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The Athanasian Creed.

No one can be at all acquainted with the feelings entertained in many quarters towards the services of the Church of England without knowing that there is a more or less continual distress or irritation caused in the minds of a considerable number of people by the recitation of what is called the Athanasian Creed. There is no special agitation on the subject at the present moment; but there is always sufficient annoyance and questioning abroad to warrant the discussion of it. "How can we know," people ask, "that all these metaphysical and indeed hardly intelligible statements about God are true?" Or, "How can we stand up in church and condemn to everlasting punishment those who cannot accept all these difficult propositions?" It is in view of such common objections as these that I am proposing to give some positive explanation of the nature, meaning, and value of the document which, for reasons which will shortly
appear, it would be better to name, like the *Te Deum* and other canticles, by the first words of its Latin form—the *Quicunque vult*.

I.

The exact date of the document is disputed and for our present purpose unimportant; for it belongs, at any rate, to what may be called the middle period of Latin theology, the period which extends from the end of the theological activity of Augustine to the beginnings of scholasticism.¹ This is the least philosophical period of theology. In many of the earlier Latin theologians—Tertullian, Hilary, Victorinus—the speculative or philosophical element is as prominent as among the Greek-speaking fathers. Augustine himself is among the most distinguished of the Christian theologians who transferred to Christianity the resources of contemporary Platonism; but in his thought and writings we observe how the regulative, governmental aspect of Latin Christianity becomes dominant. The deeper aspects of the Godhead and the attempt to arrive at the exact truth in the

¹ Mr. Burn, *The Athanasian Creed* ("Texts and Studies," vol. iv., No. i, Cambridge, 1896), has quite recently again shown cause for believing that it belongs to the beginning of this period and proceeds from the Gallican school of Lerins, c. A.D. 425-450. "The Church of Gaul had then a special gift for full-toned and worthy liturgical language" (p. xcix.).
interpretation of the New Testament are alike subordinated to the necessity of presenting Christianity as an effective dogmatic discipline—in other words, all other tasks of the theologian are subordinated to the one task of lifting the dogmas of the Trinity and of the Incarnation into such unmistakable emphasis and distinctness as should admit of no kind of ambiguity, and should enable them to be used as instruments in educating untaught races without possibility of mistake. When the Latin language had once been moulded to this end, notably by Augustine and Leo the Great, the Church for many centuries was content simply to use it without any serious amount of further reflection. The writer of the theological tracts ascribed to Boetius does, indeed, devote himself to the philosophical explication of theological terms, and John Scotus Erigena stands almost alone as a philosophical theologian—one, too, of a courage bordering on audacity—in the ninth century. Otherwise the period of nearly seven centuries, from Augustine at the one end to Berenger, Abelard and Anselm, who introduced the scholastic metaphysics, at the other, is destitute of a philosophical theology. It devotes itself to another not less important or interesting task—that of ruling and disciplining by the aid of a revealed truth, embodied in clearly cut dogmatic forms, the rough races who
formed the material of modern Europe, availing itself in this way for the purposes of government of the results arrived at by theological thought and the interpretation of Scripture, through the combined genius of Greece and Rome, in the Church of the previous age.

I speak of the results of the previous age, the age of the great theologians and great councils, for results there had truly been. Certain vigorous attempts to rationalize and explain, or rather to explain away, the Christian doctrine of God and of Christ—the attempts especially of Arius, of Apollinarius, and of Nestorius—had been met and repudiated. They had been shown to be fundamentally subversive of the truths which they professed to explain. Their repudiation was embodied in definite theological determinations or dogmas; viz. that Christ, the Son of God, is no demigod, but truly God, of one substance with the Father; that the same is true of the Holy Ghost; that Christ was really made perfect man with a human mind and spirit as well as a human flesh and life; that, none the less, the humanity constitutes no separate person, but is only another mode of existence assumed by the eternal Son; lastly, that this humanity which He assumed remains human in all its distinctive activities, and that for ever. These dogmas, as Mr. Arthur Balfour has
The Athanasian Creed.

truly perceived, were not explanations, but "the negation of explanations"\(^1\)

The Church held that all such partial explanations [as the great heresiarchs attempted] inflicted irredeemable impoverishment on the idea of the Godhead which was essentially involved in the Christian revelation. They insisted on preserving that idea in all its inexplicable fulness; and so it has come about that while such simplifications as those of the Arians, for example, are so alien and impossible to modern modes of thought, that if they had been incorporated with Christianity they must have destroyed it, the doctrine of Christ's Divinity still gives life and reality to the worship of millions of pious souls, who are wholly ignorant both of the controversy to which they owe its preservation, and of the technicalities which its discussion has involved.

