How high a truth! For here is the law of the cross: “No man dieth to himself;” for his pain and loss is for others, and, unconsciously to himself, brings with it, to others, joy and gain. —F. W. Robertson.

“COMFORT.” —I know of nothing that expresses the idea more correctly than “helpful or strengthening consolation.” There is a consolation that is weakening. Here is a child fretting because some trinket has been taken from him; an unwise parent returns it to him; he is consoled, but at the expense of his character. Or, here is an adult bowed down by some solid and solemn sorrow. A companion, eager to lessen his trouble, purposes to divert his thoughts by leading him to some scene of gaiety. His sorrow ceases to trouble, but he is not a nobler man for this. —J. C. Cuthbertson.

In one of the first crises of the revolutionary fury, when Marie Antoinette was being carted, like a piece of useless lumber, amidst unsympathising or brutal multitudes to her death, she gathered up her force of fortitude, and bore the trial with the calm dignity of a soul tortured by misfortune and strengthened by sorrow. No muscle relaxed, no expression changed, no sign of pain or joy was in that beautiful trouble-moulded face. Whatever cries of scorn and cruelty met her ears, from the Conciergerie to the Place de la Revolution, she was calm, quiet, broken-hearted—every inch a queen. But once, so they say, among the crowd a little child, moved by some hidden whisper of that great tried soul to its own innocent nature, stretched out its little arms to her and cried. In a moment the queen’s face changed, some subtle cord was struck, and the poor, forsaken, insulted woman burst into tears. —H. J. Knox-Little.

I GRIEVE, and still I grieve, but with a heart
At peace with God, and soft with sympathy
Toward all my sorrowing, struggling, simple race.
My hope, that clung so fondly to the world
And the rewards of time, an anchor sure
Now grasps the Eternal Rock within the veil
Of troubled waters. Storms may wrench and toss,
And tides may sway me, in their ebb and flow,
But I shall not be moved.

He is the Father of our Lord. Luther thanked God for the little words in the gospel.—Nicolls.

THINE, O Master, is the presence
Which, when life is bright or bare,
Makes joy loveliest of the lovely,
Sorrow fairest of the fair.
Thine the hand that lifts the fallen,
Bruised and wounded on the road,
Wakes again his waning courage,
Points the penitent to God.
Thine the love that wins the weary,
Calm to lean upon Thy breast;
Thou, the comfort of the labouring,
Of the heavy-laden, Rest!

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Mystics and Saints.
By the Rev. P. T. Forsyth, M.A., Leicester.

The present writer published last year, in a book called Faith and Criticism, an essay in which he laid some stress on the harm done by mysticism, with its exit in metaphysics, to the true idea of revelation. To his great surprise he has occasionally heard that essay described and distrusted as mystical. And the reason seems to be that it insisted on personal intercourse with the personal, historic, and living Saviour as an indispensable condition of any revelation, in the true and religious sense of the word, namely, as bearing less on God’s nature than on His will and work for mankind. If that be mysticism, of course faith is essentially mystic, and so is the revelation it answers. But that is not mysticism in the word’s convenient and distinctive use. As a tendency in human thought, mysticism is, first, the
It regards religion as fundamentally metaphysical, as a form of the knowledge of ultimate being, a phase of natural knowledge spiritualised. This is something different from the act of faith, which is moral, not an act of knowing, not a process of the natural intelligence spiritualised, but the one true supernatural act, the one true organ of the supernatural, finding its object in no mere object of noetic perception, however present, but in a historic person equally present. His union with us is not the mystic interfusion of two substances, however rarefied and dubbed spiritual; but it is real personal intercourse, and the ground of that certainty which is the deepest of all—the certainty which rests on a moral being like our central selves. Opposed to all mysticism is the faith (but not the uncritical faith) in a historic personal Saviour, intercourse with whom is the standing condition for ever and ever of all that is properly to be called religion. The judges of Christian truth are not, in the first place, reasonable men, but redeemed men. If our Protestantism mean anything distinctive it means that. And if it be weak for the hour, it is because the habit of the hour is to accept Christ, not as the Creator of a new creature, but in so far as He can be shown to commend Himself to lovers of truth, human instincts, social ideals, or aesthetic taste. We judge and elect our Judge. The mystic, be he visionary or rationalist, measures Christ by His precious but passing utility for effecting the union of the soul with God. The Christian finds that union only and ever in Christ, the historic and exalted Christ. This difference may seem either trivial or oversubtle. We believe it is just as trivial as the displaced molecule in the brain, or the little misbehaviour of a heart-valve. And it is just as subtle as the intangible gas which in time extinguishes life.

It will further illustrate my meaning if I take up another point. It is sometimes asked how, if we insist on the reality of direct contact with the living personality of Christ, we can deal with a Romanist who declares that he has the same evidence as ourselves, in personal experience, of communion with the Virgin Mary or any of the saints. To which I should reply thus:—

1. The final certainty by which we test all, is a moral certainty. It is a matter of conscience. Conscience is the authority for truth no less than action. This is a world where truth exists ultimately for the sake of action, and we cannot there-
fore have two standards. This ethical standard is
the distinctly Christian, and is in flat antithesis to
the pagan nature worship which speaks in this
wise: "If the miracle of the soul and the world
does not touch men, if through its veil they do not
see the face of God, neither will they believe
though one rose from the dead." Thousands of
Christian believers who had seen no God in the
soul disprove that.

