

xii. 3. Here again it is suggested that "Judah" has been substituted for "Israel." It is perhaps enough to adduce here Harper's remark on v. 5 that the prophet must sometimes be allowed to glance at Judah.

Reviewing these passages as a whole and considering the Hosean vocabulary, sentiments, and style of them, the allusions to contemporary history and to the prophet's family life, and the obvious influence of Amos; and noting their incompatibility with post-exilic Judean thought and feeling, we cannot think there is much besides an *a priori* theory to support the view that they are interpolations. And when we note the great divergence of critical opinion both as to the theory itself and as to its application in any particular case we close this part of our enquiry with little doubt that we have in these passages genuine contemporary words of Hosea.

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(*To be continued.*)

MODERN NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM AND THE EVANGELICAL FAITH.¹

BISHOP BUTLER, in his preface to the *Analogy*, speaking of the decay of religion in his day, tells us that "it had come to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much a subject for enquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious, and accordingly they treat it as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule"! The same kind of language might be appropriately used to describe the attitude which prevails to-day among many

¹ A lecture delivered at the opening of Hackney New and Regent's Park Colleges.

New Testament scholars towards the Evangelical Faith. The general tendency in the more radical school of criticism—German and British alike—is either to ignore it or explain it away. There is only the slightest recognition of the great truths of Evangelicalism in Harnack's *What is Christianity?* Pfleiderer and Wernle and Bousset and even Weinel fail to grasp their significance or attempt to minimise their importance. Foakes Jackson and Lake, in their reconstruction of the history of early Christianity, deny that there is any shred or vestige of the Evangelical Faith in the original deposit of truth that Jesus bequeathed to His disciples. Loisy, in a striking article which he wrote in the *Hibbert Journal* in 1911, sought to prove that the chief articles of the Evangelical Faith—the doctrines of justification by faith and regeneration or the new birth were an alien element not derived from the teaching of Jesus at all, but imported into Christianity from the Greek Mysteries. Mr. H. G. Wells, in his popular *Outline of History*, sums up a widespread opinion in the words, "What will be clear to any one who reads the Epistles side by side with the Gospels is that his (St. Paul's) mind was saturated by an idea that does not appear prominently in the reported sayings and teaching of Jesus—the idea of a sacrificial person who is offered up to God as an atonement for sin. What Jesus preached was a new birth of the human soul; what Paul preached was the ancient religion of priest and altar and propitiatory bloodshed."

This statement of Mr. Wells is likely, as I have reason to know, to leave its mark upon the minds of the more cultured members of our Churches. For one man who has read Harnack or Bousset or Pflleiderer, I suppose a thousand have read the *Outline of History*, and many who have long since abandoned the belief in the infallibility of the Apostle Paul are prepared to accept without question the

statements of the modern historian as infallible truth.

The statement itself is full of the most glaring inaccuracies—unless indeed it be that Mr. Wells credits the Apostle Paul with the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews (and if he does that he puts himself out of court at once) for St. Paul never on any occasion whatever uses the categories of the priest or the altar in the interpretation of the doctrine of the Atonement. He very rarely employs even the language of sacrifice, and when he does it is quite uncertain whether he employs it in anything more than a poetical sense. And yet when we have eliminated the inaccuracies in which the statement abounds, it is impossible to deny that there is a residuum of truth in it, and that Mr. Wells has put his finger upon the real crux of the New Testament problem.

No one can read the New Testament without being conscious of the fact that it contains two great worlds of thought, or three, if we take into account the Book of Revelation. There is the world of thought that we get in the Gospels; and there is the other world that is revealed in the Epistles. We can best realise the different ethos of these two worlds of thought by reading side by side the Sermon on the Mount and the first five chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. There could not be a greater contrast than that which exists between the simplicity of the ethical and religious teaching of Jesus and the complexity of the abstruse arguments and theology of the Apostle Paul.