Mr. Balfour is surely quite right. The dogmas were negative rather than positive. Their purpose was to say "no" to mistaken attempts at explanation, and still to point back the believer, for his positive conception of Christ, to the record of the New Testament Scriptures. But there resulted from them an augmented emphasis and distinctness and freedom in positive statement of Christian truth. The doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation need not have lost at all in this process, either in spirituality or in truth to Scripture. If, in fact, they were allowed to suffer loss in some respects, it was not owing to the dogmas, but rather to the

\(^1\) See The Foundations of Belief (Longmans, 1895), p. 279. I have endeavoured to explain this at somewhat greater length in The Incarnation of the Son of God (Murray, 1891), Lecture IV.
temper and ignorance of the early Middle Ages; or to a false position being assigned to the dogmas, as if they were intended to be independent sources of positive information about Christ, instead of only guides to the Scriptures. But in any case, by their emphatic dogmatic statement the doctrines gained as instruments of positive force in disciplining the minds and lives of rude and untamed races. This was the present function of the Church—to be a school in which revealed truth should be used as an instrument of discipline, and specially in the suppression of idolatry. This—the peril of idolatry—accounts for the strenuousness of the Church when she enlisted the Franks as her fierce instruments for the suppression of Arianism. Arianism was, in theory and practice, tolerant of the worship of demi-gods. The Church dogma lifts the One God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, into absolute and isolated supremacy and distinctness, and refuses to conceive any gradation of existences between the Creator and the creature. The same motive—zeal against idolatry—accounts for the seriousness of the Frankish Church in repudiating the decisions of the [Eastern] Second Council of Nicea in favour of image worship. "For, although," said the Caroline books which represent the mind of Charles the Great and the Council of Frankfurt, "instructed people may avoid the common error
in the worship of images, owing to the fact that they venerate not what they see but what they represent, yet, none the less, they generate scandal for the uninstructed, who venerate and worship simply what they see."

It is to this period—when the Church is occupied in using the dogma as an instrument of discipline for uninstructed people and specially as a bulwark against idolatry, Pagan or Christian—that the *Quicunque vult* belongs. It is by a most mistaken and unfortunate use of terms that objectors to this Creed complain of it for being metaphysical. That is exactly what it is not.¹ The period to which it belongs is essentially and markedly unmetaphysical. The scholastic period after it was metaphysical, so was the period of Greek theology before it. The period of which the *Quicunque* is characteristic is practical, disciplinary, quite unmetaphysical. Let any one who is philosophically minded go to the previous period, and he will have opportunity

¹ Of course, in one sense, all terms, and especially all terms which describe what is invisible, such as 'spirit,' 'eternal,' 'God,' are metaphysical terms. In this sense the Bible is full of metaphysics. But a document is not properly described as metaphysical unless it is written from a philosophical point of view, in order to explain the inner essence and relationship of things in their fundamental principles, and not merely for practical purposes. It is in this strict sense that I call the language of the *Quicunque vult* unmetaphysical, viz. that it is not written from the point of view of the philosopher, but from the point of view of practical ecclesiastical government and worship.
to study in Origen, or Athanasius, or Gregory of Nyssa, in Hilary, or Victorinus, or Augustine, the rational meaning of the dogma, the subordination, distinctness, and unity of the persons in the Godhead, the realities and limits of the disclosure of God made in Christ; or, among the creeds, let him study the Nicene Creed, which, though it was practical in its object, was developed in a more philosophical atmosphere. But he must have got rid of the spirit of metaphysical inquiry, or philosophical accuracy, before he approaches the theology of the Quicunque. That is the theology for plain people who want and will accept a simple, authoritative discipline. It is dogmatic, ecclesiastical, disciplinary. If this so-called creed is longer than the others it is not the desire to further define truth which makes it so. It does but recite and reiterate in its first portion the dogma of the three co-equal, co-essential persons in the one Godhead, which was the outcome of the Arian controversy, and in the latter portion the dogma of the divine and human natures in the one person of the incarnate Christ, which was the outcome of the subsequent Christological controversy.

No one ought to find any difficulty in the doctrinal language of this formula who is, first, confident that the Son of God, who was incarnate, and the Holy Spirit are with the Father really the one true God:
and who is, *secondly*, prepared to recognize that this faith in the threefold Name may legitimately be stated in language which is clear, but (from a philosophical point of view) rough and ready, lacking in modifications and explanations, in order to guide and protect simple believers.

But you will say, "Why is the creed so long if there is no love of multiplying definitions?" The answer is a simple one. It is praise, not definition, that makes the *Quicunque* long. Granted that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, it follows, as a matter of course, in the mind of every theist, that each of the holy persons is also uncreated, eternal, incomprehensible (or, rather, infinite—*immensus*), omnipotent, Lord. The clauses which contain these additional sentences, and very many others, add nothing in the way of definition. They occupy their place simply because the Church loved to dwell in adoring thankfulness on the truth of God as He had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. Thus the *Quicunque vult* is most accurately described in the two titles we find most commonly applied to it in early times. It is first called *Fides Catholica*, or *Fides Athanasii*, a statement or an explanation of the faith of the Catholic Church, the faith of which Athanasius was the chief champion; and, as such, it is required by a Council of Autun that the clergy of all degrees
should be acquainted with it. But also it is, and especially in England,⁠¹ called a "hymn," or "psalm," of the faith. And this is the best name for it—the psalm *Quicunque vult.* It is, like the *Te Deum,* a composition in which the divine object of Christian faith becomes also the object of Christian adoration and praise; and it is the love of drawing out and reiterating the phrases in which this praise finds expression, this and this only, that makes the *Quicunque* so long. The other title applied to the document, that of *symbolum* or creed, is a less fortunate one, because the document has never been used either as a baptismal profession of the faith of a Christian or as a dogmatic document, like the Nicene Creed with its phrase "of one substance with the Father," which clergy should be required to subscribe as a condition of Catholic communion. The hymn *Quicunque vult* has never been used as a formula for subscription.⁠² It is a canticle

