

in the evangelical formula, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us"? and how better describe His continuous action through all the centuries of our Christian experience than by the verse, "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth"? The grandeur which thus comes to His person transfigures through it all nature and the whole history of man, and may well bid us adopt as our own the words of the same Evangelist, who did not fear to set his audacious conception in the very forefront of his Gospel, certain that its justification would come in the events which are as the articulated judgment of Providence: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only Begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

A. M. FAIRBAIRN.

ON THE SPIRIT OF THE TRUTH NOT
SPEAKING FROM HIMSELF.

"When He, the Spirit of the Truth, is come, . . . He shall not speak from Himself."—*John* xvi. 13.

THESE familiar yet strange words follow close upon the announcement that Jesus had yet many things to say, concerning which the deficient preparation of His followers kept Him silent. But their loss should not be for ever, because, when the Spirit of the Truth should come, He should lead them along the road into all the truth.

It is to this promise that He adds the strange reason, "for He shall not speak from Himself." How does such an assertion help the context?

Before examining this question, let us pause to observe how strong a light this passage throws upon the mystery of the Divine Nature.

It would be vapid and a platitude, if all agnosticism were not an implicit denial of it, to say that we may look, and learn much by looking, into truths of which we never may fathom the abysses, just as, on some desolate ice-field, the eye may gaze into the intense blue depths of a huge crevasse; and although the utmost ray that is flashed back from sharp needle-points of ice does but announce that profounder gulfs lie undiscerned below, yet what is seen is real, and to ignore it is the dullest, the most incurious apathy.

So does the universe declare the glory, and Scripture the nature of Him whom none by searching can find out. So, in this passage, we may discern something, surely not erroneous, both of the Holy Spirit and of Christ. We see that the Spirit of Truth is no mere influence, but intensely personal and masculine; nor does even our English version "He, the Spirit" more than represent, this once, the energy wherewith, in the immediate context, three times over, Christ applied to the Spirit (which is a word in the neuter) as the fitting pronoun, not "it" but "He," *ἐκεῖνος*. "*He* shall convict the world of sin." "*He*, the Spirit, shall guide you into all the truth." "*He* shall glorify Me." No emphasis could be more imperious. And it is only fair to ask the impugnors of Catholic doctrine how they account for a phenomenon so fraught with import as this triple and deliberate expression of our Lord.

Again, if they will have it that the Spirit is only a divine influence, while the Redeemer is something—anything—less than divine, how is it conceivable that this illuminating influence from God should speak not from Himself, but by taking what belongs to a creature in such wise that the glory should be His? "Who then is Paul? or who is Apollos?" said the greatest of the apostles. "He shall glorify Me: the Divine Spirit shall not speak of Himself but shall take of Mine," said the Carpenter, the Son of Mary.

And this self-assertion, which is characteristic, and common to the Meek and Lowly One in all the Gospels, has been so effective that for nineteen centuries the church, obeying His startling injunction, has "gathered together unto (*eis*) His name, "that is to say" with Him for its aim in worship. Whom maketh He Himself? The Church which adores Him knows.

Deeply instructive also is it to observe that Christ's name for His Spirit is not the Spirit of emotion, however pure and tender, however rapturous and aspiring.

In these days of hysterical impulse, when the lack of self-control is thought to be a more spiritual thing than gravity and sober-minded wisdom, and when great movements appear to have taken for their watchword the ironical phrase "I am become sounding brass," it is surely suggestive to observe that Christ loved best to call His Spirit the Spirit of the Truth, that in the Old Testament He is the Spirit of knowledge and wisdom, and in the Epistles the Spirit of power and love and a sound mind.

Emotion, which in its place is good, is wisely sought not by cultivating a weak emotionalism, but by pondering on the mighty truths by which God would stir and warm our hearts. The Spirit is the Comforter, but much more than "comfort" is included in the great word Paraclete, and the comfort which it involves is not a gust of impulsive ardour; it is born of deep convictions and noble views of truth, and the spirit of such comfort is essentially the Spirit of the Truth.

We reach our main subject, when we ask, further, what does this expression convey, when viewed from an orthodox and frankly Christian standpoint. What special truth does it suggest to us, commensurate with the remarkable paradox by which our Saviour bespoke our attention for it? For it is a paradox. Who does not feel that with such a teacher, the very Spirit of Truth Himself, the natural assur-

ance would be the reverse : " He shall guide you into all the truth, for He *shall* speak from Himself" ? Can anything be more paradoxical than to say, " He shall guide you into all the truth, for He shall not speak from the Spirit of Truth, nor from Himself" ? This, however, is what Jesus said ; and there underlies it, I venture to think, a meaning full of hope for the Church and for humanity.