It was, I think, Kinglake in his *Eothen* who said that he was always haunted by a nightmare. He saw before his eyes a map of the two hemispheres of the world side by side—just touching each other at a single spot. His task was to steer his vessel from one hemisphere into the other under the narrow bridge where the two came into contact,

and he was always obsessed with the fear that some day he would miss the narrow bridge and be swept over the side of the map into infinite space.

The problem for modern scholarship is to find the bridge that connects the two hemispheres of New Testament thought. But the problem is not altogether new. It was a puzzle—it was almost a nightmare—to some of the more conscientious of the old Evangelicals to discover that by the exercise of a little ingenuity they could find more proof-texts and arguments in support of their position in Leviticus and Judges and Chronicles that they could in the Sermon on the Mount and the Gospel of St. Mark, and one of the later reformers went so far as to warn the Christians of his day against using so unevangelical a book as the Gospel of St. Mark.

I.

Now it must be frankly admitted at the outset that there are some types of modern New Testament criticism which cannot be reconciled with any form of Evangelicalism. If the portrait which Foakes Jackson and Lake draw of Jesus is true, there is absolutely no room for any germ of Evangelicalism in His teaching. And it is equally true to say that there are some types of Evangelicalism which cannot be reconciled with any form of New Testament criticism. It is most unfortunate for our enquiry that both the terms we are compelled to employ—"New Testament Criticism" on the one hand, and "The Evangelical Faith" on the other—are vague and nebulous phrases, and may each of them be used to cover the most divergent theories. There is no greater mistake that can possibly be made than to suppose that in the history of the Church the Evangelical Faith has always stood for a fixed and uniform and invariable body of doctrine. The very reverse

is the actual truth. Luther may be described as the father of Modern Evangelicalism, because it was the central doctrine of the Evangelical Faith which provided him with the lever that created the Reformation. But Luther's Evangelicalism was linked with a form of Christology—a sacramentarian doctrine—and sacerdotal practices which most Evangelicals to-day would repudiate with scorn. And between Luther and Calvin, the second founder of modern Evangelicalism, there existed upon almost every other question of doctrine the utmost difference of opinion. As things worked out in practice, there was almost as wide a gulf between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches on the Continent (both of which were formed to embody the principles of the Evangelical Faith) as there is between the Anglo-Catholics and the Free Churchmen of to-day. It was the same in the history of the great Evangelical Revival in England in the eighteenth century. The two wings of the Evangelicals—the Calvinist, the Arminian—were always at daggers drawn with each other. One would have thought that between John Wesley, the founder of the movement in England, and the author of the great evangelical hymn,

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee,”

there would have been the completest harmony and unity of spirit, and yet as a matter of fact they were always most bitter opponents and neither of them had a good word to say for the other. Toplady had a perfect genius for abuse. He described the chief ingredients in John Wesley's teaching as “an equal portion of gross heathenism, Pelagianism, Mahometism, popery, Manichæism, ranterism, and antinomianism, culled, dried and pulverised *secundum artem*, mingled with as much palpable atheism as could be possibly scraped together.” Compared with the virulence of language such as this, the worst strictures on Peake's

commentary to-day seem soft and mild. I tremble to think what Toplady would have said about some of our modern scholars if he had been alive to-day.

Dr. Dale once preached a great sermon at the opening of Argyle Chapel, Bath, on "The Old Evangelicalism and the New," in which he sought to show the transformation that had taken place in Evangelicalism in his own lifetime. Among other points he showed that Evangelicalism in his day had emancipated itself from the old rigid Calvinism that had formerly dominated it—that it had now abandoned the belief in the eternal torture of the damned and that it had learned to lay greater emphasis on the Incarnation of Christ, since it was the Incarnation that explained the value of the Cross. And we may surely add to the statement of Dr. Dale, that it has now freed itself from the tyranny of the belief in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. Luther did the greatest possible disservice to the Evangelical Faith when he linked it up with his sacramentarian doctrines; Calvin almost destroyed it by his doctrine of Predestination; and those who in our time are seeking to bind about its neck an obscurantist view of Scripture are striking at its very vitals and dooming it for the intellect and conscience of our world.