¹ Burn, *l.c.,* pp. xli, f.
² It has been suggested that in the eighth of the Anglican Articles of Religion, the Athanasian Creed is treated as a formula for subscription. The language of the article is: "The Three Creeds, *Nicene* Creed, *Athanasius's* Creed, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles'* Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture." This language can hardly be pressed to mean more than that the theology of all the three formulas, *i.e.* in effect, the dogmas of the œcuménical Councils, is to be accepted
rather than a creed. And its balanced, cumulative, unmodified phraseology is suitable to the language of hymnody.

Enough, I hope, has been said to indicate the temper of mind necessary for entering into the spirit of this statement of orthodoxy turned into a psalm of praise. We must be not at all in the temper of inquiry, but in that of acceptance. We must be in frank acceptance of the divine revelation, thankful to God for the good gift of the catholic faith. We must be, moreover, cordial churchmen, believing in the function of the Church to protect, formulate, and hand on the faith, through rough ages and for ignorant classes, as well as through philosophical ages and for educated classes. And, believing thus, we must be ready to express, and expressing to give thanks for, our faith, not as philosophers, but as common believers, in terms adapted to the common devotion rather than to the exact niceties of philosophical appreciation.

II.

Once more—to approach another kind of difficulty experienced in regard to this formula—the faith revealed in Jesus Christ is revealed primarily for a practical object. It is the great salvation; as thoroughly in harmony with holy Scripture. It does not single out the *Quicunque vult* and propound it separately for subscription.
the great instrument of our deliverance from the power of sin. The Church, therefore, to which this faith is entrusted is the way of salvation. It embodies a life redeemed from the power of evil by the power of a revealed truth—the truth, or name, of God, the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. As there is but one God, so there is but one revelation or name of God, and one deliverance or salvation based upon it. This revelation of God has been made in many parts or manners, to all nations, to all individuals more or less. But it reaches its climax in Jesus Christ. The Christian revelation supersedes all other religions, as the light supersedes the twilight; supersedes them by including in a greater whole the elements of truth which each contains. In a true sense, every religion may be regarded, like the Jewish, as leading up to Christ. But every religion, including the Jewish, becomes the antagonist of Christ so soon as it enters on a career of rivalry. To reject Christ, as manifested and made known by the example of Christian life and the preaching of the word, is to reject the light and to choose the darkness. There is one God, one Christ, one salvation based upon His name—not alternative Gods, alternative Christs, alternative salvations. To those to whom the light comes, and who can appreciate its message, the Christian religion
The Athanasian Creed.

represents the one and only Gospel of salvation and deliverance; and the rejection of this Gospel is the choosing of death. "Neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."¹ As there is a true and eternal life based on the acceptance of the one revelation of God, so there is a true and eternal death based on a rejection of the one revelation of God. "He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."² And so the Quicunque begins with its tremendous statement, "Whosoever wishes to be saved [or, strictly, safe, in a state of salvation—Quicunque vult salvus esse], must needs before all things hold the catholic faith." For what, in fact, is the catholic salvation but a life based upon God's revelation of Himself? To reject this revelation, the terms of which the Church is now about to recite, is, beyond all question, to reject the offer of eternal life, the life of the spirit, and to choose the eternal death, the death of the spirit. Therefore, "which faith except every one shall be found to have kept whole and inviolate, without doubt he shall die eternally."

Here, obviously, the Quicunque is again stating the truth broadly—that is, without modifications or answers to the questions which accurate reflection

