

# The Fraternal.

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Literary and other contributions for "The Fraternal" should be addressed to the Secretary, Rev. A. J. Payne, 25, The Grove, Earlsfield, Wandsworth, London, S.W. 18.

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## SECRETARY'S NOTES.

OUR President, Rev. B. Grey Griffith, B.D., is getting into his stride as Home Secretary of the B.M.S. and we all hope that the work of our Society under his leadership will steadily go forward. He has also been busily engaged advocating the Superannuation Campaign as opportunity has been found.

We are sorry that it was not possible to issue a number of the Fraternal in October but suitable matter was not forthcoming. We are grateful to Rev. John Pitts, B.A., for his article, which was received with much appreciation when given as an address before the L.B.A. We have inserted in this issue also part of an address delivered by Rev. John Lewis, of Crawley, before the Kent and Sussex Association.

Will members please note that the address of the Librarian now is Rev. W. H. Pratt, Nocton Rise, Stratford Road, Watford, Herts.

It has been suggested that a question column for enquiries and difficulties would be helpful. The Editor will be glad to make room therefore for such enquiries, etc.

The Officers send their kindest greetings for Christmas and the New Year to all our members and hope they will do their utmost to secure new members and also secure suitable articles for our Magazine.

Many Subscriptions for 1927 are still unpaid and we hope the enclosed reminder will bring them along as speedily as possible.

## MODERN PHILOSOPHY AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

(Notes of an Address given to the Ministers' Session at the London Baptist Association Meetings, on Sept. 27th, 1927).

**M**ODERN Philosophy is a definite period in the history of human thought. It begins with that greatest but one of the Elizabethans, Francis Bacon, who has been well called not only "the last of the schoolmen" but also "the Father of Modern Philosophy." Prior to his day the fundamental principle of thought had been: "Bring all your beliefs into harmony with traditional authority." That was the principle of the Medieval Church. It was the principle of the Scholastic Philosophy, despite its seeming intellectualism. Even the attempt of Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the Schoolmen, to rehabilitate Catholic dogma on the basis of a revived Augustinianism and the newly discovered philosophy of Aristotle was used by the Roman Church further to keep in bondage the minds of men. But with the passing of Aquinas, in 1274, Scholasticism began its decline and by the opening of the 16th century a new movement was well under weigh, the fundamental principle of which was: "Bring all your beliefs into line with the facts of nature." It was by this new movement that Francis Bacon was flung up and he, in turn, gave the movement a fresh impetus by his formulation and elaboration of what is known as the "Inductive Method" the method which, as everyone knows, has been more or less used by thinkers, both scientific and philosophical, ever since. The period which followed witnessed the rise of the great speculative thinkers—Descartes, Spinoza, Berkeley, Leibniz, Hume, right down to Kant and Hegel—most of whom treated religion seriously, though they cut themselves adrift from much that was associated with traditional Christianity.

But to consider the bearing of their systems upon the Christian Faith would obviously take us too far afield; hence I must interpret the phrase "Modern Philosophy" in the sense of "*recent philosophy*," although in this connection I recall the assertion of Dr. W. R. Matthews to the effect that "there is no modern philosophy; there are only modern philosophers." That saying, however, is an

exaggeration which Dr. Matthews himself has recently partly retracted. Those who endeavour to take what Prof. R. F. A. Hoernlé calls "the synoptic view" of the most recent developments of philosophical thought can perceive emerging here and there some general agreement among contemporary philosophers—an agreement which gives promise of a new synthesis of thought that will, in all probability, sooner or later be achieved. Let me see if I can indicate clearly some of the significant features of the modern situation in philosophic thought as they impress the individual who endeavours to take "synoptic view." And, of course, I shall be concerned with these "significant features" in their bearing upon the Christian Faith. It may be that, at the close of our survey, we may have good cause to believe that men who, like Dr. Charles Gore, turn away in disgust from philosophy as affording no assistance to those who are concerned with defending and propagating "the faith once for all delivered to the saints"—it may be that we shall believe that they have adopted a mistaken attitude. After all, we who wholeheartedly accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ have no need to fear the philosopher. If he come to conclusions which are the contradictories of "the things most surely believed among us" so much the worse for him. We do not regard him as infallible and it may be that our Gospel will survive his system of thought as, in past ages, it survived many another system which has long since gone the way of all lost footsteps. On the other hand, we need not be ashamed of utilising what we regard as helpful and true in recent philosophy for the purpose of supporting and commending the Christian Faith. Indeed for us Christians to utilise in our own mill and grist which modern thinkers provide for us is only to follow in the wake of the Apologists of the first Christian centuries—men like Aristides, Tatian, Tertullian, Origen and others who did not hesitate to assimilate all that was good and true in the faiths and philosophies of their day that they might win a hearing for the Gospel from the educated outsider.

