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THE
CHURCHMAN

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ART. I.—LOISY'S SYNTHESIS OF CHRISTIANITY.

II.

BEFORE I proceed further, I must give some account of the relations of Loisy to Professor Harnack, whose subjective synthesis of Christianity it is the Abbé's aim to dethrone. It is necessary for any full appreciation of Loisy in his merits and demerits to read carefully first the "History of Dogma" and "What is Christianity?" ("Das Wesen des Christentums"). Personally, too, I can testify that the transition from the great German critic to his Roman rival is a most interesting psychological experience. Someone, I think, has said that were a scientific treatise on the life and habits of an apteryx demanded, a German savant would evolve an account of the subject by hard work in a museum inspired by his own inner consciousness, while a savant of France would profess to know all about it after a cursory inspection of the bird caged in the Jardin des Plantes. The witticism broadly illustrates the respective trends and limitations of the rival syntheses of Christianity now propounded from Berlin and Paris. For Harnack the essential of Christianity is the subjective realization of God through Christ, apart from all social system. For Loisy Christ's "kingdom" was from the first, and is now, an objective matter, which we are to identify with a single Christian association. Harnack, attempting to reconstruct the primitive Christianity from anatomical fragments, brushes aside some of the most potent influences on actual Christian life, and tells us bluntly that the Church misunderstood its credentials from the second century onwards. The Abbé, in like arbitrary fashion, but with exquisite tact, picks out the results of destructive Protestant exegesis best suited to his

purpose, and so unfolds a tale of development from a Jesus who did not declare Himself Divine to a Pio Nono who declared himself infallible. Thus, while for Harnack there is no realization of the "kingdom" in its objective form at all, for Loisy it is strictly identified with the Church of Rome. We are shown our strange bird in a Roman menagerie, deprived of free powers of action, and adapting itself to a new climate and cramped confines, and the question is ignored whether Christianity does not show more splendid powers where these limitations are unknown.

An initial divergence in the definition of Christ's "kingdom" thus leads on to conclusions hopelessly at variance. Harnack, after complimenting the Roman Church on its past achievements, bows it out with the words: "No longer a leader, but a drag; yet the drag is not always the reverse of a blessing."¹ Loisy, conceiving of no Church life save in the unreformed fold, and assuming that all Protestant Christendom accepts the meagre, mutilated synthesis of Harnack, girds at the endless disintegrations of an "Évangile individualiste," "où l'on ne voit plus réellement que Dieu et l'âme, l'âme et son Dieu."²

Both critics, indeed, agree to discard the Christianity of the Eastern Church, but their gravamens are strangely dissimilar. For Harnack the Greek ritualism is the chief offence—"the injunctions to submit to religious ceremonies as though they were mysterious ministrations; to be punctilious in observing a ritual; to put up pictures, and to mumble maxims and formulas in a prescribed form." "It was to destroy this sort of religion that Jesus Christ suffered Himself to be nailed to the Cross."³ By Loisy, on the other hand, the Greek Church (which, he tells us, "pendant les premiers siècles avait gravité autour de Rome") is discarded as outside "l'Église Apostolique," and as a victim of Byzantinism from the time of the disruption of the Roman Empire.⁴ Of any other organizations endeavouring to realize "la vie collective de l'Église" he seems not to have heard.

I shall have to make frequent reference to the conflicting statements of these two great authorities in their presentation of the aims and history of Christianity. It will be best, therefore, to confine myself at present to an analysis of these two syntheses, reserving my own views of the subjects at issue for future papers on the Synoptic Christology, the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Christ, and the actual position of Rome in early ecclesiastical history.

¹ "What is Christianity?" Lect. XIV.

² "L'Év. et l'Égl.," p. 192.

³ "What is Christianity?" Lect. XIII.

⁴ "L'Év. et l'Égl.," p. 146.

RÉSUMÉ OF HARNACK'S SYNTHESIS.