¹ Acts iv. 12.
² 1 John v. 12.
suggests. It is stating the truth in a phraseology adapted to a psalm or hymn, not to an exact statement of personal moral responsibility. The so-called "damnatory clauses," I say, are, in fact, rough-and-ready statements of a great principle. They are statements of a principle, not anathemas or damnatory clauses properly so-called; for they "damn" or pass sentence upon no particular person or classes of persons. But the statements of the principle or truth are rough and ready, and afford no answer to such questions as the following. What is the relation of moral goodness to the acceptance of revealed truth? The Quicunque—as Charles Kingsley, one of its earnest advocates, was fond of pointing out—declares that the final judgment upon us shall be by our actions rather than by our opinions. "They that have done good shall go into life eternal, and they that have done evil into eternal fire." What is the relation of this judgment according to our works to the requirement of an orthodox faith—"He therefore, that wishes to be in the way of salvation let him thus hold (sentiat) about the Trinity?" What is to be said of a thoroughly good man who (whether through the working of his own mind, or through hereditary influences) is unorthodox? To this question the Quicunque gives no answer at all. Again, what is to be said
of the good heathen who has never heard, or adequately heard, the message of Christ? Again, to this question—though it cannot be said that the Quicunque contemplates the case of the heathen at all—there is no definite answer. Thoughtful theology, earlier and later than the Quicunque—theology from Justin Martyr down to Roman Catholics and Anglicans and Protestants of to-day—has answered the question by saying, in varying phrases, that every man who is good up to his lights is the friend of Christ; that there is no other rejection of the Light of the World than the love of the darkness; that all men who live well will, if not in this life, yet in the many mansions beyond the grave, learn to recognize and rejoice in the truth. “In whatever hatred or contempt or blasphemy of Christ nurtured,” said Dr. Pusey, “God has His own elect who ignorantly worship Him, whose ignorant fear or love He who inspired it will accept.” I suppose there is no decently instructed Christian who doubts this at the present day. Charles Kingsley, who surprised some of his friends by his vigorous defence of the Quicunque vult, used to point out that the churchmen who composed and first sang this psalm believed intensely in the intermediate states of purgatory and paradise before the final assessment of human lives. All that can be truly said about the psalm
is that it was not written in view of the difficulties which we experience in justly estimating the responsibility of individuals for disbelief, or in the moral atmosphere where such difficulties are felt. It states the truth that the one covenanted deliverance from sin depends on the acceptance of the one authoritative revelation of God in Christ, and it states it without embarrassment or hesitation: again, I say, in a mode of speech suitable to a triumphant psalm of praise for the gift of the divine revelation.

Nor would it appear that the modifications which would need to be introduced for the complete understanding of these warning clauses are any more than the modifications needed in any similar statements of our purely moral (not intellectual) obligations and responsibilities. We say, with the New Testament writers, that liars and fornicators shall not inherit the Kingdom of God or shall be participators in the "second death;" but we do not mean it without qualification. We do not mean that an Italian peasant or other Christian who has been brought up to think ordinary mendacity a quite venial offence, and who perseveres in the practice of it, shall be necessarily an outcast from God, or that those—Hindus, perhaps—who have had no idea of the sinfulness of sensual indulgence, shall be condemned for it finally. We know that
to incur the guilt of any moral offence we must have the responsibility and opportunity of right knowledge. We must have sinned against the light. In the technical language of theology, in order to be guilty we must offend not only "materially," or in outward fact, but also "formally," or in will and intention, knowing what we do. Thus to reject God's offer of truth is to sin against God, is (finally) to reject God and be rejected of Him; but to incur that guilt we must have had the opportunity and responsibility of knowledge. Rejection without malicious intention or evil conscience is not, morally regarded, rejection at all. Thus the statement of the Quicunque is, no doubt, general and without refinements. But can we get on without such general statements of right and wrong—for example, about thieving and lying and drunkenness—made for the purposes of government and expressed without reference to particular cases? And can we doubt that in a very great number of cases the rejection of the Christian revelation, considered as truth for the intelligence, is due to a previous refusal or unwillingness on the part of the will to accept the yoke of Christian discipleship?  

1 To the present writer it has always seemed somewhat mathematically and precisely true that "there lives more faith in honest doubts . . . than in half the creeds": for "half the creeds," i.e. the beliefs of half the believers, are probably formal, and "honest doubts," that is, anxious and hesitating seekings after truth, are no
III.

Viewing the Quicunque vult with more or less of knowledge in the true light, an ordinarily orthodox churchman ought not, I think, to find any serious difficulty, and ought, on the other hand, to experience some real satisfaction in the singing or recitation of it, as applied to himself and to others like him. What destroys our satisfaction, however, as the recitation occurs in our customary morning services, is the fact, which cannot be doubted, that there are very many in an average congregation who are disturbed or irritated by it—many whose worship on great festivals is actually spoilt by it.

What are we to do to meet this difficulty?

I am quite sure that it would be a perilous mistake to attempt to meet these difficulties by either excluding the Quicunque from the Book of Common Prayer, or leaving it to the taste of the individual clergyman whether he would say it or no. This latter course—perhaps the most objectionable of all—would be the occasion of numberless offences by making the recitation of the formula a matter of personal predilection. doubt of more moral value than merely formal orthodoxy. But it does not therefore follow, as many people seem to think, that ordinary doubts represent as high a moral level as genuine beliefs, or, generally, that "there lives more faith in doubts than in creeds."
The former course, even if initiated from some right motives, would quite certainly be understood to imply some disparagement of the importance of the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation. Let us trust that any attempt to deal in either of these ways with the Quicunque will be met with the same determined opposition that it encountered twenty years ago.

Nor must we omit to notice a fact which may help to commend this document to those who would wish by all means to keep the communion of the Church as broad as possible. Its language appears to imply that the most necessary articles of Christian belief are the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and those only. At least, it exalts them into a position of isolated and unique importance.

But I would make the following suggestions with a view to meeting the difficulties which are now under consideration:—

1. Let all churchmen be educated in the true principles which the Quicunque embodies. The name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God, is in fact and truth the only name of salvation. The connection between the name and the salvation cannot be made too plain.