1. The first significant feature to which I would refer is this: *Modern philosophy is giving us a new evaluation of religious experience.* The 19th century, as we all know, witnessed a widespread and growing revolt against every

form of religion which regarded itself as anything more than "morality touched with emotion." Many people, indeed, came to think of religion as a miserable superstition which would inevitably be thrown aside as "the thoughts of men were widened with the process of the suns." Religious experience came increasingly to be regarded as a mere illusion—as something which, however true it was thought to be by those who laid claim to it, had no objective reality corresponding and giving rise to it. Several important influences contributed to inspire this revolt. There was the Pessimistic philosophy which asserted itself at the beginning of the 19th century and very soon made rapid headway. It was a reaction from the optimistic philosophy of the previous century—a philosophy which began with Leibniz' view that this was the best of all possible worlds and which, in a short time, prevailed throughout Europe. "Voltaire," as Dr. Griffith-Jones puts it, "broke the happy spell in the realm of thought, and the proximate failure of the French Revolution completed the disillusionment in the world of affairs." Then came Schopenhauer's pioneer work, "The World as Will and Idea," which laid the philosophical foundations of the reactionary theory—a theory which by denying the ideal ends of human activity and emptying the universe of all objective spiritual values endeavoured to banish religious experience into the land of shadow and make-belief. Side by side with this we may mention the Agnosticism, so closely associated with the names of Herbert Spencer and T. H. Huxley, which became the creed of so many presumably thinking people and which struck a shrewd blow at the Christian Faith. But more influential than either of these was the rise of the evolutionary philosophy with its principle of "the survival of the fittest" in biology and its theory of Naturalism in morals and religion. It is not to be wondered at that those people who found themselves caught in the eddying thought-currents of their day were disposed to regard moral and spiritual values as the figments of diseased, or at least abnormal, imaginations.

To-day however a different note is being sounded. Religious experience seems to be coming to its own again—and coming to its own despite the modern attack on religion from the Freudian school of New Psychologists

with its over-emphasised doctrine of the "Unconscious" and its revolting theory of "Pan-Sexualism." Indeed as far back as the latter half of the last century a new philosophical drift in the direction of religion is noticeable. Men like T. H. Green of Oxford, the brothers John and Edward Caird of Glasgow, and others of the Neo-Hegelian school were expounding a type of Idealism which was not easily reduced to a common denominator but which certainly told in the direction of the rehabilitation of moral and religious values. And now in our own day the tendency to give religious experience its due weight is more marked than ever. Rodulf Eucken of Jena, whom Dr. R. F. Horton described as the greatest thinker of this century, in his philosophical system known as "Activism" defends the spiritual interpretation of life and insists upon the creative power of free personality. These indeed are two fundamental principles of his philosophy. He sets forth a metaphysical conception of a realm of Spirit—an independent spiritual Reality, underlying and transcending the external world, which is not the product of the natural man, but which communicates itself to the natural man as strives for, and responds to, it. His second principle is but an extension of the first. The essence of life is to be found in activity. Man's conduct actualises itself in a world of strife and only in and through endurance does man win his own soul. Ten years ago Prof. W. R. Sorley published his massive volume of Gifford Lectures under the title of "Moral Values and the Idea of God." The book is a study of Morality and Religion in their mutual relationships; it is concerned with the connection between "the true foundation of all ethics and morals" and the "true knowledge of God." *But its chief significance* lies in its continual insistence upon the real value of moral and religious experience for the interpretation of the universe, upon the fact that the deliverances of the moral and spiritual consciousness must be taken into account by the philosopher if he is to succeed in formulating a consistent "world-view." Indeed, he insists that our moral and spiritual experience has certain primacy for our interpretation of Reality and that any denial of this fact is bound to lead to a partial and lop-sided theory of the universe of life and being. More recently that brilliant mathematical

philosopher, Prof. A. N. Whitehead, of Harvard, has given us a small yet remarkable book, "The Making of Religion" in which the real value and meaning of religion are stressed from beginning to end. It is such facts as these that justify us in asserting that religious experience is coming to its own again, that it is now more likely, than at any other time since the 18th century, to obtain a fair hearing in the highest courts of philosophical speculation. And that is as it should be. The modern "world-view" in which the most advanced thought of to-day finds its chief pride professes to be an interpretation of experience, and not merely a series of deductions from *à priori* principles, as in the 17th and 18th centuries; if therefore men are going to put complete trust in experience there is no justification for omitting what is undoubtedly an important part of experience, viz. the religious and the moral. And modern philosophy is coming to an increasing recognition of that fact.

2. The second significant feature of recent philosophy is its *protest against over-intellectualism in the search for Reality*. One of the great controversies of modern philosophy was the long drawn-out conflict between the Rationalists and the Empiricists. The Empiricists—who are best represented by the British philosophers John Locke, Bishop Berkeley and David Hume—maintained that all knowledge originated in experience and that nothing could be known independently of experience. The Rationalists, on the other hand—who are best represented by the Continental philosophers, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz—held that in addition to the knowledge which we gain by means of sense-perception and by means of reflection upon sense-data, there are certain "innate principles" which are formulated by the reasoning faculty independently of experience. Some of the Rationalists, indeed, went further still and entertained the ideal of a system of knowledge which would be in its essence a vast mathematical system, all the detail and complexity of which would be rigorously deducible from a few central truths. Rationalism, however, failed to maintain itself in the face of the growing Empiricism of the age and Empiricism itself found its logical conclusion in the Sceptical philosophy of David Hume. Then along came Kant, awakened out of

his "dogmatic slumber" by the scepticism of Hume, and he endeavoured to find a way out of the impasse to which philosophy had come. This he did by demonstrating the inability of the "pure reason" to grasp the "thing-in-itself" and by insisting upon the primacy of the "practical reason." Many have felt that Kant's solution to the problem is more apparent than real; to them it seems that the German philosopher smuggled in through the back door the poor waif whom he had kicked out through the front door. But be that as it may it is certain that in his insistence upon the primacy of the "practical reason" Kant was a Rationalist and in him the intellectualistic tradition once more begins its ascendancy. The summit was finally reached in Hegel with his theory of the Absolute in which Thought and Being are One.

