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## FATHER TYRRELL AND PROTESTANTISM.

IF the common feature of the various forms of the modernist movement in the Roman Catholic Church is, as Abbé Loisy has said, "the desire to adapt the Catholic religion to the intellectual, moral and social needs of the present time,"<sup>1</sup> it cannot but make a claim upon the interest of Christians who are not members of that Communion. There is no branch of the Christian Church which is not confronted in one way or another with the problem of adjusting the Christian faith to the intellectual outlook and social aspirations of the age. How Christianity is to be interpreted and defended, how it is to be persuasively presented with a due regard to scientific and philosophical thought, to the results of historical science in the investigation of non-Christian religions, of the literature of the Bible, of the origin of Christianity, and of the development of the dogmas and institutions of the Church, and to the social ideals which are at work in democratic and socialistic movements—that is a problem with whose solution every Church is forced to concern itself. It is true that the problem presses itself upon the Roman Catholic Church in an exceptionally acute form. For that very reason, the Modernist Movement has exceptional interest. Just because it is compelled, in face of the seemingly greater alienation of the Roman Catholic Church from the modern spirit, to deal with fundamental questions in a more thorough-going fashion than has sometimes characterised the apologetic work of the Protestant Church, it may be the richer in suggestion as to how the

<sup>1</sup> *Simplex Réflexions*, p. 15.

Christian religion is to be adapted "to the intellectual, moral and social needs of the present time."

Nowhere can the bearing of the Modernist "apology" for Christianity upon Protestant apologetic be studied to greater advantage than in the writings of the distinguished Irishman, whose death in the vigour of his manhood has been lamented in so many different quarters and with such warmth of feeling as to testify to the depth of the impression made by his attractive personality, and by his written words. As Professor Holl, of Berlin, has said in his recent tractate on Modernism: "Amongst the Modernists the former Jesuit George Tyrrell is pre-eminent,—the noblest expression of the whole movement. He makes a special appeal to our sympathy on this ground, that the religious motives are with him at their purest and strongest. George Tyrrell also lives unconsciously upon a Protestant heritage. In Catholicism, he has gone through the school of Augustine, Thomas á Kempis, and the *exercitia spiritualia* of the Jesuits, in order to extract everywhere only what is sound, what is evangelical. To his strength of thought there is added a wonderful simplicity of language. He has the command of a homely beauty of form, such as is only attained by one who looks with steadfast eye upon the object. In both respects—strength of thought and charm of style—Tyrrell reminds me continually of the greatest of the English preachers of the nineteenth century—F. W. Robertson."<sup>1</sup>

Professor Holl is justified in laying stress on the religious interest which is at the heart of the Modernism of Father Tyrrell. In the case of other Modernists, other interests—the interests of the Biblical scholar, the ecclesiastical historian, the scientist, the philosopher, the social reformer, the politician—have had a larger share in evoking their sympathy with the Modernist Movement. But with Father

<sup>1</sup> *Modernismus*, p. 29.

Tyrrell, the religious interest was first in the field, and has throughout been predominant. In this respect he ranks with Luther rather than with Erasmus. As he himself has indicated in that extraordinarily vigorous piece of controversial writing—his reply to the Lenten Pastoral of Cardinal Mercier: “My pre-occupation has been almost exclusively with traditional dogmatic teaching and with the problem of reconciling it, on the one hand, *with the exigencies of the spiritual life*;<sup>1</sup> and, on the other, with the recent results of critical Church history.”<sup>2</sup> “If I owe much of my Modernism to S. Thomas Aquinas, I owe still more to Ignatius Loyola. *Nova et Vetera* and *Hard Sayings* (this latter, the fragments of a projected volume on the *Spiritual Exercises*) are rightly admitted by the discerning to contain the substance of all my later aberrations. They were written before I had met with or read or even heard of my subsequent Modernist guides and masters. These only helped me to shape and fix ideas that were formless and floating, and gradually to separate the two systems—scholastic and pre-scholastic—that were so hopelessly tangled in my mind.”<sup>3</sup>