Obviously the key to the whole passage, which, therefore, must fit this ward of the lock among the rest, is the fact that what is promised is not omniscience after Pentecost any more than during the bodily presence of Jesus. It is much the reverse. It is a progressive and steady advance in knowledge and discernment. I still possess many things to tell you. He, when He shall come, shall lead-you-along-the-road-into all the truth, all that body of truth which is Mine to tell. And how shall He thus lead the Church ? By acting, (it is a sublime and solemn expression) not as her independent Teacher ; albeit He might reveal all truth if that were well to do ; not thus, but as one who listens, who repeats only great words that are spoken by another in some region beyond mortal hearkening. He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever things He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He shall announce to you *the* coming things. And whose voice He hears, we know, since the things which He shall take and reveal unto us are the things of Christ.

And why are these mysteries the things of Christ, in a sense in which they do not belong to the spirit of abstract and ideal truth ? Surely because Christ is the Governor of the world. All things which the Father hath are His. All power is committed to Him in heaven and earth. In the Apocalypse, when every being in heaven and earth had failed to open the sealed book of the history of the future, the Lion of the tribe of Judah—the Lion who is also the Lamb, opened those awful seals which let loose, one by one,

as He broke them, war and pestilence and earthquake and the trumpets of the final judgment.

Thus we are led to the conclusion that Christ, who upon earth graduated his revelations according to the mental and moral capabilities of his disciples, still gives the time for all the revelations of His Spirit; the historical moment is awaited; the fact that something is profoundly true is not a sufficient reason why the Spirit should announce it; He speaks only when the providential hour has struck: when the voice of the King of History is heard to proclaim a truth in heaven, then it is ripe for utterance on earth, and He, the Spirit of Truth, makes it audible to His people's hearts.

Is not this whole interpretation subverted, however, by the words, "He shall show you the things to come"? They certainly refute it if they mean that He is to show, at a flash, all the future of the world; for then there can be no selection of a fit moment for one revelation and for another.

But this is precisely what the original words do not and cannot mean. What they promise is that He shall reveal the things already in motion, actually drawing nigh, the approaching births of time,¹ They tell us that the Church need never be taken unawares by the march of Providence; hers it is to penetrate with a divine insight the purpose and mystery of the world, "the riddle of the painful earth," and when men's hearts are failing them for fear and for looking at the things coming upon the earth, the Spirit reveals them to His people, whose discernment ought therefore to be in advance of all the boasted wisdom of the world.

¹ τὰ ἐρχόμενα. Cf. *δύονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον* (Luke xxi. 27), and especially the withdrawal, after the second Advent, of the third clause from the title *ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος*. (Rev. i. 17 in the best copies, contrasted with i. 4, 8). The Bishop of Durham says that the phrase τὰ ἐρχόμενα occurs here only in the New Testament (*in loco*). Compare, however, *εἰδὼς πάντα τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἐπ' αὐτόν*, and *προσδοκίας τῶν ἐπερχομένων τῆ οἰκουμένη* (John xviii. 4, and Luke xxi. 26).

In the light of such a verse, how grotesque a thing is all that monastic or Puritan asceticism which averts its gaze from life and its concerns, muttering to itself that the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hermetically sealed up, lest the contamination of the meal should come at it. Not so. The people of Christ, as He wills to have them, know more of the meaning of events than other men; and, holding a clue in the labyrinth of affairs, they are profoundly interested, because they are divinely taught.

This text does not stand alone; nor does the companion passage fail to throw a clear light upon its meaning.

On the day when this Spirit actually came, St. Peter hailed His advent as the fulfilment of the promise, "I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams." And He further said, "Repent and ye shall receive this gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call." But that is the promise of the Spirit poured upon all flesh to give visions and dreams and prophetic insight. And it proves, if proof were needed, that our Lord's own promise of guidance into all the truth, and of revelations of the coming things, was not restricted to the first age and the apostolic order, but announced a world-wide and universal endowment, limited only by the one condition that the Spirit of Truth should not reveal truth merely as such, but as the proper truth for the occasion, ever speaking as He hears.

What has become of this great promise? What can the Church show to justify her claim to it? Or ought she to be covered with confusion if her enemies proclaim her a convicted boaster, because no such endowment actually exists at all?

Reflection will show that sober-minded Christians have a sound and good reply to any such complaint, a reply on exactly the same level with the true answer to all taunts about the disappearance of miraculous powers.

The gift of miracles had a two-fold object. In the relief of human misery they exhibited the benevolent mind of our reconciled God, and also they were an evidence which helped the new religion to take root.

As evidence, they belonged to the childhood of the faith, and when it became a man, they were withdrawn. Miracles in the hand of a few princes or champions of the faith—in official hands—have disappeared.