All this, of course, is quite familiar to students of the history of philosophy. The point I want to make is that in our own day we are witnessing another revolt against extreme intellectualism in the attempt to find a consistent "world-view"—a revolt comparable, in some of its aspects to the earlier revolt of Empiricism against Rationalism. This revolt has taken several significant forms, only two of which need be referred to here.

(1) Take the philosophic movement called *Pragmatism*—a movement initiated by the little-known American philosopher, Charles Pierce, but popularised and made influential by that profound and brilliant thinker, William James, of Harvard, and expounded in our own country to-day, under the name of "Humanism" by Dr. F. C. S. Schiller. Pragmatism was put forward as a new theory of knowledge avowedly anti-intellectualist in spirit and method. Its essence, according to William James, "is the doctrine that the whole meaning of a conception expresses itself as a practical consequence." In other words, a truth must not be regarded as the solution of a problem but as the basis of an activity. That which works is true; whatever is useful is valid. The truth of any judgment consists solely in the practical consequences which follow from it. A mere disinterested love of wisdom of which the Greeks prided themselves, a mere speculative interest in truth that has no relation to the living needs of the soul, is a will-o'-the-wisp which leads men nowhere.

Thinking and living are intimately connected and cannot be truly divorced. We live before we think and thinking to be valid must be useful, i.e. it must serve the purposes of living. Ideals are the instruments of life and even the ultimate principles of thought, those very principles without which we cannot think at all, are not copies of reality but tools fashioned by man for his own use. As James puts it in his own vivid manner: "When Pragmatism says that a notion is true, it means that it has *value for life*, it helps men and women to live, to understand and connect and control their experience, to overcome the world. The truth of an idea is its *cash-value*—its equivalent of help, of encouragement of vital benefit."

Now the bearing of the pragmatic principle upon the Christian Faith is, I think, obvious. Pragmatism offers a justification of the "faith-attitude" and the "faith-attitude" is, as we know, the very essence of the Gospel. Even though we cannot accept the exaggerated assertion of Lecky that "Christianity has habitually disregarded the virtues of the intellect," we know full well that the religion of Jesus Christ is not simply a theory or a speculation but a life and a living process. The Christian Faith, in its essence, is practical, not theoretical. The "faith-attitude" is something very much more than an intellectual assent to a "plan of salvation" or a too particular theory of the Atonement; rather in the words of Hartley Coleridge, "It is an affirmation and an act, that bids eternal truth be present fact! It is, in a sense, "the will to believe." "If any man will to do His will, he shall *know* of the doctrine." The Christian Faith, of course, involves theory and the theology that aims at being true must be capable of being tested by logical canons. We do not really serve the cause of our religion by retaining bad logic in our theology. But life is larger than logic and the pragmatic principle in its application to Christianity is the contention that the truth of religious theory cannot be separated from the success of the religious attitude. Christianity presents us with a *forced* option between two alternatives, both of which are *alive*, but neither of which can be strictly proved. "Either there is a Heavenly Father—or there is not." Only Omniscience itself can be certain which is the true alternative. Yet we

must choose, for the choice is vital. The sceptic has made his choice and we have made ours. If the sceptic is right in his choice, what has he gained? On his own principles, nothing. If we are right what have we gained? We have gained that which is necessary for living—viz. freedom and strength in the love of an Almighty Father and Friend. That is to say, our alternative *works* and is thereby demonstrated practically to be true.

But in the application of the pragmatic principle to the Christian Faith at least one important caution must be borne in mind. Pragmatism is not impervious to criticism, though surely Dr. Garvie is too scathing when he says that is "savours of intellectual dishonesty and cowardice." Pragmatism has rendered real service to religion in insisting upon the principle of utility in the search for reality. But is every religious idea which works to be accepted as true? The devout Romanist obtains peace and strength when he adores the elevated Host, yet few of us here would regard the Roman Mass as a true expression of the Gospel. In days gone by, antiquated methods of studying the Bible "edified" the saints; ought we to retain such methods because they "worked" in the experience of people who knew nothing about modern Biblical science? Recently, one of our younger ministers, preaching at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, remarked that he was "an old-fashioned Calvinist" (apparently he was very sensible of the fact that he was standing in Spurgeon's pulpit). Perhaps, had he been challenged on his statement he would have fallen back on the argument that "Calvinism has produced strong men," i.e. Calvinism "worked!" Most of us, I should think, would gladly confess to a wholesome Calvinistic strain in our theology. But ought we to defend Calvinism solely on the ground that it produced strong men in the 17th and 18th centuries? We must not regard certain views of the Bible or the Church as proved simply because they are useful for the religious life. The fact of the matter is, the positive statement of the pragmatic principle is misleading. We cannot always say that whatever works is true. But, as Prof. W. E. Hocking points out, we can use the pragmatic principle *negatively* and urge that *that which does not work is not true*, and say of any theory of reality which "lowers

the capacity of men to meet the stress of existence, or diminishes the worth to them of what existence they have"—we can say of such a theory that it is somehow false, and if we are really honest and sincere we cannot for long rest content with it. If this negative interpretation of the pragmatic principal is valid, then it is obvious that the "faith-attitude," and not its logical contradictory, is the only one that can justifiably be adopted by any fair-minded man.