Between the extreme form of Radical Criticism and the extreme form of narrow Evangelicalism no *rapprochement* is ever practicable, but it ought not to be impossible to find a bridge between a sane and temperate criticism and a sane and liberal Evangelicalism.

II.

Now let us suppose, merely for the sake of argument, that Loisy and others are right in their contention that the leading principles of the Evangelical Faith came into Christianity from the Greek Mysteries. What does that

imply? For one movement to influence another, there must necessarily be contact—and contact that is real and vital. It is not enough for us to assume that floating ideas out of the Mystery-Religions passed unconsciously into Christianity from the atmosphere of the age. Floating ideas would never have transformed the character of the Christian Faith. If the thought-waves that emanated from these Mystery-Religions had been strong enough to change automatically the teaching of Christianity, they must inevitably have left a far greater mark on contemporary religion and philosophy than the literature of the period reveals. The contact must have taken place in one of two ways. It is conceivable that the Apostle Paul and other great Christian leaders may have modified the Christian Faith in the course of the appeals which they made to the devotees of the Greek Mysteries. We know that at Athens Paul tried his utmost to meet the Epicureans and Stoics on their own ground. And though we have no record, it is impossible to imagine that he did not approach the members of the organisations connected with the Greek Mysteries along similar lines. “You initiates of the Mysteries,” he must have argued, “are seeking for God and truth and purity, and above all else you are trying to find a guarantee of immortality. What you are vainly groping after in your Mysteries has been fully revealed by Christ; in His teaching you will find the answer to your quest.” This is the kind of argument the Apostle Paul must have inevitably pursued, but the validity of it depended upon the fact that Christianity already contained a better answer to the religious problems than could be found in the Mysteries themselves. If Paul had made a bid for the support of the votaries of the Greek Mysteries by telling them Christianity contained the faith for which they were in quest (when as a matter of fact, if Loisy is

right, it did nothing of the kind), he would have speedily been found out and discredited.

But there is another way in which the contact may have happened. It is conceivable that numbers of the members of the Greek Mystery-cults may have been attracted by the new religion. They had tried many forms of religion in the past and were not satisfied with any of them. They may have been allured in the first instance by the novelty of Christianity, and they may have determined to try one more experiment in their quest for truth. They may have said to themselves, "We have not found what we want in the Pagan cults. The Greek Mysteries have done little but formulate the 'obstinate questionings' of our hearts. They have taught us the need of Communion with God, and a new birth—of some means of restoring purity of life—and they have given us a vision of immortality. But they have asked questions without answering them. They have stated problems merely to leave them unsolved. Let us see whether this new religion has anything better to give us." And so they made the venture, and the new religion proved not satisfying indeed, on Loisy's theory, in itself in so far as its faith had yet been worked out, but capable of a transformation which would give them what they required and what they could not get in their own cults. But what does this mean? It implies that they were able to find the great secrets for which they were in quest—the secret of the new birth, the secret of communion with God, the secret of immortality, in Christianity though they had sought for them in vain in the Greek Mysteries. It means that for them Christ had conquered Dionysius and that the Greek Mysteries were part of the great Divine *Præparatio Evangelica*. But in that case the truth for which they were seeking must have already been present in Christianity. They could not have put it

there themselves, they could not have imposed it on the Christian Faith. The ultimate problem is this, why did they find more in Christ than they did in Dionysius? How is this that these converts from the cults were able to create in the Christian Church an Evangelical Faith when they could not do it in their own Greek Mysteries? The answer is, of course, that the Evangelical Faith was at any rate latent in Christianity, and that at the utmost all the Greek Mysteries could have done was to make explicit what was already implicit in the Faith of the Church; for unless there had been some affinity—some community of interest between the two, the marriage of the Greek Mystery-cults to the Christian Faith could never have taken place at all. Lord Bacon, in his *Novum Organum*—the book that laid the foundations of modern science—gravely propounded a theory that an oak tree was capable of changing itself into a fern, and he adduced as proof of this that he had sometimes seen ferns growing out of the trunk of an oak tree. Loisy's theory is very similar. He sees what he takes to be the fronds of the Greek Mysteries growing amongst the foliage of the tree of Christianity, and, like Lord Bacon, he imagines that the transformation has taken place. The one hypothesis is as foolish as the other.

