is the Christianity and the faith of the New Testament taken as a whole. By the very perfection of His silent character He might be no more than a reporter of God, in the sense of a witness, a reflector, instead of God with us, and working in us. And wherever Jesus is but God's supreme prophet you have religion sinking in due course to a rationalism, Pharisaic or Sadducean, orthodox or heterodox, from which all the prophets were found unable to save Israel. Prophetism cannot in perpetuity moralise intellect, or worship, or action. It did not do so in Israel, nor has it done so in Islam (in spite of the Spanish Moors). It could not do it even in Jesus as prophet. That is only possible to a Christianity of redemption and reconciliation by the Cross.

Now the dilemma between these two views of Christ may slumber unrealised without doing serious harm. But it cannot always slumber. And when it is forced into consciousness the choice becomes a matter of life and death to Christianity and its future—nay, ere long, to personal religion. For the wrong choice places Christianity simply in the chain of religious evolution, With a promise of something better one far day. The right makes it God's last but eternal Word to the rage. The wrong view believes that Christ came to serve Humanity, by improving its fundamentally sound position in the Universe; the right believes that He came to recover it from its fatal moral tragedy. The difference also represents the great and hopeful advance in the negative camp from Strauss to von Hartmann and Nietzsche, from a religion of life concerned sanely only with the untoward, to one which grasps life dramatically as essential tragedy.

Finally, I am liable to be told that I have done more in the way of stating my position than of arguing it. But that is the very nature of my plea. Theology must be dogmatic, and it is only a choice of the right and wholesome kind of dogmatism. Theology is not syllogistic—that would be theosophy. It is not ruled by the logic of an idea. It is empirical in the great sense, in the soul's sense, the will's sense. By its nature it is dogmatic, as conscience is, as science is about nature's uniformity, or as society is about marriage. It is not the deduction of a system from an innate principle which Christ brought to the surface, nor is it the analysis of the Christian consciousness, but it is the exposition of what the living conscience of the Church finds in the fact and act of Christ, creative and historic. It is not progressive argument so much as enlarged statement, not the movement of a dialectic but the exposition of a corporate experience. Everything turns on what the soul does, or does not, find in the objective fact of Christ as the self-donation of God to our case. No otherwise do poetry or science deal with the gift in nature. We are always more sure of the reality than satisfied with the rationality of the matter. Living faith is always more of a moral miracle than a mental sanity. It is a will's mysterious choice and not a mind's lucid flame.

P. T. FORSYTH.