(2) The other anti-intellectualist movement to which I refer is the new *Intuitionism* of the French philosopher, Monsieur Henri Bergson—a movement which may be regarded as a rebound from both Hegelianism and Pragmatism. Berson's system of thought is sometimes termed "Vitalism" and sometimes it is classed with the philosophy of Eucken under the title "Activism," but the essence of his teaching is best summed up in the appellation "Intuitionism." For the foundation of Bergson's philosophy is the contention that deeper than any intellectual bond which hold a conscious being to the reality in which it lives, and which it may come to know, it is the vital bond of *sympathy*. Our knowledge of reality depends upon an intuition which is never merely intellectual, and this intuition is the very essence of life. In other words, the pathway to reality is not to be found in logic or science or analytic thought, but in this supra-intellectual faculty—intuition. Unaided reason can never bring us into contact with the Ultimate; such contact can be achieved only by means of a non-rational, yet not ir-rational, *awareness* which gives us an immediate and unimpeded vision of Reality. This "awareness," or intuition, is a kind of intellectual sympathy, but its affinity is with instinct rather than with discursive thought. In the language of Prof. Miall Edwards: "It is instinct become disinterested, wound up into knowledge instead of wound off into action, and so capable of leading us into the most intimate secrets of life." That such non-intellectual knowledge is possible Bergson demonstrates in a number of ways. In the existence and sway of instinct in the animal nature he finds a proof from fact. Instinct, he maintains, is an inlet for knowledge as well as an outlet for impulse; it is a faculty of knowing which does not use the categories of

the intellect. He also finds evidence in the generally recognised fact of aesthetic intuition. The layman perceives the landscape. He has an external knowledge of its content. Its parts are so arranged that his intelligence can grasp it as a whole for the purposes of action. But in so far as he lacks the artist's vision, he misses the life, the meaning, the intention of the landscape. The artist sees the same landscape. Both men see the same material content. Yet the artist sees more and he sees that more by virtue of his possession of aesthetic intuition. His attention is keyed to the inner rhythm of nature ; he perceives creative form at work ; he catches the meaning which gives vitality and unity to the parts. And just because the artist has this intuition of meaning he can make the scene live with the pen or brush. For further evidence of his contention, Bergson takes us to the history of philosophy. He maintains that the enduring element in everyone of the great systems of philosophy is not the dialectic, but the vision behind the dialectic, the vision which dialectic seeks to interpret in intellectual terms. In every great system there is a dominant personal element which defies historical analysis—an element, in fact, which is none other than the intuition that inspires the whole system, the breath of life in the valley of dry bones.

Now I think that the bearing of all this on our Christian Faith obvious. Christianity also makes its protest against the over-intellectual attitude in religion, and without despising reason shows that there is "a more excellent way" into the heart of things. The Gospel, let us remember, is a form of Intuitionism. Faith is an immediate contact with the Ultimate Reality, an unclouded awareness of the Divine. It is "the pure in heart," not merely the clear in head, who "see God." Or as old Dr. James Hamilton used to say: "A Christian on his knees sees further than a philosopher on his tip-toes." The essential Christian experience takes us into the heart of the Ultimate in a way that nothing else can. Is not this the grand claim of every Christian Mystic from the Writer of the Fourth Gospel right down to Alexander Whyte? Most of us have to be content with being what Arthur Pringle calls "synoptic Christians." In our more general moods we are more at home on the plateau with Matthew,

Mark and Luke than on the mountain top with John ; the plain, if burning, injunctions of some of Chrysostom's "Homilies" suit us far better than the rapturous ecstasies of the Mediæval Mystics. And yet, in so far as we get to the heart of Christian Faith, our experience is one with that of the Mystics in every Christian century, though we should never dream of indulging in the grossly exaggerated descriptions of our experiences such as we find in Sant Theresa or in Catherine of Siena. Nevertheless, strip Mysticism of its vagaries and its extravagances, winnow the chaff from the wheat, and you have the essential Christian experience—viz. an immediate intuition of "the All-Wise and the All-Loving too." And one service, at any rate, that Bergson has rendered to the Christian Faith is that he has made it more possible for us to defend, from the philosophic point of view, this essential Christian experience ; indeed, during the last ten years or so there has been a marked tendency in certain quarters to exploit this new Intuitionism as philosophic justification of Christian Mysticism.