But when the faith preached to the world the unity of God, and the consistency and beauty of all his plans, it supplied modern science with the germ whence all its wonders of beneficence have been evolved. The unity of nature is deduced from the unity and perfection of God. Moreover, the Church has always been the preacher and inspirer of all the philanthropies, and to-day, in a thousand hospitals and charitable agencies, and, far more, in the burning hearts of all its true disciples, it is the good Samaritan of the race. Nor will any thoughtful man, whatever be his views, deny that to freeze up the love of all Christians in any baptized land to-day would be a far greater loss to that country than if one or two distinguished persons had been moving up and down in it, working miracles like the apostles, and were suddenly withdrawn.

But this is the same thing as to say that we have in the Church still as much physical and humanitarian benefit for the race as ever, only we have it in a form so natural, so easy, and, above all, so diffused, that its evidential and aggressive results, though they are not lost, are indirect, and veiled from hasty observation.

It is quite the same thing with prophecy. When Joel himself, severed from common humanity by his gift,

announced the future endowment of all flesh, of our sons and daughters, our young men and maidens, he proclaimed the coming abolition of his own order and its special function. Its members were like the pools, which, when the tide is down, lie here and there among the rocks, but are merged at high water in the vast expanses of the universal flood. But it is not the loss of anything which has submerged them.

The gift of the latter day should be universally diffused, and therefore should less resemble the glare of lightning than the brooding, unrecognised electric forces which beset us behind and before continually with results we little dream.

We have now worked our way to the verge of a truth which is modern, practical, and all-important. That truth is that the whole Church is endowed with, and does actually exert a steady force, parallel, and, to say the very least, equivalent to the rare and intermittent powers of the prophetic order in the pre-Christian ages. It is neither asserted nor supposed that it is equally surprising. As was said of miracles, so of this: it is no longer needed to dazzle men as an evidence, but to strengthen and edify them as a grace.

But we must remember that even the older prophets foretold future events, not as fortune-tellers, but through their insight into the mind of God. And if human actions and tempers changed so greatly that the operations of His eternal principles (though not the principles themselves) were modified, then came such results as, on the one hand the postponement of Hezekiah's death for fifteen years after its deliberate prediction, and the sparing of Nineveh though Jonah was humiliated, or, in the other direction, the announcement, "I said indeed . . . that I would establish thy throne for ever, but now be it far from Me."

Whatever else these passages imply, they surely teach us not to be disheartened, because the claim now to be set up falls short of omniscience so far that it is not infallibility.

It is simply a straightforward claim to that which the literal words convey, without exaggeration and without flinching from their force, namely, continual progress along the paths of practical truth, a divine perception of the meaning of events and of the tendencies of the history of our time, and so inspiring and elevating a faith in the loving government of the world that our aspirations shall become a reality, and our visions and daydreams shall mark the path along which the world is yet to travel.

This is the God-given prerogative of the Church, how shamefully soever she may have failed of its enjoyment, however far from such visions are the eyes which earthly glories dazzle, and from such dreams the brows that are weighted with a triple crown.

And therefore, when the mightiest practical issues have been propounded to the simple ones of Christ, their insight has been clear and true.

In the primitive ages the questions which moved the Church were concerned with the profoundest mysteries of the revelation of God incarnate: she was half unconsciously verifying the divine credentials of her Teacher; and the decisions then attained shall never be reversed, nor shall the Church retrace the steps along which she was then led.

This we believe, not on the coercive authority of any council whatever, but as being persuaded that the Church in these great decisions was really leaning upon her Guide.

At the Reformation, awaking from the drugged and fevered sleep in which manacles had been fastened on her wrists, she declared that no order and no class could pretend to monopolize the Spirit Who was given to all flesh, and that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. On many great questions, the rights of the individual conscience, what is called the right of private judgment, but is really far less a "right" than a solemn responsibility and awful

duty, above all, upon the free and childlike approach of man the child to God his Father,—on these and many another vital question the Church of the Reformation spoke in clearer, bolder, and deeper tones than ever the patristic church had heard.

And this is a perplexity and offence to some. But surely nothing short of it is implied in the promise that she should be led along the road into all truth.

And what are the great questions that concern the Church in our own time? What problems really press heaviest upon her heart?

They are not the problems of the higher criticism, so-called, nor yet whether the material of which man was moulded was animated or inanimate dust. Some of us have lived long enough to see, with joy, the comparatively minor place which is now given to all such questions; and to have fared as when one crosses, in a few hours, the watershed of Europe, and feels the winds blowing over other regions, and sees the rivers hurrying to mingle with other seas.

Never was there a time when the Church, in all its developments, felt either so keenly, or at all in the same direction, its responsibility for *social* questions. That these are the questions of the time is felt by all. We hear—all men can hear it—

Amid the strife,
 A motion toiling in the gloom—
 The spirit of the years to come
 Yearning to mix himself with life.