III.

But there is another consideration which must be taken into account. If the transformation of Christianity under the influence of the cults really happened at all, when did the change take place? Now the Evangelical Faith is found quite clear and definite in the earlier Epistles of St. Paul, and the earliest of these cannot be dated later than 52 or 53 A.D., and may possibly, if Harnack's scheme of chronology is correct, be five years earlier still. So that at the most there is only a period of twenty years available

for the creation of this revolution in the character of the Christian Faith. The change must have been complete before the Apostle Paul started on his second missionary journey. But not even the whole of this period of twenty years is really available, for we must subtract from it the four or five years at the commencement when Christianity was confined within the boundaries of Palestine and there was no opportunity of contact with those outside forces. It was not till Christianity reached Antioch, the capital of the Province of Syria, that these alien influences had any chance of making any impression upon it. So that the whole thing must have happened within fifteen years.

Now unfortunately our knowledge of the first twenty years of Christianity is scanty in the extreme. We have only the meagre record of the first fifteen chapters of Acts. "Christianity," it has been said, "entered a tunnel after the Resurrection from which it did not emerge into the clear light of day until the second missionary journey of St. Paul." There are only a few gleams of light penetrating the darkness. Christianity must have changed its clothes in the tunnel if it changed them anywhere. But what records we possess certainly give us no indication that any revolutionary change took place in the character of the Christian Faith. The only important modification that was made was the decision to admit the Gentiles to the Church on the same terms as the Jews; but that has no real bearing on the issue we are considering. The speeches of St. Paul in the later chapters of Acts do not differ in any essential particular from the speeches of St. Peter at its commencement. In neither of them, of course, do we get the full theology of the Epistles, but that is not difficult to explain; and if the later speeches are more explicit on some points than the earlier, that is only what is naturally to be expected. No one would dream of maintaining to-day that there was

no development in the exposition of Christian theology ; the only issue is, was that development a legitimate evolution of what was always present in germ, or was it the imposition of alien elements which were foreign to the original deposit of divine truth upon which the Church was founded ?

But not only is there a complete absence of any indication of this metamorphosis of Christianity in the narrative of Acts, but there is the clearest proof that the Apostle Paul was not aware of any breach of continuity, as far as the Evangelical Faith is concerned, between his own theology and that of primitive Christianity. " For I delivered unto you first of all," he writes to the Corinthians, " that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." This doctrine was not his own discovery, it was not borrowed from the Greek Mysteries or any other external source ; it was part of the Christian tradition which he had found existing in the Church at the time of his conversion and which he had embodied in his own teaching. It was his datum—" the thing given to him "—the original fact and the primary truth round which he had built up the substance of his theology.

St. Paul of course expounded and expanded this belief, which he had inherited, in his own way, and in doing so he may possibly have made use of terms and categories derived from the Greek Mysteries, but at the most it was only Paul's exposition and philosophy of the subject that came from outside sources ; the belief itself was, according to his own statement and convictions, an integral element in the faith of the Church from the start.

The statement of St. Paul upon this point is borne out by another line of argument. Supposing St. Paul had been an innovator in this matter—supposing he had introduced into Christianity for the first time the Evangelical

note—he would certainly have been challenged. He had enemies even within the fold of the Christian Church. No man was ever more criticised than he was by Christians who wanted to keep Christianity as a monopoly of the Jews. They attacked him on every possible occasion. They questioned his credentials and denied his authority. If Paul had been responsible for changing the character of primitive Christianity they would not have lost the opportunity of bringing the charge against him. It would have given them a weapon which they could have used with deadly effect. They ransacked their armoury for other instruments of attack. It is incredible to suppose that if the sword of this argument had lain ready to hand it would have been allowed to lie idle in its sheath. No, though Paul and his Judaising opponents differed on many points, the Evangelical Faith was common ground to both of them and on this issue they were at one.