For Harnack (starting with a repudiation of the Fourth Gospel) the main points in the teaching of Jesus were: (1) The kingdom of God and its coming; (2) God the Father and the infinite value of the human soul; (3) the higher righteousness and the commandment of love.¹ "The kingdom of God" is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals; it is God Himself in His power." Jesus Himself did not assert a claim to Divinity. His consciousness of being the Son of God in the Synoptic account is "nothing but the practical consequence of knowing God" as the Father, and as His Father. "Rightly understood, the name of Son means nothing but the knowledge of God." "The confidence with which John makes Him address the Father, 'Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world,' is undoubtedly the direct reflection of the certainty with which Jesus spoke. But here all research must stop. We are not even able to say when it was that He first knew Himself as the Son, and whether He at once completely identified Himself with this idea." But "He is certain that He knows the Father, that He is to bring this knowledge to all men, and that thereby He is doing the work of God." This is inferred from the texts Matt. xi. 25-30, Luke x. 21-34.² With limitations, this Son may be regarded as consciously the Messiah expected by the Jews, for the Evangelists connect this consciousness with His Baptism, the story of the Temptation assumes it, and the entry into Jerusalem and cleansing of the Temple proclaim Him in this character. But Christology is no feature in His teaching. To the question, "Does Jesus assume a position in His Gospel?" the answer is that "Jesus' Gospel was confined to two factors, God and the soul" (Micah vi. 6-8 quoted). "The publican in the Temple, the widow with her mite, the lost son, know nothing about Christology." "*The Gospel as Jesus proclaimed it has to do with the Father only, and not with the Son.*" But "no one had ever yet known the Father in the way in which Jesus knew Him." And so "He is the way to the Father, and as He is the appointed of the Father, so He is the Judge as well." He has thus a claim to human worship. Yet it is "a mistake to put Christology first." "A man can think and teach rightly about Christ only and in so far as he has already begun to live according to Christ's Gospel. . . . It is only the religion which a man has himself experienced that is to be confessed; every other creed or confession is in Jesus' view hypocritical and fatal."³

¹ "What is Christianity?" Lect. IV.
³ *Ibid.*, Lect. VIII.

² *Ibid.*, Lect. VI.

Passing to the Apostolic times, Harnack finds proof that the primitive Christian community was convinced of the Resurrection and the Ascension, and that "within two generations from His death Jesus Christ was already put upon the highest plane upon which men can put Him. It was the ideas of His death for our sins and His resurrection which explain this. . . . It is not our business to defend either the view that was taken of His death or the idea that He had risen again." But the abolition of sacrifices wherever Christianity came vindicates that view of the Atonement taken in Heb. x. "Wherever Christians have returned to sacrifices, it has been a relapse. . . . The earliest Christians knew that the whole sacrificial system was thenceforth abolished, and if they were asked for a reason they pointed to Christ's death." The rationale of the Atonement lies in the human consciousness. "Wherever any great deed has been done in history, the finer a man's moral feelings are, the more sensible will he be of vicarious suffering. Did Luther in the monastery strive only for himself? . . . Everywhere that the just man suffers an atonement is made, which puts us to shame and purifies us."¹

In the matter of the Resurrection we may distinguish between the Easter Message and the Easter Faith. "Did Paul know of the message about the empty grave? . . . I think it probable, but we cannot be certain about it. What he and the disciples regarded as all-important was, not the state in which the grave was found, but Christ's appearances. But who can maintain that a clear account of these appearances can be constructed?" We must abandon the miraculous appeal to the senses. Whatever happened, "*this grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal.*"²

Passing on to later Christian history, Harnack finds that in the primitive society "every individual was conscious that he was placed in a living and entirely personal relation to God." But in the second century Christianity took new shape. "Faith was transformed into a Creed, devotion to Christ into Christology; the ardent hope for the coming of the kingdom into a doctrine of immortality and deification; prophecy into technical exegesis and theological learning; the ministers of the Spirit into clerics, the brethren into laymen in a state of tutelage: miracles . . . disappear altogether, or else are priestly devices."³ This was done within 120 years, partly through the ebb of spiritual impulse, partly through the infusion of Hellenism, "which is the greatest fact in the

¹ "What is Christianity?" Lect. IX.