"My rule," wrote Charles Kingsley, "has been to preach the Athanasian Creed from the pulpit in season and out of
season; to ground not merely my whole theological, but my whole ethical teaching, formally and openly in it; to prevent, as far as I could, people from thinking it a dead *formula*, or even a string of intellectual dogmas."¹

“Do you, who come to church,” wrote the great thinker, Frederick D. Maurice, “wish to be saved from those courses which assuredly are destroying you, and will destroy you, let your profession be what it may? Then hold the catholic faith which you say you hold. Believe in the Name into which you are baptized, the Name in which you and all men are living and moving and having your being.

“The Name of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is, as the Fathers and schoolmen said continually, the Name of the infinite charity, the perfect love, the full vision of which is that beatific vision for which saints and angels long even while they dwell in it. To lose this, to be separated from this, to be cut off from the Name in which we live and move and have our being, is everlasting death.”²

2. Let us learn something of the breadth and largeness which belongs to our membership in the Catholic Church. It is an immense privilege, surely, to belong to a society which has endured through so many ages, and which is suited to contain all classes, conditions, and races of men. We ought to dwell more on this privilege. But it is sure to carry with it some accompanying burden. For example, it is conceivable, though improbable, that a Book of Common Prayer drawn up to suit one class in one age, might contain nothing specially

¹ Charles Kingsley (Kegan Paul), 1885, p. 322.
² Life of F. D. Maurice (Macmillan), vol. ii. pp. 413, 563.
distasteful to any of that class or age. But it is hardly conceivable that a Book of Common Prayer, a large part of which consists of devotions common to all Christian ages and classes, should not contain something distasteful to a particular age or class—but not for that reason unnecessary—should not, in particular, contain what jars upon that peculiar sensitiveness to dogmatic claims which characterizes educated circles at the present moment. The statements in the *Quicunque vult* are in fact statements of truth, unqualified, no doubt, as a very intellectually sensitive class would wish them qualified, but in broad simplicity and effectiveness statements of abiding truth. And this kind of unqualified dogmatic statement is, we can easily conceive, just the kind of statement in which truth needs to be enshrined, if it is to last unimpaired through ages of wild barbarism and rough negligence, or, on the other hand, shallow latitudinarianism and unspirituality. What do we not owe to the sharp, unmistakably emphasized, language of the *Quicunque* for preserving the faith in the Blessed Trinity, one only God, through ages when idolatry was a continual peril, or through such a spiritually dead age, such a *seculum rationalisticum*, as the last century in the English Church? What do we not owe to the *Quicunque* for preserving the faith, or, shall I say, the skeleton of the faith,
always ready to be reclothed in the sinews and flesh of a living devotion, and inspired by the vitalizing spirit of God, as by a wind that bloweth where it listeth? I am assuming that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is the safeguard of the practical truth of our redemption, and of the verity that God is personal and God is love. I am assuming that, because I cannot stay to show it. But granted that, did not the truth need encasing in a stout armour to persist through wild days? Did it not need utterance in unmistakable tones if it was to ring on through an age utterly averse to mystery and depth? And are we not narrow-minded if we fail to rejoice in an utterance like this, because we should like it moderated and modulated to suit an over-intellectualized sensitiveness, a sensitiveness somewhat absorbed in its own difficulties and unsympathetic to the broader wants of common man? No kind of religion more needs broadening than academic and intellectual religion. It is always forgetting how much more common are the religious needs and perils which arise from dulness and grossness, than those which arise from a temper of intellectual scepticism. And the Church is Catholic—the mother of all sorts and conditions of men. It was a poet who wrote in real sympathy with common religious feelings who called the Quicunque the—
“Majestic march! as meet to guide and time
Man’s wandering path in life’s ungenial clime,
As Aaron’s trump for the dread ark’s array,
Creed of the saints and anthem of the blest!”

3. It might be possible to relieve some difficulty felt in regard to this profession of faith if a few of its phrases were to be retranslated, as is attempted at the end of this paper, and if a note were appended which should plainly state that The guilt of any sin, and therefore the guilt of rejecting the Christian faith, is only incurred by those who both transgress in fact, and also have the opportunity of knowing what they are doing. Thus the guilt of rejecting God’s truth can never be incurred by one who really "willeth to do His will." And such an one can receive enlightenment beyond the grave.

4. It is also possible that, as time goes on, it may be desirable to effect alteration in the present position of the Quicunque in our services, so that it may both be preserved in memory, and also may more truly appear as a psalm of praise. At present, as it is recited in the course of Morning Prayer, those are required to join in it—the wealthier classes, who chiefly frequent our Morning Prayer—amongst whom are the greater number of those who misunderstand and are irritated by it. The poorer classes and the increasing number of devouter worshippers who frequent the Eucharist as their morning service,
and who are almost always absent from Morning Prayer, never join in it at all. The tendency to make the Eucharist the chief service of the morning may be expected to increase. It is at least possible that the example of St. Barnabas Church in Oxford might be followed with advantage and the *Quicunque vult* sung as a psalm of praise in the evening service, or as a marching hymn for procession on Trinity Sunday. In this way it might remain familiar to the mass of church worshippers, while its true character as a canticle of praise might better appear.