Again, if the innovation was made at all, it was made, as we have seen, during the first twenty years after the Crucifixion; it was made, that is to say, in the lifetime of many who had been personal disciples of Jesus Himself. Would it not have been inevitable that in the face of the revolution some of them would have risen up and said, "we have not so learnt Christ"? The discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels and the Epistles, which seems so patent to modern scholarship, was not recognised in the first century. The Gospels and the Epistles grew out of the soul of the same Church and lived side by side, and, as far as we can tell, the modern discovery, if such it can be called, that they contained different gospels, was never even suspected by the first generation of believers. The New Testament is practically unanimous on the point. It contains six or seven different types of theology. These types contain varied and sometimes discordant expositions of the Christian

Faith. Some emphasise one side of Christian truth and some another. But there are certain great Christian beliefs which are emphasised by them all, and none is more emphasised than the central principle of the Evangelical Faith. It is found in all the New Testament documents except one—the Epistle of St. James—which is the exception that seems to prove the rule. If this doctrine had been an intruder into the faith of the Church, is it at all conceivable that in so short a time it would have succeeded in capturing so large a share of support in the Christian Church? It was never exactly a popular doctrine. It did not readily appeal either to Jews or Greeks. It was rather a burden on their faith than otherwise, for to the Jews it was a “stumblingblock” and to the Greeks “foolishness.”

No, if we ask the question, “Why does the Evangelical Faith glow so vividly in the pages of St. Paul’s Epistles?” the answer is two-fold. (1) First of all, Paul was convinced that it was an integral element in the original Christian Faith which had been accepted by believers from the very first; (2) and secondly, Paul had verified for himself its truth in his own tragic experience of sin and of redemption. Paul had proved the validity of the doctrine “on his own pulses.” If modern scholarship would turn for a time away from the Historico-Critical study of the play of external forces upon the development of the Christian organism—a study that has produced the most fruitful results, and laid all modern students of the New Testament under the deepest possible debt of obligation—if it would turn from this rather overworked mine of research to another field which is now “white unto the harvest”—I mean the psychological analysis of Christian experience, St. Paul’s own experience to begin with, and then the experience of all the “twice-born” men and women of the first generation—a change would come over the spirit of New Testament

scholarship and there would speedily be a great inversion of values. For while the records of Christian experience remain—as they must remain—unchallenged, the Evangelical Faith rests upon an unshakable foundation—a foundation that is more valid and invincible than a thousand proof-texts from Leviticus or even from the Epistles of St. Paul.

IV.

We are driven, therefore, to the conclusion that the Evangelical Faith is not an alien addition superimposed upon Christianity by some external force, but a vital element in the original deposit of truth bequeathed by Jesus to His followers—an integral part of “the faith once delivered to the saints.” Is this conclusion borne out by the evidence of the Gospels themselves? Now it must be admitted that on the face of it the evidence of the Synoptic Gospels seems sparse and almost negligible compared with the wealth of the testimony to the Evangelical Faith which we find on almost every page of the Epistles. There are only two proof-texts which yield us unmistakable proof that Jesus Himself enunciated in His teaching the principles of Evangelicalism. The one is the statement found in St. Mark, “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” The other, of course, is contained in the words of the Communion Service, “This is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many.”

