

Lord Halifax for the permissive use of the first Communion Office of Edward VI. What is needed is a steady, though patient and considerate, enforcement of the obligation of obedience to the declared law on disputed points, and a concentration of the energy of clergy of all schools on the revival and deepening of faith in the great realities of the Christian Creed and in Holy Scripture. In political action Christian men ought resolutely to oppose policies and parties which would be injurious to the maintenance of a national religion among us, and which would reduce to a secondary place in our public life the obligations and influences of our faith. We may be quite sure that no social reforms will conduce to the permanent welfare of the poorer classes or of any classes unless faith in God and in Christ is maintained and deepened in the hearts of our people. As Lord Hugh Cecil said well the other day, all such social legislation is, at the best, mere machinery. That upon which the results depend is the spirit which animates those who employ the machinery and those on whom it operates; and if we would save our country from the anarchy and misery which menaces any Godless society, the time has come for subordinating all political and ecclesiastical quarrels to the one supreme necessity of reviving the old God-fearing and Christ-trusting religion which has been the foundation of the best English character and life.



Jesus or Christ? ¹

BY THE REV. CANON H. HENSLEY HENSON, D.D.

“**J**ESUS or Christ?” This strange and disconcerting question is often forced on our notice at the present time, and it has a certain importance as summing up shortly a tendency of religious thought and indicating the nature of a

¹ Sermon (on Heb. xiii. 8) preached in Westminster Abbey, November 21, 1909.

religious experiment which is attracting some Christian people. Neither the tendency nor the experiment is really new, for we can produce parallels and equivalents of both from those distant ages when first the Gospel passed under the criticism and into the speculation of non-Christian and semi-Christian thinkers ; but both have taken unprecedented and distinctive forms in our own time. The tendency is towards a repudiation of the unique authority of the Gospel, and its absorption into an eclectic religion hospitable enough to admit into its pantheon every form of deity. This repudiation has perforce taken the form of a severance between the historical and the theological elements of Christianity—the substitution of an ideal for a person. I say this severance has been necessitated, because the truly distinctive factor in Christianity is precisely the combination of the historical and the theological elements ; and if the Gospel is really to be domesticated in the new eclecticism, it can only be by disallowing the history from which it has sprung. The experiment is being made by an application, or misapplication, of historical criticism to the Apostolic testimony enshrined in the New Testament. It is assumed to be possible to go behind the Apostolic testimony, and recover by a critical handling of the Gospels another and a truer version of the history of Jesus than that which the Apostles proclaimed and assumed. The result of this attempt is expressed in the challenge “Jesus or Christ?”—that is, history or faith, the facts certified by historical science, or the ideal built on them by generations of believers. It is taken for granted that the difference between history and faith is of such a character that the traditional unity of both is no longer permissible to thoughtful and well-informed men ; and we are assured that the surrender of the history as incompatible with the faith will really nowise injure the latter, because the faith is now so well entrenched in the respect due to its own merits that nothing can now affect its security. If we give up “Jesus” in deference to the “New Theologians,” we are free to keep “Christ,” and to clothe Him with whatsoever moral excellencies we may imagine to be becoming. I desire to

examine this strange and far-reaching proposal, which is made to us with so great a parade of exact knowledge and high ethical fervour.

Let it be noted that this proposal would not concern us here if it were advanced only by those who made no claim to speak as ministers of Christ. We could have no right, and would not wish to have any, to put shackles on the freedom with which our religion is discussed by men who do not themselves accept it; but the situation is different when, from within the Christian society itself, and from those who hold the chairs of authority in the Churches, teachings are put forward in the name of Christ which seem to undercut and disallow the treasured beliefs and indispensable postulates of Christian men. I do not say that even the acutest alarm may necessarily be well-grounded, nor would I ever make novelty as such the criterion of religious error; but these are circumstances which justify—nay, require—the attention of all Christian teachers, and must explain my present concern with the challenge which is implicit in the formula, “Jesus or Christ?”