Professor Holl is also justified in claiming that the religious interest at the heart of Father Tyrrell’s Modernism invites the sympathetic consideration of Protestants. Not on the sectarian ground that Father Tyrrell is “making for” the Protestant Church. He is passionately devoted to the Catholic ideal—the ideal of a Christian Society, with its roots reaching far back into the past, and with its branches stretching over wide spaces of human life in the present; with its power of linking together a vast multitude of persons of different nationalities and races into the most wonderful organisation the world has ever seen; with its great traditions of an innumerable company of saints and heroes

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.      <sup>2</sup> *Mediaevalism*, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* 112.

and thinkers ; with its inspiration for Christian Art in architecture, painting, and music ; with the extraordinary range of its appeal to widely different religious tempers, to choice religious spirits, as well as to those whose religion is little more than a refined paganism ; and with its immense unifying force for promoting the solidarity of the peoples of Christendom. The Catholic ideal has cast its spell over him. As he himself tells us in the volume, which contains his severest indictment of the Roman Catholic Church as it actually is : “ The very word ‘ Catholic ’ is music to my ears. . . . If the Roman Church still holds me it is because, in spite of the narrow sectarian spirit that has so long oppressed her, she cannot deny her fundamental principles ; because, as a fact, she stands for the oldest and wisest body of corporate Christian experience ; for the closest approximation, so far attained, to the still far-distant ideals of a Catholic religion.”<sup>1</sup>

But there is more than this devotion to the Catholic ideal which prevents Father Tyrrell from “ making for ” the Protestant Church. He rebuts—and with a generous warmth—ill-grounded charges which Cardinal Mercier brings against Protestantism, but he has difficulties of his own. The Protestant Church, as represented, at least, by its official documents and its favourite spokesmen, has in a greater or less degree committed itself to the very positions regarding creeds and dogmas from which Modernism has been striving to free the Roman Catholic Church. Besides, Father Tyrrell finds in Protestantism its own peculiar defects. “ Profoundly as I venerate the great truths and principles for which Protestantism stands, I am somewhat chilled by its inhumanity, its naked severity, its relentless rationality. If it feeds one half, perhaps the better half, of the soul, it starves the other. The religion of all men must be the

<sup>1</sup> *Mediaevalism*, p. 185.

religion of the whole man—Catholic in depth as well as in extension.”<sup>1</sup>

Father Tyrrell disowns that he is a Protestant in the making. It is in another direction we are to find reason for his Modernism claiming the sympathetic consideration of Protestants. As I have read his volumes, he has seemed to me to have close affinity with tendencies, visible in various sections of the Christian Church, which are suggestive of the direction in which Protestantism is moving. He himself is not unaware that his “apology” for Christianity may evoke the interest of Protestants who are themselves feeling out for a happier adjustment of the Christian faith to “the intellectual, moral, and social needs of the present time.” “The controversy dealt with in these pages,” so he writes in the Introduction to *Scylla and Charybdis*,<sup>2</sup> “is one of those which reach their acutest stages in the Roman Communion, just because the principles engaged have been at work there for a much longer time and on a much wider scale than elsewhere, and have consequently been developed to their extremest conclusions by the great logic-mill of life. Yet there is no Christian communion that in taking over some portion, however small, of Christian doctrine has not thereby committed itself to the same conception of theology and revelation, and of their relations one to another. If less extensively and less pressingly, yet all are to some degree encumbered by the same difficulties, and must, sooner or later, be forced to a similar criticism of traditional assumptions. Hence these essays are of much more than domestic interest.”<sup>3</sup> Were it not so, they would never have been gathered together in this form. For indeed, I cannot expect that they will be very welcome to those of my own communion who, ignoring the existence

<sup>1</sup> *Mediaevalism*, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> The italics are mine.

of the problem to which they are addressed, will regard my efforts as idle and uncalled for, if not as wantonly mischievous."

There are three features of Father Tyrrell's "apology" to which I direct attention as of special interest to Protestants who are concerning themselves with the re-interpretation of the Christian faith—the emphasis he lays upon the historical Christ, the emphasis he lays upon spiritual life, and especially his exposition of the significance of the doctrines of the Church's creeds.