² *Ibid.*, Lect. IX.

³ *Ibid.*, Lect. XI.

history of the Church of the second century." Intellectualism became a substitute for religious emotion. Mythological elements were incorporated, and "at last, in the worship of the saints, we see a regular Christian religion of a lower order arising." As developed in the East, "it would have done battle with the Christians of the first century, just as it did battle with the worship of Magna Mater and Zeus Soter"¹ The spiritual life was lost in traditionalism, and immense importance was attached to ritualism and profession of orthodoxy. As developed in the West, this Christianity took further colour from Roman juridical conceptions. Here Rome of necessity became the centre of Christian unity, for all that the barbarians left of Roman civilization and Roman spirit took refuge in the Roman Church. The Bishop of Rome thus "necessarily became the guardian of the past and the shield of the future," and the Roman Church the "continuation of the Roman world empire." From the initial propositions, "the Roman Church is the kingdom of God," and "the Church must govern like an earthly State," the most exorbitant demands along with degradation of the moral standard are a natural sequence. Logically, too, this line of development led up to Papal absolution and infallibility, "for in an earthly theocracy infallibility means at bottom nothing more than full sovereignty means in an earthly State." "La tradition c'est moi," said Pio Nono. The one foil to this deteriorating influence was Augustine. "That this Church became at one and the same time Cæsarian and Augustinian is the most important and marvellous fact in its history." For Augustine really resuscitated the Pauline experience of sin and grace, and to this day inward and religious fervour in the Roman Catholic Church and the expression they take are Augustinian."²

Naturally, this presentation of Christianity does not commend itself to the Roman Catholic professor, agreeing though he does with Harnack in disclaiming the historical presentation by Christ of His own Divinity. I endeavour now to present Loisy's reply, and the theological position taken in "L'Évangile et l'Église" and "Autour d'un Petit Livre."

RÉSUMÉ OF LOISY'S SYNTHESIS.

Of Harnack Loisy complains that "Il a mis l'essence du christianisme dans un sentiment." It is not true that the traditional Jewish expectation of an objective Messianic kingdom is only the husk of Christianity, and that "ce qui

¹ "What is Christianity?" Lect. XII.

² *Ibid.*, Lect. XIV.

est personnel est le noyau."¹ Contrariwise, the "kingdom of God" familiar to us in the Synoptic record is the Church, as a delimited society fulfilling these ancient expectations. It cannot be proved by "authentic texts"² that the "kingdom" is a subjective realization of forgiveness and sonship. The Messianic character was not, as Harnack supposes, assumed by Jesus "comme une sorte de costume ou de déguisement dont il a besoin pour traiter avec les Juifs."³ The claim to be the Messiah is the explanation of His calling Himself "Son of God," and it explains His whole career, and actually led to His condemnation at Jerusalem. But we must note that "la rôle du Messie est essentiellement eschatologique." "Le ministère de Jésus n'était que préliminaire au royaume de cieux et au rôle propre du Messie." Hence it is that John Baptist asks, not directly "Art thou the Christ?" but rather if Jesus is going to be the Christ. The history of the Church explains this, for she "taught that Jesus became Lord and Christ by virtue of His resurrection," and her expectation in the early age was one of Christ's "coming" (not His "return") as the Messiah.⁴

The Church, realizing its claim to embody the promises of this future "kingdom of God," and convinced by the Resurrection appearances, passed on from proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah to declaring His actual Divinity. This doctrine would be a part of the original teaching of Jesus, "if the Fourth Gospel was a direct echo of the Saviour's preaching," and if the Synoptic texts Matt. xi. 27 and Luke x. 22 were not "a product of tradition."⁵ It is useless to question whether Jesus, in the course of His human life, "avait conscience d'être le Verbe Éternel." But after all these deductions, "Il ne suit pas qu'il n'ait point été Dieu."⁶

As to the abolition of sacrifices, this cannot be pressed, since for Jews Jerusalem was the only scene of material sacrifices, and after its fall they became necessarily impossible.⁷ But the conception of Christ's expiation is really only a Pauline development. It was not part of the primitive faith or of the teaching of Jesus, for "le passage de Marc [chap. x. 45] où on lit que 'le Christ est venu donner sa vie en rançon pour beaucoup' a toute chance d'avoir été influencé par la théologie de Paul, et l'on peut en dire autant des récits de la dernière scène."⁸

As to the historical evidences of Christ's Resurrection,

¹ "L'Év. et l'Égl.," p. 46.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁶ "Aujourd," etc., p. 130.