There are some other “sayings of Jesus” which might by a little pressure perhaps be made to yield similar results, but it will not help our argument to resort to dubious devices in our search for evidence. As Dr. Dale once put it, “To attempt by skilful manipulation to get a better meaning out of a text than it contains is as fraudulent a proceeding as to attempt by skilful manipulation to get a better meaning out of a cheque than it contains. The text,

as a devout soul might say, is more precious when you have put a great Christian truth in it than it was in its naked and original state. No doubt. And a cheque for ten pounds is more precious when you have added a couple of noughts to the ten and made it a thousand. The two proceedings are very much of the same character. There should be conscience in the study as well as in the counting-house."

When we have got every ounce of meaning to which we are legitimately entitled from our proof-texts, we are still left with the problem, why are there so few of them? Why did Jesus only embody the Evangelical Faith in two of His sayings?

The answer, I think, lies in the region of the psychology of religion. It is a law of the spiritual life—a law that seems to be of universal application—that the moral ideal must be awakened before the sense of the need of redemption can be aroused. It was because St. Paul realised far better than his contemporaries the full significance of the moral ideal embodied in the Jewish law, because he saw that it reached into the secret places of the heart, that he began to realise the difference that existed between the man he was and the man he ought to be, and so was forced to cry out for "some power, not his own, that makes for righteousness." It was because John Wesley had caught a vision of the moral ideal as it glowed in the pages of the *Imitatio Christi* and *Law's Serious Call* that he came to realise his own exceeding sinfulness and his need of salvation. Jesus followed the true psychological method when He devoted most of His time in His teaching to describing the demands and imperatives of the Christian moral law. He knew that when once His followers realised all that was involved in these demands they would be driven to cry out in their despair, "God be merciful to us sinners," and it was at that point when the sense of need was created that he revealed

in his teaching some glimpses of the great redemption. It is a significant fact that it was only after the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi that Jesus began to talk plainly to His disciples about the fact and meaning of His death. It was only when they had reached that stage in their spiritual development that they were capable of receiving the higher truths which Jesus had to teach them. You cannot teach the binomial theorem to a class of boys that has not mastered the first principles of arithmetic. And it is not at the beginning of the history of religion, but rather at its end, that the great truths of the Evangelical Faith begin to make their real appeal.

But I do not stake my argument so much upon the proof-texts, though I think their evidence is irrefragable. I stake it rather upon the facts of the life and death of Jesus. Jesus gave expression to the Evangelical Faith not so much in His words as in His deeds. He taught it by action rather than by speech. The most amazing thing in the Gospel narrative of the life of Jesus is the deliberate choice of the Cross. There were other alternatives before Him. From the first days of the Temptation in the Wilderness to the final struggle in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus saw always before His eyes the forking roads. There was the broad road of popularity and success. The people would have taken Him and made Him King. By the great supernatural powers which He possessed He might have won freedom and emancipation for his people—He might even have sat upon the imperial throne in Rome itself. What could have been a more alluring vision than this? What a platform it would have given Jesus for making known His truth to the world? What a change would have come over the face of history if Jesus had been Emperor in place of a Tiberius and a Nero? Could He not with a lever such as this have set up the Kingdom of God on earth? Then

there was the other road—the *via dolorosa*—the way of suffering and poverty and rejection, the way that climbed the steeps of Calvary and ended in the awful tragedy upon the Cross. Why did Jesus deliberately—though not without a great fight—always set aside the attractive prospect of the throne, and all that the throne might have meant for Him in capturing the world for His ideals? Why did He choose the Cross and all the agony of suffering which the Cross entailed? Judged by ordinary human standards the choice of the Cross was foolish almost even to the verge of madness. The public ministry of Jesus had lasted on the longest computation for less than three years. What can a man—even though He be divine—hope to achieve in less than three years? Most of the men who have permanently influenced the thought of the world—Confucius, Gautama, Mahomet, Aristotle and Plato for instance—lived long lives and were before the public for many years. If the real contribution that Jesus made to religion lies in His teaching, it was little less than a consummate act of folly from the ordinary human standpoint to bring martyrdom upon Himself before He had had time to establish and consolidate His work. Prudence should have led Him to postpone the final catastrophe as long as possible, that His teaching might have time to produce a permanent effect. But at the earliest possible moment, as soon as He was sure of His disciples, without even waiting to test the reality of their convictions, “He set His face to go up to Jerusalem,” and began to speak in language that was unmistakable of the fate that was to befall Him there. The Cross was the supreme goal of His life. It was for the sake of the Cross that He swept His temptations on one side. It was for the sake of the Cross that He refused the Crown. It was for the sake of the Cross—and for that alone—that He steeled Himself to make the final journey to Jerusalem. The Cross