#### I. Emphasis on the historical Christ.

Father Tyrrell has told us<sup>1</sup> that before he had heard of the Modernists, he was exercised with the problem of reconciling traditional dogmatic teaching with the recent results of critical Church history. Once he was face to face with the question of the development of the Church, he had to come to some understanding with himself as to the starting point of the development. Historical science forbade him to believe that Christ had intrusted to his Apostles and their successors a body of theological doctrines as the *depositum fidei*, and instructions as to the sacraments and institutions of the Church. Nor could he believe that the Scriptures apart from the living Church constituted a satisfactory starting point. Where then is the starting point to be found? Significantly enough, he takes up the cry which has often been heard in recent years in the Protestant Church: "Back to Christ, back to the Gospels." This is the burden of that illumining and inspiring volume *Lex Credendi*, as a few quotations will indicate: "Back to Christ, back to the Gospels has ever been the watchword of salvation in such seasons [of spiritual drought and famine]; back, that is, to the classical, normative manifestation of that spirit by which all other spirits have to be

<sup>1</sup> *Mediaevalism*, p. 107.

tried and criticised ; back to the very thoughts and words of the Apostles, not as to a final rule of thought and speech, but as to the rude vehicle and embodiment of the first, fullest, and supremely authentic manifestation of the Spirit of Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Nor is it the mere teaching of Christ Father Tyrrell has in view, but “the life of Christ, the Spirit of Christ as revealed to us in the Gospels.” “The truth, the intensity, the depth, the purity of Christ’s spirit, that is, of His vision, feeling, will, all in one, was such as to make it indeed the light of the world . . . His revelation was no divine ‘Summa Theologica’ written with the finger of God ; it was His own spirit of Love which He bequeathed, with all its implications, to His disciples.”<sup>2</sup> “What makes New Testament Christianity in some sense classical and normative is that it exemplifies for us the working of Christ’s spirit in its purest form and in its greatest intensity,—albeit under conditions that have largely ceased to obtain.”<sup>3</sup> “In a sense, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, was itself the Revelation, the *depositum fidei*.”<sup>4</sup> “The Christian revelation, the *depositum fidei*, is the spirit of Christ with all its implications.”<sup>5</sup> “We judge the lives of ordinary Christians by Christian teaching ; but when this teaching itself is in question we test it by the admitted or classical standards of Christian life ; we turn to Christ, whose life is, in a sense, a divine revelation, an implicit *depositum fidei*, and to the greater saints, whose lives are, so to say, authentic developments of His, authentic manifestations of the same spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

It is to Christ—the life, the spirit, the personality of Christ—Father Tyrrell goes back as to the fountain head of the whole subsequent movement in Christian experience, Christian doctrine and Christian institutions.

<sup>1</sup> *Lex Credendi*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Id. p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Id. p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Id. p. 49.

<sup>5</sup> Id. p. 59.

<sup>6</sup> Id. p. 3.

No one can read Part I. of *Lex Credendi* entitled "The Spirit of Christ" without recognising that the author has a profound appreciation of the spiritual magnitude of the historical Christ. A Modernist like Abbé Loisy gives his readers—at times, at least—the impression that he regards the history of the Christian Church as a development from something rudimentary into something indefinitely greater. Father Tyrrell shrinks from comparing the relation of New Testament Christianity to its subsequent history with the relation of an acorn to a gnarled oak. He looks with suspicion upon any interpretation of the development of the Church which would seem to minimise the quite unique significance of the life and personality of Jesus of Nazareth.

But while Father Tyrrell insists that Christ, in whom is given to humanity "a new revelation, a new experience, a new life, a new ideal of human personality,"<sup>1</sup> as the supreme fountain head and norm of Christianity, he is careful to point out that loyalty to the Spirit of Christ by no means involves a blind attachment to the thought-forms and institutions of "New Testament Christianity." In such "New Testament Christianity" he finds a denial of "all flexibility and vitality in the religion of Christ." It is the Spirit of Christ which is *the* thing of importance: to magnify the forms even of New Testament Christianity may be real disloyalty to the Spirit of Christ. "If we compare St. Francis of Assisi with a typical Puritan or Bible Christian, we shall find that the latter thinks, speaks and conducts himself generally (or at least strives to do so) much more in accordance with the New Testament embodiment of Christianity; but who does not feel that, for all the palpable differences that exist between the external religion of the first and the thirteenth centuries, St. Francis' spirit is unmeasurably truer to the Spirit of Him whose consciousness of Divine Sonship lit up