**IV.**

It may be worth while to say one word in conclusion. We must never forget the only legitimate meaning of breadth in connection with the Church. It is broad because it is a society based on a revelation of the Divine Name which is adequate for all men and all ages, which expresses the eternal and essential fellowship of divine love—the Name of the coequal Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God. The Church is a society based on this truth. Let it be as broad as the open and unhesitating confession of the Divine Name can allow it, or rather make it, to be. The belief in the Creeds and Scriptures which proclaim this
Name, the practical fellowship in the ministry, the sacraments, and the worship of the Church—this is an adequate basis of unity on which we can build in free allowance of manifold differences. But the underlying faith and the practical fellowship in common worship and sacraments, these are essentials of the life of the Church. For the Church to be broad, in the sense of being indifferent to the dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation, would be to lose the very meaning of her being, for she is in the world as this and nothing but this—a society embodying a life of goodness and love, based upon the confession of the threefold Divine Name. "Go ye," said our Lord, "and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world."
A REVISED<sup>1</sup> TRANSLATION OF THE QUICUNQUE, WITH BRIEF EXPLANATIONS.

THE QUICUNQUE VULT.

A Statement of the Catholic Faith, turned into a Canticle of Praise.

INTRODUCTION.

The principle is affirmed that the Christian religion is a life based on a revelation of truth, and you cannot expect the practical benefits of redemption except by believing the divine revelation. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."

1. Whosoever wisheth to be in the state of salvation, must needs before all things hold the Catholic Faith.

2. Which Faith, except every one shall have kept whole and inviolate, without doubt he shall perish eternally.

PART I.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

The ecclesiastical doctrine of the Holy Trinity is but an attempt to put into words, and so to safeguard, that disclosure of God which was made evident in the incarnation of His Son. In coming nearer to men for their enlightenment and deliverance, God discovered to men also something of His own eternal being. The name of the one God became to the Apostles, and so to the Church, the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are plainly spoken of in our Lord's own language, as recorded in the New Testament, as each of them personal, and distinct the one from the other; thus: "No man knoweth the Son save the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son."<sup>2</sup> "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him."<sup>3</sup> Or, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another

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<sup>1</sup> The corrected translations are printed in italics.

<sup>2</sup> St. Matt. xi. 27.

<sup>3</sup> St. Matt. xii. 32.
The Athanasian Creed.

Comforter, that He may be with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth."¹ In all these sayings of our Lord it is clearly implied that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are in some real sense three persons. But they are plainly also the same one God who had been revealing Himself under the old covenant. They are distinct persons, but not separate individuals. This appears most clearly in our Lord's language in the upper chamber, after the last supper. Thus, after speaking of the Holy Spirit as "another Comforter" distinct from Himself, He goes on to teach that in the coming of that other Comforter He too will come. "I will not leave you desolate, I will come unto you."² A little further on it is, "We will come," i.e. the Father and the Son, because, in fact, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one inseparable unity. The movement of one is the movement of all; the coming of one is the coming of all. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the three Persons in one God, is thus implied in our Lord's words, and was part of the belief of the Church from the first. It is mysterious, no doubt, as all deep, true things are mysterious, but not more baffling to our understanding, as Professor Huxley admits, than many of the mysteries of nature with which science deals. In fact, we find many analogies to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the constitution of the world and of man; and it helps us to understand how God can have lived and loved alone before all creation, and without the need of any creatures. God has a real and complete life in Himself because, though He is one, yet there is relationship and fellowship in His one being.

After the days of the Apostles the Church had hard work to find a form of words for this faith in the Holy Trinity and to defend it from attacks on the one side and on the other, but at last the phrase was accepted—as the best which our imperfect human language could supply—that in God there are three persons in one substance. And the Quicunque Vult, written in an age full of dangerous heresies and of idolatry, does but enshrine and reiterate in its swinging and easily remembered verses this one central truth. When it speaks of the Son as "begotten" and the Holy Spirit as "proceeding," it does but retain the language of the New Testament without attempting to explain the difference between the terms used.

3. Now the Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.

¹ St. John xiv. 16. ² St. John xiv. 18.
The Athanasian Creed.

4. Neither confusing the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.
5. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.
6. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.
7. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.
8. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate.
9. The Father infinite, the Son infinite, and the Holy Ghost infinite.
10. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.
11. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal.
12. As also there are not three infinites, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated and one infinite.
13. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty.
14. And yet they are not three Almightyes, but one Almighty.
15. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.
16. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.
17. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord.
18. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord;
20. So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.
21. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.
22. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten.
The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.

And in this Trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another;

But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.

He therefore that wisheth to be in the state of salvation, let him thus hold about the Trinity.

PART II.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION.

That glimpse into the eternal being of God, of which the result is the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, was given to men through the coming of the Son in our flesh to work out our redemption. The doctrine of this Incarnation is the keystone of the Christian religion. It is plainly implied in the New Testament that the Son of God, without ceasing to be God, was made true and very man. But before all the apostles were dead men had begun to doubt the reality of the divine condescension, and to say that Christ was not really man. And not long after there were found men to doubt, on the other hand, whether He was God. This was only the beginning of a long series of controversies, under the pressure of which the Church fashioned for herself a clear terminology. According to this terminology Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is one person in two natures or substances, the divine and human; perfect God and perfect man; and His human nature is complete in body, soul, and spirit. And it is the original Christian faith thus hammered out into a dogmatic language which the Quicunque Vult makes use of, to impress upon believers in general the rudiments of the Christian Creed.