⁷ "L'Év. et l'Égl.," p. 114.

² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

Loisy appears to take the same critical views as his opponent. "Que 'le message de Pâques' et 'la foi de Pâques' soient choses distinctes on doit l'accorder à M. Harnack." The one is the "form," the other the "substance," of the Christian faith. He goes on, however, to argue that "on ne doit pas opposer la foi comme un absolu au message qui serait relatif. . . . L'entrée d'un mort dans la vie immortelle se dérobe à l'observation. Le tombeau vide n'est qu'un argument indirect."¹ The historian finds it incontestable that the faith of the Apostles did rest on a series of apparitions of the Risen Jesus, and if the Gospel story presents difficulties and divergencies in regard to the character of these apparitions, he remembers "que les apôtres, même Saint Paul, n'ont pas eu l'idée d'une immortalité distincte de la résurrection corporelle." The witness of the Gospels thus only furnishes a limited probability, which perhaps does not seem proportionate to the extraordinary importance of the object attested. "Mais n'est il pas inévitable que toute preuve naturelle d'un fait surnaturel soit incomplète et défailante?"²

The direct divergence from Harnack on the subject of "Le royaume des cieux" leads on to the chapter entitled "L'Église," pp. 127-170. Loisy here complains that Harnack makes Christianity "a spirit without a body," and the Church the outcome of the sectarian controversies of the first two centuries.³ Rome's power of absorbing and transmuting the elements of the Gospel is really not a fault, but a merit. Though the charge has been long repeated, one cannot see how "la société du Christ était quelque chose de plus invisible et de plus intérieur que l'Église romaine."⁴ From the first there was organization—first the twelve, then one selected to be the first "par une sorte de désignation du Maître." There was no occasion for "chartes constitutionnelles, des inaugurations pompeuses," but organization is evinced in the Apostolic powers, "d'agrèger les convertis . . . d'exclure les indignes et de maintenir le bon ordre."⁵ It matters little that this primitive Church, "n'eût pas encore conscience de former une société distincte du judaïsme." The Christian communities spread among the Gentiles, and gradually became a Church separate from the Synagogue. "The Apostles and first

¹ I fail here to see any difference between the positions of the two professors, save this: that the one openly disowns belief in the story of the empty tomb, and that the other thinks it advisable to disguise his unbelief in dialectic. Perhaps I am doing M. Loisy injustice, but he seems as little to recognise any *objective* reality in "la série des apparitions" as Harnack himself.

² "L'Év. et l'Égl.," pp. 117-122.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-130.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-136.