3. The third and last significant feature of recent philosophy to which I will refer (and that briefly), is the *widespread revolt against Materialism*. 19th century philosophy, especially as allied to the rapidly expanding science of the period, was for the most part frankly materialistic in tone and outlook. A mechanical conception of the universe was in the ascendant. The classical theories of evolution—both the Darwinian and the Lamarkian—enabled men to think of the sum total of phenomena as a sort of gigantic clock that could be explained in the terms of pure mechanism that did not call for the intervention of mind for either its construction or its control. Indeed, the advances made in the sciences of biology and physiological psychology seemed to many to eliminate mind not only from the ground and cause of the universe but from human life itself. Consciousness came to be regarded as mere "epi-phenomenon"—as an entirely unessential phosphorescent glow generated by the working of the machinery of the nervous system, a mere by-product of the biological process which had no significance whatever for the totality of things. Life itself was looked upon as an accident, as matter accidentally become

conscious of itself. Hence it was nothing more than a human conceit to regard consciousness—the outcome of an accident—as the key to the interpretation of the universe. I am not, of course, saying that every scientist and philosopher held this view—we think, e.g. of Lord Kelvin among scientists and of T. H. Green among philosophers who were very far removed from the being materialists—but I do say that this was the trend of advanced thought in the last century.

To-day, however, a different tale can be told. The present situation, on this point, can be summed up in the paradoxical saying of Lord Balfour: "We know far too much about matter now-a-days to be materialists." To refer to two points only. A thoroughgoing acceptance of the evolutionary hypothesis does not necessarily commit one to the materialistic conception of the universe. A man can accept the view that higher forms of life have been evolved from lower forms and yet still believe in "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" as the Source and Originator of all things. The theory of continuous development implicates a supreme directive Intelligence as much as does the older view of special creation. Indeed, one of the most recent developments of the evolutionary hypothesis—that known as the theory of Emergent Evolution, championed by such thinkers as Dr. Lloyd Morgan and Prof. S. A. Alexander—is definitely opposed to the mechanical theory of life so prevalent in the 19th century. It recognises within the evolutionary process a direction, a striving towards higher ideals and values and such recognition is a great advance towards the view that evolution does not get rid of creative and presiding Mind, i.e. God. I am not saying that the theory of evolution is to be accepted as finally proved; all I am asserting is that it is quite possible for a man to accept that theory and still believe in the God of Jesus.

Moreover, the trend in Psychology is to-day away from the materialistic interpretation of the life. The influence of the American Behaviourists is rapidly on the wane. One has only to read such a book as Dr. W. McDougall's "Outline of Psychology" to see how difficult it is, in view of more recent psychological research, to accept the once prevalent theory that man is nothing more

than a highly evolved machine. Quite recently, Prof. A. E. Taylor, one of the foremost philosophers, said with reference to the theory of psychological materialism that it is the theory "which finds *least* support among psychologists who really know the facts." And he adds: "No scientific psychologist whatever is a materialist." That testimony should, I think, be sufficient.

Much more could be said, but I must close. Bergson has said that a philosopher should be content if he has treated with success one or two problems in the course of a life-time. I have endeavoured to treat, all too inadequately I know, one or two problems in their bearing upon our Christian Faith—and that within the limited space of a comparatively short address. Only one thing will I say in conclusion. Prof. W. Adams Brown has said: "For a world religion two things are necessary—a universal sympathy and a unique message. This combination Christianity provides." Christianity itself is a philosophy (though it is not merely a philosophy) for Christ came as the Wisdom as well as the Power of God. It has a unique message—the message of the grace and love of the Almighty revealed in the Person and Work of Him whom we regard as "the Lord of all good life." And yet it also possesses a universal sympathy. It wholeheartedly welcomes truth and goodness wherever it is found or from whatever quarter it comes. In a word, the Gospel offers men a "world-view" which delivers the Christian thinker from bondage to any philosophy, yet which enables him to judge all human systems of thought so that he may receive from them only that which is true and good.

JOHN PITTS.

#### NOTE ON BOOKS.

Those who wish to pursue this entrancing subject further should read:—

Philosophy and Religion ...	<i>Hastings Rashdall</i>
The Philosophy of Religion ...	<i>Miall Edwards</i>
The Problems of Philosophy	<i>Watts Cunningham</i>
Matter, Life, Mind and God ... ..	<i>Hoernlé</i>

These are all very readable books and are comparatively cheap.

J.P.

## BAPTISED INTO JESUS CHRIST.

*Extracted from an Address given by Rev. John Lewis,  
of Crawley.*

I AM a Baptist Christian to-day, not because I was born such, but because I have found that the truths enforced and illustrated in that faith, have served me best in the long, intellectual, moral and spiritual struggle in which I have been involved. My deliberate conviction is that the Evangelical faith alone meets all the facts of life triumphantly, that our distinctive practice best illustrates and enforces the central truths of that faith, and that these truths and this practice bear witness to each other in the experience of to-day. If I could not say this I should question our right to exist as a separate denomination. In that case we should best serve God by closing down at least some of our smaller churches. Those who work in small towns and villages will best appreciate my meaning.

But when we once see that the principles we call "Baptist" are of the very essence of the Christian faith, we see too that it is our duty to uphold them whatever the cost. And they are costly. They make a great personal demand on us in the initial act in which we publicly put on Christ. They make a far more exacting demand when we try to realise the ideals to which that act commits us. And the demand is one that some of us feel we dare not refuse.