Furthermore, it is necessary to eternal salvation that he also believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
30. Therefore the right Faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.
31. God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds, and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world.
32. Perfect God, and perfect Man, consisting of a rational soul and human flesh.
33. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.
34. Who, although he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ.
35. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the Manhood into God.
36. One altogether, not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.
37. For as the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ.
38. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.
39. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
40. At whose coming all men must rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works.
41. And they that have done good shall go into life eternal; and they that have done evil into eternal fire.

Conclusion.

42. This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be in the state of salvation.
There is a certain sense of weariness attaching to the discussion of the relations between Church and State. It suggests a number of apparently trivial questions, which are always raising difficulties, and cause an amount of trouble disproportionate to any gain which comes from their solution. In fact, they are rarely solved, and are merely put aside for a time.

It must, however, be observed that these questions cannot be avoided. The Church sets forth the fundamental truths on which man's life is based; the State attempts to organize the life of the community in the most satisfactory way. There must frequently be difficulties about embodying principles in practice, doubts if the most obvious step is really the wisest, if changes made for convenience do not imperil principles, and so on. The Church must frequently criticize the proposals of the State, and must consider if they tend to narrow or impede her efficiency for setting
forth principles. Church and State alike work for the good of the community, but they begin at different ends. The State is willing to redress particular grievances; the Church is upholding general truths.

Thus in Christian countries there are two organizations which care for human progress, each in its own way. This may lead to temporary difficulties, but produces immense advantages, as may be seen by looking to the history of non-Christian peoples. Thus in Mohammedan countries the Church has absorbed the State. The Koran is the statute-book as well as the Bible. The result is that religion becomes official, and the State stagnates. On the other hand, in ancient Rome, the State absorbed the Church, which consequently became a mere symbol of earthly greatness, and lost all religious and moral force. Without these forces no nation has been able to maintain itself; for human energy rests on a conception of the object of the individual life, and this is what religion sets forth. It is the supreme testimony to the truth of Christianity that it holds up to mankind a Person, at once human and Divine, Who revealed God’s purposes in a life, in which every believer shares; a life lived for a brief space on earth, but which came from heaven and went back to heaven. The force which this
belief gives to those who hold it is the cause of every great movement in civilization. The sense of a common purpose in national life must find expression in the form of religion.

Thus Church and State are inseparably connected, and it is impossible to keep them apart. It is useless to talk about either of them being "free," in the sense of beings entirely independent of the other. Both deal with human life; both have the same community as their members; both have their own organizations. The practical question is how these organizations are to affect one another: and this is what is meant by the relations between Church and State.

These relations have frequently changed; and the general character of the change in every country has been that the actual power of the Church has diminished, and the power of the State has increased. This has led to a notion that the Church has always been hostile to what is called progress, and that advance in social development has been made by overthrowing ecclesiastical pretensions. It is worth while to consider how far such an opinion is true.

To examine it properly it is necessary to go back to the foundation of the Christian Church. It came into existence within the political framework of the Roman Empire, which had erected a
great system of orderly government, and had brought under its sway all the civilized world. But though Rome could conquer and could govern, its rule was not founded upon any spiritual principles. In early times of Rome's history the character of its subjects was moulded by a strong sense of patriotic duty, springing from a simple religion. This religion passed away, because it was not able to explain the growing complications of life, and to maintain the sense of duty, on which increasing demands were constantly made by the increase of power. When its dominion was established, Rome had no great ideas which could bind its subjects together, or curb the selfishness of its governing class. Hence it began to decline, because it could not maintain the basis of character, which is necessary for national life. It produced many good and wise men, but they were wise and good for themselves only, for their philosophy could not influence the masses. All the local religions decayed, and degenerated into superstitions. In this state of things Christianity appeared as a new bond of union between men. Its great work in the world was that it restored character from within.

Christianity won its way, for this reason, to be the recognized religion of the Roman world just as Rome was falling before the invasions of the peoples
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of the North. On the ruins of the Roman Empire was built up a new political system; and the Christian religion was the means of uniting the conquerors and the conquered, and of saving much of the old civilization under the protection of the Church. The Roman people were decaying from want of vigour; their conquerors had vigour enough, but were rude and undisciplined. It was the work of the Church to set before men a conception of life and character which should train them up into new power.

Thus the Church was prior to the State, and educated it into a knowledge of its work. The Church was organized from the beginning as a Catholic, or universal, Church. There was no such organization of civil society. When our forefathers in this land became Christians, they entered into an organization which existed independently of them, and moulded their institutions into some sort of agreement with its own principles. The Church had rules for its children long before the State had laws for its subjects; and when laws were made they were made under the influence of the Church. In a time of ceaseless warfare the officers of the Church alone represented the claims of peace, and were the first to care for the development of civilization. They could deal with things which the State had no means of dealing with;
and in so doing they gradually educated the State into a higher notion of its functions and possibilities. The life of the nation developed under the care of the Church, and the State had slowly to learn how to make provision for this growing national life.