missionaries" instituted "collèges d'anciens ou de surveillants" for its government. In due time came the pre-eminence of the Bishop, "dans le groupe des anciens," and "celle de l'évêque de Rome entre les évêques." Just as in other organisms, it is crises and perils in the Church that create the new development of organs, and this form of development is a proof, not of decay, but of vigorous life. For it was the rise of Gnostic heresies that necessitated and established a monarchical episcopacy. "Ne s'ensuit-il pas que l'Église est aussi nécessaire à l'Évangile, que l'Évangile est nécessaire à l'Église?"¹ As the episcopal idea gained strength, so did that of the preponderance of the Roman Church. But the cause was not alone the central and imperial position of Rome. Each Church had a sense of the general unity, and "il y fallait un centre qui supportât en quelque sorte l'effort de la tendance universelle et garantît le concert des Églises en le rendant visible et régulier."² In the Epistle of Clement we may see how Rome dictated to other Churches, and it matters not that in this Epistle it is the Church, not the Bishop, that speaks, and that episcopal autocracy was really established later in the West than in the East. This distinction is merely an accessory; the sentiment of authority is the same in Clement, speaking in the name of the Church, as in Victor Callistus and Stephen, speaking in their own names, "et comme tenant la place d'apôtre Pierre."³ Even in the days of Peter and Paul the central position of Roman Christianity must have been established, and "on peut penser que lorsqu'ils moururent ils ne se doutaient pas qu'ils eussent légué un maître à César, ni même qu'ils eussent . . . donné un chef suprême à l'Église." Their deaths at Rome consecrated what their presence there signified. They had made Rome "le chef-lieu de l'Évangile."⁴ No wonder this idea never perished in the West. Even in the East, where Christianity was not due to Roman missionaries, there were signs that "l'Église d'Orient . . . serait entrée de plus en plus dans l'orbite de l'Église apostolique," had not her ecclesiastical government become entangled in political ideas, and her Christianity become "une religion d'État." The loss of Rome to the Empire led men here to the mistake that "l'évêque de Rome n'a plus rien à dire en ce qui les touche, et que celui de Constantinople la nouvelle Rome a sur l'Orient les mêmes droits et les mêmes pouvoirs."⁵

The development of Papal autocracy in the West is briefly

¹ "L'Év. et l'Égl.," pp. 137-139.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 142, 143.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 145.

² *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

passed over. It was not only a result of the transfer of the old imperial power to the Roman Church: it was the effect of that original movement compelling the Christians to organize "qui s'était fait sentir en Orient aussi bien qu'en Occident." The Popes of the fourth and fifth centuries "veulent être les juges en dernier ressort de toute la chrétienté," just as in the preceding centuries the Roman Church posed as a type to all other Churches for teaching, organization, and discipline. A merely ideal centre, such as Cyprian conceived of, "would have been useless." Somewhere there must be a deciding voice in controversies. Local councils would not have sufficient prestige to decide them. General councils could only be an extraordinary expedient, and experience showed it was one attended with grave inconveniences. The final tribunal "ne pouvait être que dans l'Église apostolique entre toutes, qui avait la tradition de Pierre et de Paul, et dont les chefs n'hésitaient plus à se dire successeurs du prince des apôtres." From the end of the eighth century this Church openly acts as the depository of the imperial tradition, "and transfers to Charlemagne and his successors the titles of the Cæsars." At the end of the eleventh all authority belongs to the Popes; not only over Churches, but over peoples. "Le pape s'est fait éducateur social, tuteur des monarchies, chef de la confédération chrétienne, en même temps qu'il reste et devient de plus en plus le chef de la hiérarchie ecclésiastique, l'arbitre de la foi." National individuality was scarcely yet sketched out, and if local Churches had kept their autonomy one would have had "la submersion complète du christianisme dans la superstition et la féodalité germaniques."¹

In his survey of the succeeding period, Loisy ignores the real moral degradation of the Papacy. He tells us that at the close of the fourteenth century there was no longer a Christian Republic, but a collection of autonomous Christian States, and that the Papal authority was exerted with increasing difficulty, for "l'Église, riche et puissante dans chaque État, est minée par une croissante corruption" and "la papauté du XV^e et du XVI^e siècle a été beaucoup trop préoccupée de ses intérêts particuliers, et pas assez de la réforme toujours plus urgente."² Yet one sees that "le pouvoir spirituel du pape est allé toujours augmentant," and that this was necessary to assure the conservation of religion in the midst of the revolutions of the modern age. The Pope remains the father of the faithful and the chief of the Churches. One can foresee that "ce pouvoir ne s'exercera plus jamais dans les formes où elle s'exerçait au moyen âge. Mais ce pouvoir importe toujours à

¹ "L'Év. et l'Égl.," pp. 148-152.

² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

la conservation de l'Église et à la conservation de l'Évangile dans l'Église."¹

Finally, Harnack's disparagement of the development of dogma is answered in the chapter "Le dogme Chrétien." Even Luther found a retention of dogma necessary, and Loisy defends the Pauline theory of salvation and the Logos doctrine as necessary adaptations of Christianity to the thought of primitive Christian times. He traces out the subsequent course of Trinitarian and Christological definition, and regards the evolution as "un grand effort de foi et de l'intelligence,"² albeit an "introduction de la philosophie grecque dans le christianisme et un compromis entre cette philosophie et la tradition chrétienne." A further vindication of this dogmatic development and of the later work of the Schoolmen is attempted in two letters in "Autour," etc., entitled "sur l'origine et l'autorité des dogmes" and "sur l'institution des sacrements."³ But this work is written in self-defence, and the second letter is mainly an attempt to reconcile his own views with the dogmatic statements of the Council of Trent. As far as his controversy with Harnack is concerned, the root of the matter is tapped when Loisy tells us in "l'Évangile et l'Église" that in Rome and in the Latin countries religion is willingly conceived of "comme une discipline et un devoir de la société," but that "pour les races germaniques elle est un principe de vie intérieure, le poème de l'âme."⁴ The main point henceforth at issue between Catholicism and Protestantism is this: "L'Évangile de Jésus est il, en principe, individualiste ou collectiviste?"⁵ Protestantism leads to endless disintegration. Catholicism can accept the development of dogma as consistent with a continuous ecclesiastical life. The divergence from primitive Christianity is to it no stumbling-block: "quand on veut s'assurer de l'identité d'un individu on ne songe pas à le faire rentrer dans son berceau."⁶ Nor is it a difficulty that the texts it has hitherto cited do not really support its inferences. For to the objection that if the familiar texts Matt. xvi. 19, John xxi. 16, 17, are given up, and Rome's claims regarded merely as the product of an early stage of ecclesiastical evolution, "on ne pourra plus rien prouver par l'Écriture," Loisy answers, "les déterminations particulières du principe d'autorité dans l'Église ne reposent pas sur une interprétation purement littérale et logique des textes." "Le

¹ "L'Év. et l'Égl.," p. 154.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

⁶ "L'Év. et l'Égl.," p. 192.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁴ "Autour," etc., pp. 186-219, 220-259.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 200, 201.

principe est absolu, l'application est relative." It is not on texts henceforth that the controversy will be conducted, but "sur l'ensemble du fait évangélique et du fait chrétien."¹

ARTHUR C. JENNINGS.



ART. II.—THE BOOK OF GENESIS (*continued*).

IF the view which I have submitted as to the so-called system of chronology of the pre-Abrahamic times commend itself to the reader, or has any verisimilitude, the question of the antiquity of man will be one upon which the Bible will give us no information. It leaves us quite at liberty to accept whatever definite results the researches of science in this direction may establish. The scientific student can enter upon his investigations in a perfectly independent spirit, and with no idea that any conclusions he may arrive at will be counted as evidence either for or against the Bible narrative. In the same way, an indefinite or illimitable time is left for the development, so far as is necessary, of different languages and racial distinctions.

But a word of caution is also necessary, especially because those who accept the doctrine of evolution—I am not concerned for the moment with its truth or not—are only ready to accept it so far as it coincides with their own views. For if evolution and development mean anything, it is that by slow degrees stage after stage of development has led to higher and higher forms of life. If you are an evolutionist, you must believe that at some stage or other from the *anthropoid* mammal was physically evolved the mammal we call *anthropos*; if you do not believe that, you are no evolutionist, and have to allow that there is a gap in your system of evolution. At the same time you are confronted by the fact that, in every known case, the mental powers and spiritual gifts of the *anthropos* are in varying degrees, yet still always capable of being distinguished from (though it is not always possible to define accurately in human language the difference) the highest form of animal intelligence. You ask the man of science, When did this difference arise? He cannot tell you. He may be able to tell you of certain implements of a rude kind found hard by the skeletons in the drift gravel of the Pleistocene period, when remains of man first appear; but the skeletons themselves reveal but little as to the stage of mental, and nothing as to that of moral, development which the

¹ "Autour," etc., pp. 173-176.