<sup>1</sup> *Mediaevalism*, p. 64.

the whole world for Him with a joy that no sorrow could quench, whose delight was to be with the lilies of the field, with the birds of the air, with little children, and with the sons of men ? ”<sup>1</sup>

## II. Emphasis on Spiritual Life.

Father Tyrrell is resolutely opposed to “ intellectualism ” in religion ; it is in fulness of life he finds the true heart of religion, in life that is “ at once Vision and Love and Will.” “ No theory of doctrinal development . . . can . . . supply us with a firm and simple principle of discrimination so long as it looks on that development as more or less principally an intellectual or theological movement, led and controlled by the mind in the interest of speculative truth ; so long as it gives the lead to the *Lex Credendi*—to the head rather than to the heart ; so long as it makes sentiment wait upon idea ; life and action upon knowledge ; forgetting that we must live and act in order to discover the laws of life and action, and that we must keep Christ’s commandments, if we would know His doctrine . . . We part company with those who bid us look underneath all variety and transformations of religious expression in doctrine or ritual for one and the same simple homogeneous sentiment of God’s Fatherhood and man’s brotherhood, and find in this the unchangeable substance of pure religion and undefiled.”<sup>2</sup> “ Let it be granted . . . that the intellectual defence of Catholicism breaks down . . . does it straightway follow that you should separate yourself from the Communion of the Church ? Yes, if theological ‘ intellectualism ’ be right. . . . No, if Catholicism be primarily a life and the Church a spiritual organism in whose life we participate, and if theology be but an attempt of that life to formulate and understand itself—an attempt which may fail wholly or in part without affecting the value and reality of the said life.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lex Credendi*, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Lex Orandi*, pp. 212, 213.

<sup>3</sup> *A much abused Letter*, p. 51.

This emphasis upon life—the life of the Spirit of Christ—is connected in the closest way with the importance which Father Tyrrell attaches to the Church. It is in and through the fellowship of the Christian Society the spiritual life of individuals is quickened and nourished. The religious capacity “needs the educational influence of a wide-spread and permanent society for its development and progress.”<sup>1</sup> It is here—in the service he conceives the Christian Society can render to the spiritual life of the individual—we find the explanation of Father Tyrrell’s enthusiasm for the Catholic ideal. “To belong to this world-wide, authentic and original Christian Society, to appropriate its universal life as far as possible, to be fired with its best enthusiasms, to devote oneself to its services and aims, is to go out of one’s selfish littleness and to enter into the vast collective life—the hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, failures and successes—of all those millions who have ever borne, or bear, or shall yet bear the name of Catholic, and who have in any degree lived worthy of that name.”<sup>2</sup> “By our identification with this external Society (so far as it is a vital and voluntary and not merely a mechanical and passive adhesion), our separate weakness is supplemented by a participation in its strength and resources; we are borne up by the crowd, carried along by its rush. Our convictions are stronger, our purposes firmer, our feelings are keener for being consciously shared by the whole world we live in. Our courage and hope and confidence are measured by our sense of the strength of the army to which we belong, of the history of its past victories.”<sup>3</sup> “As members of the visible Church, we share in those communised fruits of its collective spiritual experience and labour which have been accumulating from age to age; we are born, as it were, not into the bosom

<sup>1</sup> *A much abused Letter*, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* 64.