2. But we do not go far in a serious way into
moral certainties till we discover the sense and
certainty of guilt. Kant will soon take us there;
however many Kantians may refuse to follow,
who have more sympathy with his intellectual
agnosticism than with his moral sense.

3. But if we are not to be left there, we must
pass in our moral experience to the deeper and
still more earnest sense of forgiveness, of recon-
ciliation, of a world reconciled, a redemption, and
atonement.

4. And there lies the world's last ethical certainty,
the basis of all ethic which is at once humane and
imperative—in a religious experience, the experi-
ence of guilt abolished by holy love. It is not
the moral philosopher, nor the poetic Stoic, like
Emerson, with his lucid but limited moral insight;
it is not the man of mere insight or genius at all,
however fine or holy, who is in possession of the
fundamental moral experience, and the ultimate
certainty of the soul. It is the man who really
experiences the redemption of his conscience from
guilt. The true foundation of modern ethics, and
especially of the ethics of the future, was laid in
the restoration of evangelical Christianity at the
Reformation, and then faith became a new power
and fashion of life, and the grace-renewed will
displaced the illuminated mind as the highest
thing in man.

5. But to take the next step, this experience, in
the great volume of competent testimony, is in-
separable from the experience of the living presence
and action of the historic Jesus as the Redeemer.
Wherever that has been denied, the habit of
thinking or speaking of guilt or deliverance from
it has decayed, and religion is founded upon
philosophic axioms and various intuitions, instead
of moral experience of the most serious, profound,
and passionate sort. The experience of redemp-
tion, and of Christ as the living Redeemer, are
one and the same experience, one and the same
act. We know our guilt and our pardon in the
act of faith by which we realise the nature and
presence of the Redeemer. He is identical with
our very ultimate conscience and our final moral
certainty.

6. He becomes, therefore, for us the test of all
else. He is, in this capacity, the evangelical seat
of authority. The seat of authority for the whole
human conscience, and therefore the whole of
human history, especially in the future, is the
Redeemer. The ideal has often as much power
to mock as to allure. The moral imperative may
damn as many as it inspires. Neither ideal nor
imperative can save—not even Christ as the ideal.
Authority invests a dying king. Our Lord is our
Redeemer. Conscience itself is but an occasional
voice from this everlasting throne of the cross.

Of no saint or virgin, even in Catholic experi-
ence of their presence, has this been said. Nor
could it be said without stepping, in the
very statement, outside the Christian pale. The
saints that are invoked are not prayed to in
the sense in which the Saviour is. They may be
auxiliaries in certain crises, but they are not the
redeemers of the soul in its grand crisis, either
individually or historically. The statements made
about the presence and visitation of the saints
must be brought to the test of our certainty in
Christ. And if denied, they must be denied on
the ground of that certainty and its implications.

7. The question under notice takes account of
nothing beyond the mere subjective intensity or
vividness of an experience. That goes for little in
reality; though in an age when mere impression is
prized, as it is to-day, it goes for far too much. It
is not a question of subjective vehemence in the
experience. It may be conceded that the experi-
ence of the visitation of saints felt by some Catholics
has been much more intense than the experience
which far better people in Protestantism have had
of the Saviour. And, indeed, this communion of
saints has in these Catholics themselves been more
vividly felt than they ever realised the Saviour's
nearness; and yet the reality of the Saviour's
action has not been thought by that Church to be
for that reason less than the action of saints. It is
not a question of the vividness of the experience,
but of the nature of it; and especially its ethical
quality, its historic origin, and its effect on the
conscience in connexion with guilt. And when
that is realised, when we turn from the amount of
an impression or the vividness of an experience to
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its moral nature and result (as Protestants should who have not unlearned the soul of their own faith), then the question which seemed intellectually so plausible will display its religious inexperience. In a word, the criterion is not subjective, mystical, individual, and intense, but objective, historic, positive, universal, and morally imperative where the deep decisions lie in a soul that is thorough with itself.

8. It is really a question which turns chiefly on the difference in kind in the objects of the experience. The most entrancing sense of the Virgin's glory is, after all, an aesthetic impression. It is not ethical in the sense in which the Redeemer's presence is. It is the impression of a vaguely glorious, spiritual presence; it is not the response to a Saviour's power. It is a state of the religious imagination rather than of the conscience. It is something the soul possesses, not something which possesses the soul. It tends to ecstasy rather than to assurance, to delight and comfort us rather than to remake and control us. It does not place us in the grasp of a mighty personality who has the right to our whole life, yea, to the conscience by which we stand against all the world. How can it? We know less than we crave to know about the historic personality of Jesus, but we know vastly less about the personality of His mother. We can establish mystic relations with her enlarged and gloriified image, but we have nothing like the character, and especially the death, of Christ, which seizes us in a moral grasp and opens a heaven for the conscience more than for the imagination and the heart. This mystic devotion is not surprising in an age when women are asserting and securing a position they have never had before both in life, faith, and unfaith. But for their own sakes it must be corrected from sources more ethical and historic. It is not in Catholic lands, the lands of the religious imagination, that their new career has become possible. Woman worship means woman slavery. They have won what they have in lands where the Christian faith was more Protestant and moral, less of the imagination and more of the conscience, less mystic and more ethical, less inspired by the beatific vision and the sweetness of charity, and more controlled by the love of truth, the righteousness of faith, and the cleansing of the conscience, by the certainty of forgiveness in Christ alone.

The Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

LITERATURE AND HINTS FOR STUDY.

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