A slow-developed strength awaits
 Completion in a painful school,
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,
 New majesties of mighty states,
 The wardens of the growing hour,
 But slow of motion, hard to mark,
 And round them earth and air are dark
 With vast contrivances of power.

Yes, we all acknowledge it, but the new and startling thing is the extent to which the church of God acknowledges its responsibility for all these movements of the public mind, and not only acknowledges but boldly and eagerly claims it. Perhaps the first sign of what was coming was the great crusade against slavery. What was then so remarkable was not the sense of the guilt of traffic in human flesh and blood. Every reader of Longfellow can remember that even in the middle ages the dying Baron was often forced to manumit his thralls. But our fathers did not say that pious folk must not have slaves; they first said, Pious people must co-operate to make the nation emancipate its slaves; and then they said, Pious people must force the nation to suppress slavery all over the world. They were laughed at. They were dreamers and fanatics. But it is coming true, this vision which our young men saw; this dream which our old men dreamed.

Led forward, along the road into all truth, they declared that slavery, because it was demoralizing, was, in the nature of things accursed, and that to be accursed was to be doomed. Our nation was wise and heard them. In America they not only protested but accepted martyrdom. But presently, by tokens that none might gainsay, by the red rain that falls fast on battlefields, and the thunder that peals from cannon, it was proved that the Spirit had indeed shown them the coming things.

And now it is beyond gainsaying that the Church of Christ is entangled with all the mighty questions of which the age is full; the claims of capital and of labour, the rights of employers and employed, and of women, of children, of paupers, and even of the lower animals, and the best means of elevating the submerged and degraded, our poor relations every one of them, being, God help us, our brothers and sisters still.

For better or worse these new ventures of the Church

are now inevitable, and brave hearts may well be glad of it. Glad, not as doubting that she may easily make mistakes, nor for the new stage which is offered for declaimers and hunters of popularity, nor yet on the degrading speculation that it is good policy for religion to flatter the democracy, which is now king. Not so, but because Jesus Christ died not merely to save souls for eternity, but to save men, body soul and spirit, for this world as truly as for all worlds to come. And also glad, because it seems that only the honest and whole-hearted intervention of the church of God can save, at this hour, the national life of England from the gravest perils.

Readers of Matthew Arnold know what is meant by the Time-Spirit. It is the tendency, the belief, the aspiration which is in the air, which all sympathetic and impressionable souls find pressing upon them like an atmosphere. It is the spirit which was sceptical in the age of Gibbon and Voltaire, and just at present it is democratic, scientific, and materialistic. The thought of the Time-Spirit, we are openly told, is irresistible. To contradict it is infatuation and defeat. To be foremost in discerning its tendencies and formulating its mandates—to speak, not of one's self, but as one hears of the Time-Spirit—that is truest wisdom in practical affairs, and above all, in political affairs.

Gentlemen, said Talleyrand to the Senate, there is someone who has more *esprit* than Rousseau or Voltaire, than the Emperor Napoleon or the Academy,—that some one is every one. Talleyrand was thinking of the Time-Spirit, and he was evidently prepared to support to the uttermost its august behests.

And yet he also had *esprit*, who said that heaven was intended for minorities and for those who were defeated upon earth.

And one seems to have heard another and less flattering name for this uncompromising loyalty to the Time-Spirit.

It is surely our old friend opportunism, "the cult of the jumping cat."

To-day, when democracies govern, and yet our most urgent questions are of the rights and obligations of these same democracies, who shall strengthen our various leaders, and us who follow, to be just and calm and fearless, and to declare that majorities have their duties as well as their rights? How shall we dare to set our convictions, if need be, against the rush of multitudes, all going one way? What voice shall we match against the soul-subduing voice of the Time-Spirit?

Only His, who is the Spirit of the very Truth itself, who speaks what He hears within the veil, and whose voice, uttered in the most secret places of the soul, is a genuine revelation of the future, telling His people of a hope for humanity grander and more elevating than all that newspapers are preaching, a hope that maketh not ashamed.

G. A. CHADWICK.

THE BAPTIST'S MESSAGE TO JESUS.

MATT. XI. 2-19; LUKE VII. 18-35.

THE impression which the unbiassed reader would naturally receive from these narratives undoubtedly is that the Baptist, whose function it had been to identify and proclaim the Messiah, was now doubtful of the identification he had authorized. The difficulty of understanding how such a change of mental attitude could arise is forcibly stated by Strauss: "Such a doubt is in direct contradiction with all the other circumstances reported by the evangelists. It is justly regarded as psychologically impossible that he whose belief was originated or confirmed by the baptismal sign, which he held to be a divine revelation, and who afterwards pronounced so decidedly on the Messianic call and the