I am not judging others. There are as good Christians outside our denomination as within. I do not plead for "close membership" churches. Four out of the five with which I have been connected have been "open" and I see no reason to wish them closed. My purpose is to encourage that sense of dignity which responsibility recognised and accepted always brings, in this case a responsibility not merely for the outward symbol, but far more, for all that it symbolises. Let this standard be maintained, and the denomination will take care of itself.

It should not be supposed that I see everything now as I once did. It is the old story of the spiral staircase, though for once we may change the figure and think of the zig-zags up a mountain pass. At every turn of the road

you see the same country on a larger scale and in a truer perspective. The grandeur grows and its meaning unfolds as you ascend. Objects that loomed large below are dwarfed by the larger that come into view. Things that seemed essential become relatively less important; some drop out altogether, others assume an entirely different aspect. Yet all the time the landscape is the same. It is only we who have changed our position. The lonely heights, so near and yet so far, still "thunder, God!" the God whose name the lovely valleys whispered. Their white peaks piercing into the deep blue, like the awful holinesses set in a framework of the everlasting mercy, remind us that we have not yet apprehended, there are fuller unveilings awaiting us round the next corner, while they call on us to press towards the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God *in Christ Jesus*.

The Christ into Whom we were baptised is the same Christ now as on that memorable day, but how much grander a Christ! We were small enough then; we are less than nothing now.

I take, therefore, these four words, and reading them in the light of the only ritual that does them justice, I find therein a whole system of Christian doctrine and ethics. So understood, they join heaven and earth in a vital, personal and progressive way. Starting in the physical they lead on to unimagined altitudes of a spiritual humanity. The material becomes servant to the spiritual, keeping it human; the spiritual sanctifies the material, saving us from materialism. We avoid the vagueness of the Quaker, and the superstition of the Sacerdotalist. Our faith becomes sacramental without being sacramentarian. And all this because the form expresses most appropriately, not a formal, but a personal and individual union with a person, a union which in the very nature of the case, requires intelligent faith and entire surrender, a faith and a surrender ideally complete in one act, but ever finding fuller realisation in the great adventure of the Christian life.

#### BAPTISM INTO JESUS CHRIST

is the most personal and individual experience possible. We demand of each candidate a public confession of a most private experience. There is a certain loneliness about it as there is about all the deepest experiences of life, a

loneliness which is part of the price we pay for the privilege of personality. When God speaks to us it is as though He and we were the only persons in the universe. Baptism is first of all of that nature. It is not yet a social act, though it will become so. It is baptism into Jesus Christ before it is baptism into a Church. "The Christian religion," says Dr. Fosdick, "is a love relation of persons." There is no way in which persons can get into such relations save by personal faith. To baptise an unconscious infant is to contradict not only the letter and spirit of Scripture, but to contradict baptism itself. It misuses a form and stultifies its meaning. The baptism that is not into Jesus Christ is worse than useless. "Were ye baptised into the name of Paul?" says the indignant Apostle to the quarrelsome Corinthians. He thanked God he had baptised very few of them, for they were defeating the very object of the ordinance by the way in which they were using it. When that happens it is time to drop even a Christ-ordained practice.

My baptism meant more than committing myself to a cause or a church. It meant my vital union with a living Person for ever and for ever.

"Not what I do believe, but Whom,  
 Who walks beside me in the gloom?  
 Who shares the burden wearisome?  
 Who all the dim way doth illumine?  
 And bids me look beyond the tomb  
 The larger life to live.  
 Not what I do believe, but Whom.  
 Not what, but Whom."

So we begin with an act which sets forth with a simplicity which is sublime and a vividness unmistakable, our union with a living Person in Whom all the springs of our life are now for ever to be found. And we must continue in the same way. We are not to be always laying again the foundations, but we are to be ever building there—and nowhere else. "Rooted and builded up in Him," says the Apostle, with a glorious mixture of metaphor, and again, "grow up into Him in all things," where the figure seems inverted but the sense is the same. It is progress in the same direction. The wording of my subject has this at the heart of it. "Into," the Greek

proposition "*eis*" expresses motion towards the place we call "*en*." Even when we are in Christ we are always to be coming more fully into Him. Baptism is a thing done once for all, but never done with.

We see this from the Apostle's appeal to it in Romans vi. Faced with the most deadly objections to his Gospel of justification by faith alone, and the most fatal dangers that threaten Christian character, he reminds these Christians at Rome that they were baptised into Jesus Christ, and then proceeds to show what that meant.

NOTICE FIRST THE POINT ON WHICH THEY WERE ALL  
AGREED.

It was common ground that they were "baptised into Jesus Christ." They had no difficulty in understanding the Apostle's constant use of such phrases as "in Christ," "in Christ Jesus," "in Jesus Christ our Lord." How often, to use Bishop Moule's picturesque phrase, "the music unrolls itself into the Blessed Name." Dr. Glover points out that the Apostle was always using verbs and nouns concerning his earthly friends, compounded with the Greek preposition "*sun*" (with). They are rather difficult to translate into English, "fellow-prisoner," "fellow-worker," and such like, but for the Lord Jesus he has a similar set of verbs which are untranslatable save by paraphrase, "crucified with Christ," "buried with Him," "alive with Him," and then in a great burst in Romans, "joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Here in one verse we have the same thing three times, for "joint heirs," "suffer with," "glorified together," are each only one word. It is as if even in his very language nothing could separate the man from his Master. His very speech is a revelation of what being baptised into Jesus Christ meant for Paul.

BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER POINT ON WHICH THESE  
ROMANS WERE NOT SO CLEAR.

"Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into His death?"

It is one of the most searching questions he could have put, and we need to face it to-day. It defines Christian baptism once for all. There is no baptism into Jesus Christ that is not baptism into His death. That much is beyond controversy.

When you ask what being baptised into His death means, the answer is not so easy, and I confess that there is no part of my subject that has given me such long and anxious thought.

Yet we Baptists are committed more than any other body of Christians to the task of demonstrating what these words mean. We contend that the following verse: "We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life," can only be understood as baptism by immersion, and our contention is supported by an increasing number of scholars in all the churches. But it would be a poor thing to be satisfied with a triumph of this kind. We are bound to go further and insist upon the fact behind the figure until it becomes the most powerful factor in our lives. We must show how the atoning work of Christ makes new men. Our distinctive ordinance compels us to look at that profound subject from this point of view. It obliges us to make the death and resurrection of Christ the foundation of all our hopes, and the centre of all our teaching.

I speak for no one but myself, but my own convictions go further. I find that baptism as Paul understood it, while not fixing a rigid creed, helps me to grasp that element in the death of Christ which gives me most deliverance from the power of sin because it most completely sets me free from its guilt and restores me to fellowship with God. The two are one and must never be separated. I am very conscious that all theories of the Atonement are inadequate, but I am convinced that the truest will be found to be that which most deeply affects conduct. I am, in virtue of my union with Christ by faith, exhorted to reckon myself dead to sin and law. I cannot see any force in the exhortation except it be true that He died not only "with me" and "for me," but also "instead of me." It is into His death I am baptised, because it was my own. How can I understand this if He did not die in my place? His death was more than a martyrdom, more than brotherly sympathy, more than a friendly service.

If this were not so why should I be baptised into it any more than into thousands of other deaths of which these things might be said?

His death was the most momentous event in the history of the race, and therefore in my history. Its value to me for all religious, moral and spiritual purposes *is in the fact that I died there*. I say, when I see that Cross, in the words of an African convert: "Jesus, come down from thence, that is my place!" As Dr. Carnegie Simpson puts it, "A dark and dreadful mystery hangs over the Garden, and the Cross, but one thing in it all presses home clear—there I might have been and should have been."

All my subjective experience depends on this objective fact. My At-one-ment with God rests upon Christ's Atonement for me. My life in the will of God is rooted in God's holy judgment on my sin where love finds its fullest and its final revelation. "Herein *is* love"—the thing itself! (I. John iv., 10). It is now the great privilege of my life to realise how completely God identifies me with the Living Saviour, because once on "the bitter Cross," He so fully identified His dying Son with me. No one can realise either stupendous fact all at once.

"Though with thine earliest dawn thou should'st begin it,  
Scarce were it finished with thy setting sun."

But we are committed to the task. When we honestly attempt it we find it to be "Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan," whereby we may attain the goal of our being. We no longer tread the weary mill of our own efforts, predestined to failure. We have a better method than that of stoical soul culture, even though it be along the lines of Christ's teaching and example. We have newness of life in the root and therefore in the fruit. "For if we be *fellow growers* in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

I find here again the symbol illustrating the truth, and the truth defining the symbol, in a way that fixes the meaning of the truth and the method of the symbol.

And the truth is that for which my experience of myself makes me cry out with a passion which every year intensifies. As Paul saw, there is no way of "rising on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things," save through being conformed to the death of Christ, because there is no other way of making those selves really dead. Dr. Dale (up to date here if nowhere else) admitting the

difficulty of putting into words this death and life union with Jesus Christ, goes on to say, that the doctrine has been verified in the experience of many Christian people, and shows how it meets the need and longing of hearts outside the Christian faith. He quotes the prayer of a devout Mahometan—"Give me first, O Allah, a death in which there is no life, and then a life in which there is no death."

In the religions of the East the same thought is often found though some times in a form which has been well described as "renunciation which is the acme of self-seeking." Dale, in a passage of moving eloquence, too long to quote, pictures the yearning of the oft defeated soul for a real deliverance—it reminds one of Christina Rossetti's poignant word—

"If I could once lay down myself,  
And start self-purged upon the race,  
That all must run! Death runs apace.

Myself, arch-traitor to myself;  
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,  
My clog whatever road I go."

or Tennyson's "Ah, for a man to arise in me, That the man I am might cease to be!"

AND THE PRAYER IS ANSWERED IN THE GREAT TRUTH we specially hold for a despairing world, that Magna Charta of Christian Freedom ratified afresh every time we immerse a believer into Jesus Christ. It is no objection to this view that many who are very jealous for the outward form never seem to see its implications, and that those who do, find it difficult to realise them, so that they have ever to be learning the same lesson again. Our business is to see things as God sees them, for as Sir George Adam Smith somewhere says, "What God sees is reality." Or as Du Bose puts it, "It is our Christianity to see ourselves in Christ."