1. Let me remind you that the suggested severance is absolutely incompatible with the Apostolic witness. The identification of Jesus and Christ took place at the very beginning of Christianity. It is the obvious assumption of all the New Testament writers, and almost immediately it received its formal expression in the double name which we have in the text, Jesus Christ. If we inquire what originally caused that identification, and what established it so firmly in the acceptance of the Apostles, we find the answer set forth very plainly in the New Testament. They were led to believe in Jesus as the Christ by their own close intimacy with Him during His ministry. There is no reasonable doubt that before the Crucifixion He had claimed to be the Christ, and that they had endorsed His claim. Jesus Himself had challenged them on the point. “Who do men say that I am?” He had asked them, in the way towards “the villages of Cæsarea Philippi”; and when they had replied by stating the various opinions respecting

Him which were current among the people, He had asked again: "But who say ye that I am?" To that question Peter had made answer in the tremendous confession, "Thou art the Christ."¹ That was the first Christian Creed: "I believe that Jesus is the Christ." To separate the two names, and propose a choice between them, is to stultify Apostolic witness from the first.

2. The "Christ idea" in the minds of the Apostles was at first—save in so far as their intimate association with their Master had modified it—quite conventional. They were nowise different from their contemporaries, whose Messianic expectations they shared. Perforce they invested their Master with the attributes of such a Christ as they had been trained to expect, and counted on such achievements by Him as they had been taught to regard as the very demonstrations of Christhood.² But the Crucifixion corrected this conventional faith. At first it seemed that their belief in Jesus as the Christ had been wholly destroyed. When the humiliated and terror-stricken disciples fled back from Jerusalem to their native Galilee they carried broken and empty hearts, and lives which were stamped with an intolerable and irrecoverable futility. Then happened the supreme event which restored and exalted their faith. The Crucified returned to them from the grave in which they had laid Him. They saw Him, and heard Him wondrously. He claimed them, rebuked their despondency, commissioned them for a grand ministry of witness, and parted from them with words of benediction. This restored and exalted faith in Jesus as the Christ was the creature of the Resurrection, and it at once dwarfed His earthly ministry into relative unimportance, and invested it with supreme and eternal significance. Let me emphasize the paradox. The living, present Lord, glorious and militant, absorbed all attention. In the fervour of the great assurance they went forth, clothed with

¹ *Vide* St. Mark viii. 27 *et seq.*

² *Cf.* St. Matt. xvi. 22; xvii. 10 *et seq.*; xix. 27; xx. 20 *et seq.*; St. Mark ix. 33 *et seq.*

power from on high, and "preached Christ." They had the demonstration of their message in the central element of their preaching: "Christ is risen." This was the summary of their Gospel: "They preached Jesus and the Resurrection."

3. This concentration of mind on the Lord Himself is naturally most conspicuous in St. Paul, for he had no treasure of holy recollections such as the original Apostles possessed from pre-Resurrection days. His own conversion had been effected by an appearance of the Risen Master, and his continuous labours as a missionary had been always holding him to the central fact that Christ was present in saving power with His Church. The opening words of the Epistle to the Romans exhibit the identification of Jesus and Christ in its full Pauline form, and indicate the manner of the Apostle's thinking on the subject. The passage has something of the aspect of a deliberate confession of faith: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which He promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and Apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for His Name's sake: among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's: to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." You observe that the identification of Jesus and Christ is conscious, categorical, and complete. A doctrine about His Person emerges inevitably. So much was necessitated by the history and contents of the Christ idea. If Jesus were the Christ, then it followed that He entered into possession of the prophecies which had drawn the picture of the Christ on the canvas of Scripture. If this prophetic ideal realized in Jesus were to be correlated with the fact of the Resurrection, and with the manifest and powerful action which called and

commissioned Apostles, and made their preaching mighty to save, then the prophetic ideal itself must be almost indefinitely enlarged and exalted. The Divine dignity—nay, the true Deity—of the Christ, whom St. Paul confessed in Jesus, emerged naturally in his language. As an evangelist, he was primarily concerned with preaching the Gospel of salvation in and through this Divine and reigning Person; the history of the private life and public teaching of Jesus could not take a principal place in that doctrine of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” to which avowedly St. Paul, in proclaiming the message, limited himself, and by which he gathered his converts. The Gospel was essentially contained in those grand acts of the Redemption which he enumerates to the Corinthians, and which bind Christianity fast for ever to the history of Jesus: “I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures: and that He was buried: and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He appeared.”