constitutes the supreme contribution which He made for the saving of the race. The Evangelical Faith as it is expounded by St. Paul, and the other great writers of the Apostolic Age is an interpretation not so much of the words of Jesus as of His life, and no other interpretation is really possible, for this interpretation alone explains the facts, and without it we are left with insoluble problems. The Evangelical Faith is the only key to the enigmas of the Gospel narrative, for it alone provides the clue to the discovery of the unity of purpose which runs through the great story of the life of Christ. The Cross is in reality as dominant in the Gospels as in the Epistles, only in the one case it is dominant in action, in the other in thought and Christian experience. It is the fact of the Cross that links together the two hemispheres of the New Testament—the Gospels and the Epistles—and that forms the bridge by which we pass from the one to the other, and while that fact remains, the Evangelical Faith rests on a sure foundation that is unassailable.

V.

The ultimate religious problem is the problem of redemption. The Greek Mystery-Religions, as we have seen, formulated, probably better than had ever been done before, the three eternal quests of the human spirit—the quest for communion with God, the quest for purity, and the quest for a pledge of immortality, but these three quests are only different aspects of the problem of Redemption. For it is only through redemption that the soul of man can enter into real communion with God; it is only through redemption that it can obtain purity of soul; and it is only through redemption that it can win the full assurance of a blessed immortality. Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of redemption; if it is not that, it is nothing—at any rate

it is nothing that really counts. It contains, of course, the finest possible moral and religious ideals, but if its Gospel is only the Gospel of ideals, it is like that wonderful statue—the Venus of Milo—very beautiful, but without hands and without arms, and so incapable of reaching down and helping men in their struggle with human impotence and sin. The world has rarely known in all its long history such an outburst of idealism as characterised the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth. And we felt so sure about those ideals. We thought that it was they that would deliver Israel. It seemed to us that they contained within themselves an inherent dynamic which would secure their triumph in history. And then in a moment—almost in the twinkling of an eye—the glorious bubble burst, and the earthquake of the European war destroyed the fair palace of our dreams, which came toppling down about our heads like a card house that a child builds. The slopes of Gallipoli and the cross-marked cemeteries of France and Flanders contain far more than the bones of our heroic dead; they are the grave too of the facile optimism of the Victorian Age. The spectacle of Europe to-day is the spectacle of a world in ruins; and yet this world in ruins—or at any rate the nobler part of it—has seen the splendid vision of the dawn of universal peace. It has seen the vision and the sight has made it more conscious than ever of its own impotence and the bankruptcy of its statesmanship and the futility of its hopes. And the world to-day, torn with strife, “with the nations snarling at each other’s heels,” mocked by its own dream and the vanity of its efforts, is wringing its hands and beating its breast and crying out in its despair, “O wretched world that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Our idealisms have failed, and the reason is not far to

seek. They are only another illustration of the truth of the old Roman proverb, "*naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret.*" "You may expel human nature with a pitchfork, but it will always come back again." Yes, that is the real difficulty. "It always comes back." You may attempt to eradicate the vices, the hatreds, the sins of the world, by civilisation or education, but "they always come back." And for that reason you may try to expel the Evangelical Faith from your theology by the pitchfork of modern criticism, but it will always come back, because it alone contains the power of redemption. In the eighteenth century Rationalism and Deism seemed to have expelled it effectually from Christian thought, but it came back in full floodtide in the Great Revival. And it will come back again to us, when once we have realised to the full the impotence of our puny efforts, apart from the grace of God.