<sup>3</sup> *A much abused Letter*, p. 82.

of a solitary waste to find out everything for ourselves, but into that of a rich and complex spiritual civilisation, whose treasures we have only to appropriate ; whose life we share ; by whose spirit, whose ideas, enthusiasms, energies, we are, not so much taught as sympathetically infected and stimulated.”<sup>1</sup> “It is to this Society, to this many-membered corporate Christ of all times and ages, that we must go to school in order to perfect ourselves in the art of divine love and to bring our will into more extensive and delicate sympathy with God’s.”<sup>2</sup>

It is from this conception of the dependence of the individual upon the life of the Christian Society Father Tyrrell develops his interpretation of the seat of the authority of the Church—an interpretation which has naturally enough been rejected by the official representatives of Roman Catholicism, but an interpretation which is in harmony with the democratic ideals of the age. “The authority of the collective over the individual mind as being the adequate organ through which truth, whether natural or supernatural, progressively reveals itself, has always been the fundamental assumption of Catholicism—*securus judicat orbis terrarum*.”<sup>3</sup> “To say that all spiritual and moral power is inherent in the people and derives from the people, in no wise contradicts the truth that it derives from God and is divine. It is only to insist that, for us, God’s highest and fullest manifestation is given, not in the clouds, nor in the stars, but in the spirit of man, and therefore most completely in that completest expression of man’s spirit which is obtained in the widest available consensus, and is the fruit of the widest collective experience of the deepest collective reflection.”<sup>4</sup> “One thing, at least, is certain, that democracy has come to stay ; that to the generations of the near future any other

<sup>1</sup> *Lex Orandi*, p. 31.    <sup>2</sup> *Id.* 28.    <sup>3</sup> *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 355.

<sup>4</sup> *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 371.

conception of authority will be unthinkable ; that if the authority of Popes, Councils and Bishops cannot be reinterpreted in that sense, it is as irrevocably doomed as the theologies of man's childhood." <sup>1</sup>

III. Exposition of the significance of the doctrines of the Church's creeds.

It is, perhaps, in his treatment of the function of doctrine in the spiritual life Father Tyrrell has made his weightiest contribution to the Modernist Movement. In reading the Essays in *Scylla and Charybdis*, and especially the various introductory notes, one cannot fail to notice how intensely he has been pre-occupied with "traditional dogmatic teaching" and its relation to "the exigencies of the inward life." Intellectual difficulties raised in connexion with ecclesiastical doctrines may have stimulated his interest in the subject, but it is the spiritual man more than the mere theologian who reveals himself to us in the painful wrestling of which *Scylla and Charybdis* is the record.

Credal doctrine is often treated from the view-point of the bond it furnishes for uniting the members of a Church into one ecclesiastical organisation. This is not Father Tyrrell's view-point. And with good reason, for he finds the bond of union for the Christian Society in a common life—the life of the Spirit of Christ. His guiding principle in the handling of doctrine is expressed in his favourite phrase *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*. How doctrine springs from the devout life, and how it ministers to the devout life—that is the aspect of the subject which holds his interest.

Where are we to look for the fountain head of the doctrines of the Creeds ? Scholastic theology points us to "a certain body of divine knowledge, revealed supernaturally to the Apostles, and delivered by them under the form of certain

<sup>1</sup> Id. p. 381.

categories, ideas, and images to their immediate successors.”<sup>1</sup> Father Tyrrell, with his knowledge of the origins of Christianity and of the history of the Church, can find no justification for postulating such a *depositum fidei*. The primary element in revelation is not the communication of final and immutable doctrines, but the experience, the life, of the Spirit of Christ. This is expressed for us in the New Testament not in dogmatic forms, but in “inspired imagery,” in the “imaginative language of prophecy.” The life of the Spirit of Christ involves, of course, implicit, if not explicit doctrine. “It is not possible to feel with Christ unless we think and will with Him, nor to think with Him unless we feel with Him, for the spirit-life is one and indivisible.”<sup>2</sup> Nor can the Christian Society well avoid the task of formulating the implications of its own life. A clearer understanding of the doctrines which are implicitly involved in Christian experience, and of their relation to the general field of knowledge, is one of the means by which the life of the spirit is clarified, strengthened and fostered. A creed is at once a creation and an instrument of life.