4. While, however, the identification of Jesus and Christ implied such a concentration of mind on His Person, and on the supreme acts of the Redemption with which His earthly life closed and His risen life began, as to throw into relative obscurity the details of His history, it manifestly follows that those details, so far from being really cast aside as unimportant, were clothed with supreme interest and significance. It is nothing better than a grotesque travesty of the facts to say with a well-known London minister, writing in the recently published *Hibbert Journal Supplement*, that “the Christ of the Apostle Paul bore little or no relation to the actual Jesus of Galilee”; that “for Paul the earthly ministry of Jesus does not exist”; that “all he has to say about Christ could just as well have been said under any other name than that of Jesus.”¹ Such assertions are as mischievous as they are grotesque. They imply the plainly irrational assumption that the entire

¹ *Vide* Rev. R. J. Campbell's article in “Jesus or Christ?” p. 189.

teaching of the Apostle is to be found in the Epistles which the New Testament contains. They omit to allow for the knowledge about Jesus, which St. Paul takes for granted that the readers of those Epistles possess, and which they certainly had received from himself. Let me illustrate the argument from the undoubted Epistles of St. Paul. When, in order to persuade the Corinthians to contribute generously to the fund he was collecting for the poverty-smitten disciples of Palestine, the Apostle says: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor," could the words have been spoken with equal fitness about one who had not been as the Son of Man who was so poor that "He had not where to lay His head"? Is it not plain that the Corinthians knew enough of the history of Jesus to be able to appreciate the reference to His poverty? Again, when in the same Epistle St. Paul "intreats" the Corinthians "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," could the appeal have been made with any effect if the Corinthians had not known what the Gospel narratives have to tell us about the character of Jesus? Or, in the Epistle to the Romans, when he commends his appeal for charitable self-suppression in the matter of meats by the statement that "Christ also pleased not Himself," does it make no difference whether the Romans could fill out the reference with a knowledge of the history of Jesus or not? Which is the natural supposition—that they could do his, and were intended to do so, or the contrary? When St. Paul bids the Galatians "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," does not the admonition owe most of its force to the fact that the life of Jesus had provided a supreme example of such service? Generally, does not the exhortation to "imitate" Christ in conduct imply a knowledge, such as our Gospels give us, of His earthly life? Does not St. Paul's practice of quoting specific commandments of the Lord as finally determining practical questions, such as those connected with marriage,¹ and, with the maintenance of the

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 10.

ministry,¹ imply on his part the highest possible estimate of the history of Jesus, and, on the part of his readers, a recognition of that history as forming, so far as it went, a supremely authoritative revelation of Christ's mind? Finally, if, with some eminent critics of our own time,² we may endorse the immemorial belief of Christendom with respect to the authorship of the third Gospel, we can be in no possible doubt that the Synoptic tradition of the Master's life, which St. Paul's "beloved Physician" compiled, was familiar to the Apostle, and underlies his references to Jesus.

5. Having postulated this groundless and quite improbable indifference of St. Paul to the history of Jesus, the writer I have quoted proceeds to describe the history itself as having no religious importance. It does not matter, according to him, whether the narratives of the New Testament are or are not true. He is even indifferent to the verdict they render as to the character of Him whom Christendom has ever worshipped as the Incarnate Son of God. He allows, indeed, that "the being who could inspire others with a faith in God which issued in such a consistent effort to live for the benefit of mankind must have been extraordinary," but immediately adds the terrible and profane assertion that He also was a sinner as the rest. Forgive me for inflicting on you the pain of listening to language so strange and so repulsive on the lips of a Christian minister: "To speak of Him as morally perfect is absurd; to call Him sinless is worse, for it introduces an entirely false emphasis into the relations of God and man." I cannot pretend to understand what is here meant, but there is no ambiguity about the main statement. The so-called "New Theology" is declared by its principal exponent to imply the sinfulness of Jesus.

Be it observed that in this teaching the "New Theology" contradicts the unanimous testimony of the Apostles. Even Schmiedel admits that "as far as Jesus is concerned, it is certain

¹ I Cor. ix. 14; *cf.* I Tim. v. 18; Acts xx. 35.