We must not ignore God's fact held out for our faith because our weakened vision fails at first to recognise its value, or our perverted will resents it as unpleasant. The fact itself is a direct challenge to self-will, calling for something harder, by far, than self-denial, the denial of

self. That selfish self is the enemy. It sometimes lifts its head in revolt against our mode of baptism, describing it as "fanatical," "absurd," "unnecessary," even when it is forced to acknowledge it as the primitive method. It meets us more subtly still when it persists in its futile efforts at self-reformation, instead of gladly welcoming a love that "fills infinitude wholly, nor leaves, up or down, one spot for the creature to stand in." It is thus that "salvation joins issue with death," a way where there is no possibility of glorying but in the Lord, and where God is "crowned with the topmost, ineffablist, uttermost crown." Is it possible that some of the objections to immersion arise from the suspicion, dim and but half realised, that somewhere in the background there stands this deeper death? You may call this teaching "mystical," "Keswick," or what not. Who cares for epithets when "the gates of new life are thrown open," and we "see the Christ stand!"? To reckon ourselves dead in Him is always to find ourselves alive in Him. He cannot abide in us till we abide in Him, but He always does then. If we are to have Him in us, we must accept the fact that "we have been and are crucified with Christ." It is as Professor Godet somewhere says, "a double substitution," "Christ substituted for us before God, as our righteousness; Christ substituted for us in ourselves, as our sanctification." I know well the difficulties as to the "substitution" in both cases, but I am always being forced to return to both by the stern facts of experience and the gracious discipline of a love which will go any lengths to rescue me from my pride.

Nor need there be any fear of losing our proper independence by such a surrender. Real faith does not destroy personality; it enhances it.

Prof. Oman says "The test of a Father's aid is the responsibility, freedom, and independence of his son." I agree, and I find these qualities strengthening within me when I am thus baptised into Christ. His death in my stead brings home to me my responsibility for my sins which made that death necessary, as nothing else ever did. It quickens the conscience that it quiets. I am never "the captain of my soul," until I allow Him to be the "General Officer Commanding." The measure of my surrender is the measure of my independence. So in an

age when physical science makes all its progress by recognising the reign of law, and when society is threatened with disruption because of revolt against it, I feel more than ever the necessity of that union with the death of Christ which releases me both from a lawless and a legal spirit, and fulfils in me the righteousness of the law, which the law could not do.

To adopt the language of modern psychology, "Conflict and repression are done away in the final synthesis or sublimation—"there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

But, make no mistake,

IT IS STILL THE "LOVE REVELATION OF PERSONS."

As a recent writer has said, "We are saved not so much by the death of Christ as by the Christ who died." To divorce the doctrine from the person is disastrous. Most of our difficulties with Paul and John arise here. These men wrote out of the closest fellowship with the living Jesus. In their doctrinal statements they were exploring Him; in their delineation of the Christian character they were portraying Him. In the whole history of folly there is nothing more foolish than the attempt, so often and so confidently made, to explain their words without their experience of Him. "How different," says Archbishop Trench, "is compliance with a complex of rules and the casting oneself on a beating heart!" And God gives special help that we may know that "beating heart," for being baptised into Jesus Christ means being baptised not "into" (save in one great passage where the whole Trinity is mentioned), nor even "with" but "in" the Holy Ghost.

It is surely significant that all four Evangelists report the prophecy of John the Baptist, that "He" (i.e. Christ) "shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost," and that the risen Christ takes up the same words, and just before His ascension, bids His people wait for the promise. Henceforward baptism is always connected with the gift of the Holy Spirit as it was in our Lord's own case. Either just before, or at baptism, or immediately after, the Spirit came to the first believers. It would be an immense gain if all whom we baptise to-day were taught to expect and receive the same gift. It is only so, that they will be able to know

the Christ into whom they have come. The Comforter is the Helper who will lead them gradually into the untrackable riches hidden in Christ for their appropriation.

And here our insistence on faith and immersion find fresh support. If baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost go together, as they do everywhere after Pentecost why is it necessary to confirm those who were christened in infancy? If they have been baptised in the Apostolic sense, they do not even need to be told that they must be born again. Moreover, how can sprinkling be a symbol of that which embraces the whole being?

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**THE HIND, THE HUNTER, AND MYSELF.**

The hind bounds up the steepest mountain track,  
 Then springs from ledge to ledge where no track leads ;  
 Both hound and hunter fail to find her haunt,  
 She breaths untainted air, and resting, feeds :  
 O safe and favoured hind whom no care stirs !—  
 Lord, make my feet, my heart, my life, like hers !

HARRY J. PREECE.

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**THOU ART THE KING OF GLORY, O CHRIST !**

**Our Advent Witness.**

We backward look—our Saviour came,  
 Our hearts within us burn ;  
 We forward look—for while on earth  
 He told of His return ;  
 Our Advent witness thus we bear  
 His Advents in between,  
 Assured that He will come because  
 He has already been.  
 Amen ! Alleluia !

HARRY J. PREECE.