If Father Tyrrell recognises frankly the indispensable place of the dogmatic function of the Church, he is never weary of reminding his readers of the distinction between religion and theology. Experience is one thing, its analysis is another; life is one thing, its scientific explanation is another. It is in a practical interest he insists upon this distinction. The identification of Christ’s religion with the dogmatic decisions of the Church tends to foster an “intellectualism” which would make assent to the doctrines of a theological creed a substitute for “the creative spirit of light and love.” And where an “intellectualist” interpretation of Christianity holds sway, mere theological confusion is apt to be mistaken for shipwreck of faith, and a

<sup>1</sup> *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Lex Credendi*, p. 16.

quarrel with the dogmatic forms in which the spirit of Christ is expressed to be construed as disloyalty to the Spirit of Christ Himself.

Not only is Father Tyrrell opposed to the exaltation of assent to dogmas over the life of the Spirit of Christ, he appraises the value of dogmas by the service they can render in the fostering of this life. He would probably decline to be reckoned a Pragmatist,<sup>1</sup> but the burden of his message in *Lex Orandi* is that the Christian Creed is shaped by "the exigencies of the devout life." "The religiously important criticism to be applied to points of Christian belief, whether historic, philosophic or scientific, is not that which interests the historian, philosopher, or scientist, but that which is supplied by the spirit of Christ, the *spiritus qui vivificat*. Is the belief in accordance with, is it a development of the spirit of the Gospel? What is its religious value? Does it make for the love of God and man? Does it show us the Father and reveal to us our sonship?"<sup>2</sup> "Beliefs that have been found by continuous and invariable experience to foster and promote the spiritual life of the soul, must be so far in accord with the nature and laws of that will-world, with which it is the aim of religion to bring us into harmony."<sup>3</sup> The doctrine of the Trinity is "a practical truth of the inner life, an exigency of Christian love, but not a necessity of philosophical thought."<sup>4</sup>

With his conception of dogma as "both parent and child of action, just as action is both parent and child of dogma," Father Tyrrell is favourably equipped for handling the question of the development of doctrine. If it is the living Church which formulates dogmatic decisions in the interests of spiritual life, and if these dogmatic decisions, in order to be effective for the age in which they are formulated,

<sup>1</sup> *Lex Credendi*, p. 251.

<sup>2</sup> *Lex Orandi*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Lex Orandi*, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* p. 105.

must be expressed in the thought-forms of that age, they are not absolute final truth ; they have only a relative value. They may have been the best possible means of "protecting" the Christian revelation—the life of the spirit of Christ—for a particular intellectual atmosphere ; they may be less suitable for a different atmosphere. The same interests of the spiritual life which called these decisions into existence may demand their readjustment. There is, therefore, a constant need of distinguishing between "the New Testament imaginative language of prophecy" and "the conceptual language of contemporary scientific thought" ; between "the religious and intellectual content of dogma" ; between the religious value of the early creeds, and the categories of Greek thought in which they are expressed ; between the religious value of later doctrines and the categories of the scholastic philosophy, such as the category of substance and accident made use of in the statement of the doctrine of the real presence. "The science of theology will be always liable to revolutions . . . owing to the progress by the whole complexus of knowledge, whereof it is a part or member. Nor will mere patching up and lettings out suffice ; there must be transformations, the dying of form into form." <sup>1</sup> "The criticism of the creed, in the light of science in general, or of theology in particular, cannot touch that religious value, which, quite independently of the external history of its origin, it has been proved to possess as an instrument of the spiritual life of the Churches, cannot assail its truth as a prophetic utterance (at least by adoption) of the spirit of Christ and of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God." <sup>2</sup>

If Father Tyrrell's exposition of the significance of dogma were accepted, a long step would be taken in adapting the Catholic religion to the intellectual needs of the time. If

<sup>1</sup> Id. 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 237.

dogma is no final and immutable knowledge of God and His relation to man and the world, supernaturally communicated to the Apostles and their successors, and supernaturally guarded in its original form ; if Christianity is essentially a life, and dogmas but the intellectual forms created by the Church itself for expressing and strengthening this life ; if dogmas, always a more or less imperfect symbol of spiritual realities, necessarily bear the impress of the thought-forms of the age in which they have been formulated, and therefore demand readjustment to the altered thought-forms of subsequent ages, then the way is opened up for a reconciliation between Christian faith and the wide field of modern knowledge, including the historical sciences.