The Evangelical Faith is immortal because it ministers to the universal need of the human spirit. There is no more pathetic book in Greek literature than the *Œdipus Coloneus* of Sophocles. Œdipus is the Greek equivalent to Job. The details of the two cases are of course different, but in all its essential features the problem is the same. In the *Coloneus* Œdipus comes to Athens seeking sanctuary. He is old and blind and broken, weighed down by the doom of Fate for the sins which he had unwittingly committed, relentlessly pursued by the Avenging Furies. As he enters the city in quest of shelter for the few remaining days of his tragic life, he is urged by his friends to try to appease the gods by offering sacrifice in the temple. But he is too old and feeble to perform the lustral rites himself. So he summons to his side his two devoted daughters, who have stood loyally by him through the crushing disaster, and bids one of them go and offer the sacrifice for him, with the words,

*ἀρκεῖν γὰρ οἶμαι πάντι μολῶν μίαν
 ψυχὴν τὰδ' ἐκτίνοσαν, ἦν εἴνοος παρῆ.*

“ I think that one can offer for ten thousand, if he but come with goodwill to the shrine.” These words seem to me as truly Messianic as anything in Isaiah or the Psalms. Substitute “ the cross ” for “ the shrine,” and make Christ the offerer, and the words of Œdipus embody the Evangelical Faith. Even as they stand, without any change or alteration, they contain a foregleam of that Faith. And in the long run we all come to the position of Œdipus. When we are broken in the struggle with sin, we instinctively turn to Him “ who can offer for ten thousand,” “ who loved us and gave Himself for us,” and who, while we were yet sinners, “ died the just for the unjust to bring us to God.”

We may not be able to find the explanation that will satisfy wholly the demands of philosophy. We may call the Pauline interpretations forensic and juridical, and perhaps they are. We may riddle with the shot and shell of our criticism the theories of the schoolmen and theologians in all the ages. It is such a cheap and easy thing to do. We may think that Mr. Wells is right in challenging the crude metaphors of the altar and the priest. And yet the thing itself remains. The instinct to which the Evangelical Faith appeals is ineradicable. And before we throw aside too readily the terms which the New Testament has consecrated and which have been hallowed by the great Christian hymns, we should remember Bushnell. Bushnell, after writing two volumes to prove the folly and perversity of all the theories which attach objective value to the Atonement, is driven in spite of himself at last to admit “ that though in the facts of our Lord’s passion, outwardly regarded, there is no sacrifice, or oblation, or atonement, or propitiation, yet if we ask, ‘ How shall we come to God by the aid

of this martyrdom ? ' the facts must be put into the moulds of the altar, and without these forms of the altar we should be utterly at a loss in making any use of the Christian facts which would set us in a condition of practical reconciliation with God. Christ is good, beautiful, wonderful. His disinterested love is a picture by itself. His forgiving patience melts into my feeling. His passion rends my heart. But what is He for ? And how shall He be made to me the salvation that I want ? One word—He is my sacrifice—opens all to me, and beholding Him with all my sin upon Him, I count Him my offering. I come unto God by Him and enter into the Holiest by His blood." In these words of Bushnell Christian experience speaks, and it speaks with authority and not as the scribes, and from its testimony there is no valid appeal.

HERBERT T. ANDREWS.

JESUS' FORGIVENESS OF THE SINFUL.

IN the following pages we are meant to contemplate Jesus face to face with sinners, who need and also somehow receive pardon at His hands ; to reflect on His teaching about forgiveness, whether conveyed audibly in words or silently by act or gesture.

It must never be forgotten that, in a true sense, Jesus continued a religious work inaugurated by the Baptist. The forerunner is pictured as " baptizing in the desert and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins " (Mark i. 4). We encounter here the conviction that all men are sinners, that no one can go into the Kingdom whose sins are not forgiven, and that repentance is the requisite path to forgiveness. It is in this atmosphere of belief that Jesus began His public work. He does not