² *E.g.*, Harnack and Ramsay.

that all the writers of the New Testament assumed his sinlessness.”¹ Since Christ, the Object of Christian worship, is thus sharply parted from the Jesus of the Gospels, we perforce inquire what precisely we are to understand that we worship, when we, following the immemorial, continuous, and universal practice of the Church, offer prayers to Jesus Christ. We cannot pray to a fellow-sinner; it seems ridiculous to pray to a personified Ideal which we have fashioned for ourselves. “I maintain,” writes Schmiedel candidly, “a clear distinction between the terms ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ in my own practice, and demand that it shall be maintained in the intercourse of theologians with one another; at the same time, we cannot count on laymen understanding the distinction and themselves observing it.”² Laymen will not stand alone in their inability to accept the distinction. “If Jesus was not God,” wrote Bishop Creighton shortly and clearly, “Christianity is not a religion, but a contribution to moral philosophy. But mankind wants a religion, and it is as a religion that Christianity works in the world.”³ Schmiedel carries his complaisance for the layman so far as to suggest a form of prayer which might be addressed to this Jesus, whom he has severed from Christ.

“As to the special question of prayer to Jesus, it would perhaps be not impracticable that prayers which, to a deeper insight, ought to be addressed only to God, should be laid aside by a process of replacing them with others which no one feels reluctance in addressing to Jesus. Their content might be somewhat as follows: ‘Be Thou my guiding star; let Thy image stand ever before mine eyes; rule my heart; make me Thy disciple.’”

This is a singular formulary, and it is addressed to a singular object of worship. I do not think it is likely to replace the ancient forms of Christian prayer: “O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.”

6. A few days ago there was published the prayer which was actually used on November 4 in the City Temple, and

¹ *Vide* “Jesus or Christ?” p. 68.

² *Ibid.*, p. 76.

³ *Vide* “Life and Letters,” vol. ii., p. 256).

addressed to one who is evidently identified with the historic Jesus. In many respects it is a significant prayer, and deserves consideration by thoughtful Christians, who would discover whereto this "New Theology" is tending.¹

"O Lord Christ, long as it is since Thou didst first speak on earth and in the flesh to humble toilers on the hillsides of Galilee, the toilers have not ceased to think about Thee, and the world can never again be as though Thou hadst not been. Men and women, weak and weary ones, sorrowful and sinful, have somehow learned to invoke Thee, to think Thou canst do great things on their behalf. If they have been mistaken it is a sad mistake, and the world is the poorer for having made it, the richer for having thought that Thou wast throned in heaven. But there has been no mistake; we feel, we know, that what Thou art ought to be enthroned at the heart of things, and we come to Thee, the One who ought to be enthroned, and therefore is; all the best instincts of our nature tell us so, and we ask Thee to help us. We are trying to fight the battle Thou hast fought, we are trying to win the victory Thou hast won. We have not fought so well, and we have not won yet, and we pray to Thee to help us here amid the darkness and the ignorance and the sorrow and the difficulty and the dangers of earth; help us that we may attain as Thou hast attained, and come home to what Thou art. We ask it for the sake of the love of God made manifest in man. Amen."

Now this is mostly a soliloquy, rather than a prayer. The reference to "the hillsides of Galilee" compels us to suppose that it is addressed to the historic Jesus—that is, to the very Person, whom the author of this prayer has told us bluntly it is absurd to regard as either morally perfect or sinless. In that case, what can the prayer mean, and what can it be supposed to effect? On the kindest estimate, is it more than a pietistic rhapsody which does equal credit to the heart, and violence to the reason, of the rhapsodist? If, indeed, our only security for the truth of the Christian revelation of "Our Father, which art in Heaven," is our conviction that what ought to be therefore is, where are we better off than those pre-Christian saints who hoped against hope for the victory of good? Experience is against us. Nature is against us. Our theory compels us to hold that not even in Jesus did the iron empire of evil and death fail of its triumph. Were it not better to face the terrible issue like men, and admit with St. Paul that "if Christ hath not

¹ *Vide the Christian Commonwealth*, November 10, 1909.

been raised, our faith is vain ; we are yet in our sins"? Contrast this prayer of the "New Theologian" with the prayer with which the Epistle to the Hebrews concludes : " Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen." There is strength, and Divine assurance, and strong reasonableness in that prayer, and it rises to heaven on the wings of that faith of Apostles and saints which hath overcome the world, even the faith " that Jesus is the Son of God."

7. " Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea and for ever." These are not the words of a bigoted opponent of salutary change. They are not the great formula which is to disguise the little policy of mere obscurantism. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews must have sustained among his brethren the difficult and suspected rôle of a religious innovator. He was the author and advocate of a New Theology. All this adds immensely to the significance of his declaration. He lays hold of the fixed factor in Christianity, that which is the indispensable postulate of every sound theology, and the verifying element in all theologies ; and he offers it as the justification of his novel teaching, and the palladium of Christian faith. The Temple, he tells his Jewish fellow-disciples, will perish ; all that the Temple symbolizes and enables will pass away ; Jerusalem will be desolate, and the religion of national privilege, which has found its centre there, will come to an end ; but this immense demolition of sacred institutions and time-honoured traditions will not touch the core of your faith, nay, it will enable you to realize more truly what that core of your faith really is. You will find that the springs of spiritual life are in no system, but in the Person of the Lord, in whom every system must find meaning, apart from whom all systems are nothing. " Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, yea and for ever." In Him Judaism has found its meaning, and lost its authority, and

reached its term. You must see Him henceforward in larger connections, and apply His teaching to new conditions.

8. After more than eighteen centuries, the Church of Christ is confronted by another crisis, different and yet similar. The same Christian teacher's words are again on our lips, but richly freighted with the confirmations of Christian experience, and we would find in them the courage to innovate, as well as the obligation to hold fast. We, like the Jewish believers of the second generation, who witnessed the downfall of the Jewish polity, must have a "New Theology" in order that we may gather up into our faith the lessons of experience, and the garnered fruits of human progress. Our clear perception of this necessity, and our frank acknowledgment of it, must not blind us to the essential condition of every change, which shall be progress and not retrogression. May we not still serve ourselves of the language of the New Testament in order to formulate that indispensable condition, which is to be for us, as for every previous generation of believers, the criterion of all theologies which claim our acceptance? "Hereby know ye the spirit of God; every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God." Does the "New Theology" bring the Saviour more effectively into the thought and life of our time? or does it, with whatever words of calculated compliment, banish Him farther from both? Is the new way of describing Jesus Christ better able to set Him as Saviour and as Judge before the sin-stricken society of our knowledge? Does the new reading of His life, and the new interpretation of His message, help men the better to perceive and to acknowledge His lordship? Does the "New Theology" make more, or less, of Jesus Christ than the old? Nay, the words were ill-chosen; there can be no less or more, for He is supreme, but is His supremacy vindicated and owned over a larger area of human life? As our science grows, and our experience multiplies problems and unfolds opportunities, is "the proportion of the faith" maintained, and Jesus Christ shown in an ever-

changing world to be "the same yesterday, and to-day, yea and for ever"? These are the questions which every theology must answer before it can justify its name, or warrant Christians in accepting it. Pour what new meanings you will, and must, into the disciple's profession, nothing can ever authorize any tampering with the profession itself: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

But a so-called "New Theology," which proposes the impossible alternative, Jesus or Christ? and calmly accepts the blasphemous postulate of the Saviour's sinfulness, is not Christian theology at all, and needs no other arguments to determine its prompt and indignant repudiation at the hands of Christian men: "We have not so learned Christ."



The Holy Communion as a Sacrifice.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR J. TAIT, M.A.

A.

IT is no unwillingness to acknowledge indebtedness for the work as a whole which prompts the writer to criticize Mr. Darwell Stone's exposition of New Testament teaching in his "History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist,"¹ nor is it failure to appreciate the hopes with which that book has been sent forth on its mission; but it is because "the better understanding of the great doctrine," and the promotion of "the cause of peace," require candid statements of points on which men differ.

The method often adopted in an inquiry into the doctrine of the Holy Communion as found in the New Testament is, to start with, an examination of the words of institution and of St. Paul's teaching in the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

¹ "A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist." By Darwell Stone, M.A. London: Longmans, Green and Co. 2 vols. 30s. net.