In the features of Father Tyrrell's apology to which I have directed attention, his affinity with tendencies manifesting themselves in various sections of the Protestant Church is unmistakable. He moves in the same theological atmosphere as Albrecht Ritschl, Auguste Sabatier, and many a theologian in the Anglo-Saxon Churches. What does this portend ? Are we moving towards a form of the Christian Society in which a reformed Catholic Church will find room within its communion for Christians who are in sympathy with such an interpretation of the significance of dogma and of ecclesiastical authority as is given by Father Tyrrell ? So Dr. Newman Smyth seems to think, if we may judge by his volume on *Modernism*, to which he has given the title *Passing Protestantism and coming Catholicism*. He, too, is under the spell of the noble Catholic ideal, and dreams of the advent of "the age of the one Holy Catholic Church." But one cannot help asking if the hope is well grounded, that the Roman Catholic Church will broaden out to make room for the realisation of the Catholic ideal. May not "Catholicism" have to "pass" ere the Catholic ideal can be realised ?

Even before Modernism had been condemned—savagely condemned we might say—by the encyclical *Pascendi Gregis* Father Tyrrell was aware that it meant a revolution for the Roman Catholic Church. “May not Catholicism, like Judaism, have to die in order that it may live again in a greater and grander form? Has not every organism got its limits of development, after which it must decay, and be content to survive in its progeny? Wineskins stretch, but only within measure; for there comes at last a bursting point when new ones must be provided.”<sup>1</sup> “The Church of the Catacombs became the Church of the Vatican; who can tell what the Church of the Vatican may not turn into?”<sup>2</sup>

But the Church of the Vatican will have none of this revolution. And from the view-point of the interests of the ecclesiastical organisation can we say that it has chosen the wrong alternative? Deprive it of its claim to absolute divine authority for the doctrines it teaches, for the sacraments through which alone God’s grace is conveyed to men, and for its hierarchical system, and you loosen inevitably the foundations on which the whole fabric is resting. Well may the spokesmen of the Vatican say to the Modernists: *sint ut sunt, aut non sint*.

Stubborn facts seem to forbid us to indulge in dreams of the present Catholicism affording a meeting-ground for the wider and nobler Christianity that is yet to be. Not in that direction is the Modernist Movement likely to affect the future fortunes of Protestantism. But is it vain to dream that the way is even now being prepared for a renaissance of Christianity, in which Modernists will co-operate with those from whom they are estranged ecclesiastically—a renaissance of Christianity which will minister to the deepest religious needs of the human heart, and at the same time be in harmony with the intellectual, moral, and social needs of the age;

<sup>1</sup> *A much abused Letter*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* p. 100.

a renaissance of Christianity in which a stronger emphasis will be laid on the life of the Spirit of Christ, and the doctrines of our creeds be regarded less as bonds of ecclesiastical union than as "the creation and instrument" of the devout life; a renaissance of Christianity in which fuller justice will be done than is often done in the Protestant Churches to the religious worth of the corporate life of the Christian Society?

"We can only turn the pages of history and wonder and wait."<sup>1</sup>

D. M. Ross.

#### *RECOLLECTIONS OF FATHER TYRRELL.*

THE writer of the following has neither the intention nor the capacity to enter in the spirit of a scientific thinker into the far-reaching controversies which George Tyrrell's theological attitude and teaching suggest.

His work is a simpler one, i.e. to give, at the request of the Editor of the *EXPOSITOR*, some recollections of a friendship ever new which it was his privilege to share with the distinguished man, the great Christian mystic and thinker, who has passed away under circumstances that may well be called tragic in their comparative suddenness, and in the way in which the ban of the rulers of that Church of which he was a priest fell upon his open grave.

Something there was in the refusal of Catholic burial (a refusal only rendered, in part at least, ineffective by the brave action of the dead man's friend, the Abbé Bremond), which recalled the end of De Lamennais. With the austere spirit of the latter Tyrrell's personality had in common the characteristics of unflinching courage and sincerity, but unlike De Lamennais the English thinker desired to die as a priest and a

<sup>1</sup> *A much abused Letter*, p. 89.