Thus the Church trained the English nation, and the State grew up under its care. The Church formed the national character, the State had to provide for its growing needs. At first, Church and State were one. Bishops were ministers and judges. The Church could make laws when the State could not, and the State consequently adopted and enforced the laws of the Church. But as life became more settled, its problems rapidly increased; and the work of government and legislation became more difficult. In early times the same man might do much business, because it could all be done in the same sort of way, with reference to the same general principles. But this became impossible as the amount of business grew. It had to be divided into different branches. Some parts of the law were taken over by the State, and others were left in the hands of the Church. A distinction was drawn between the business of the State, and the business of the Church, and sometimes it was not easy to determine the exact line of division. This was one
reason which led to disputes between Church and State.

But there was another reason, which was more important. The State was concerned with the business of England only: the Church was part of an organization which embraced the whole of Western Europe. The State explained and adapted the old customs of the English people; the Church applied laws which were formed on principles which came from the old Roman law, and claimed for them universal acceptance. There were two legal systems in England—one purely national, the other common to Western Europe. The Church had undertaken to regulate by its system some relationships, especially matters concerning marriages and wills, at a time when the State had no means of dealing with them. But as the State developed its own system of law, it resented the existence of another system, especially as that system admitted appeals to the Pope. These appeals grew more frequent, and were felt to be a hindrance to the execution of justice. There was a growing restiveness to the foreign jurisdiction, which ended in its abolition in the reign of Henry VIII. From that time onward England has managed its own affairs, recognizing no right of interference from outside.

The change in the relations of the Church to
the Pope led to other changes also. Many things in the Church had gone on badly, because there was no power of reform, when the Pope was supreme. In the sixteenth century the old system of the Church was severely criticized, and was rudely shaken everywhere. Some countries set up a new system altogether; England mended the old system: and the Papacy found it necessary to make many changes if it were to keep its hold in the countries that remained obedient. There was a great loosening of old bands; there were great differences of opinion; and there was consequently a new sense of individual liberty and of the rights of conscience. It was very hard for things to settle down again upon the old basis; the idea of complete submission to authority could not be restored.

In these troubled times, when religion and politics were confounded all over Europe, England thought it necessary that all its subjects should hold together in one religious system. The Church was reformed, and the State demanded that all men should accept it. There were, however, some Englishmen who preferred the old services and obedience to the Pope. There were others who wished to sweep away the old system of the Church, and set up a new system, as had been done in Germany. The State, wishing for unity,
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tried to secure it on the basis of religious uniformity, and enforced uniformity of law. Its definition of a loyal subject was that he should be a member of the Church of England. So, for its own purposes, the State made use of the Church as a standard of loyalty. This was a great misfortune, and from it came many evil results, which still continue to affect the question of the relations between Church and State in England.

Let us try and see fairly what really happened. England, in the reign of Elizabeth, was exposed to great dangers of foreign invasion. This invasion was made for the purpose of reconquering England for the Pope. Any signs of differences of religious opinions in England made the chances of invasion more probable; so the Government thought it a duty to prevent religious differences by penalties. This attempt at repression did not succeed; but the Church, by allowing these penalties to be inflicted in its name, laid itself open to the charge of wishing to master men's bodies by force, rather than win their minds by persuasion. It became identical with the State, in the opinion of many; and those who strove for freedom had to strive against Church and State alike. This led to a contest in which Church and State went to the ground, and Cromwell made an attempt to find new forms
for them both. This proved to be impossible; what England wanted was the old State and the old Church on a wider basis, with more room for liberty of opinion. It took some time for this to be understood, and many mistakes were made before things were settled. The settlement came in politics by a sort of agreement that men might differ in their opinions, so long as they respected the opinions of others, and all worked together for the public good, with a regard for justice and a sense of common duty. This is the understanding which makes our system of government possible. There are opposed political parties; we do not expect everybody to agree to everything that is done: but when he has expressed his opinions and done the best he can to convince others, he must abide by their decision and obey the laws. No one denounces the State. He may find fault with the existing government and everything it does; but he lives in hope of another government which will do more nearly what he personally wishes, and he must rest satisfied with that hope.

As regards the Church it is otherwise. There are different opinions about religion, as about politics; and the differences follow the same sort of lines. They are not so much about the truths of Christianity, or of the duties which it implies, as about the way in which these truths are best
taught to the world. In other words, religious differences mostly concern questions of organization and Church government. These questions, however, are very important, as the Church exists for the purpose of setting forth truth, which cannot be changed to suit people's wishes or convenience. Therefore it must have an organization fitted to keep that truth pure, and to set it forth accurately and entirely. This must come first, before the question how it can be made most acceptable, or how it can best be adapted to men's apparent needs and the conditions of their minds. In this way the Church differs from the State. The State is the exponent, rather than the educator, of the national will: in proportion as it has become the executor, it has ceased to be the director, of the nation's wishes. The Church, on the other hand, exists as an educator and director. It is influenced, of course, by all the thoughts and wishes of men, because it consists of men who must think and wish with their fellow-men. But the Church must uphold the truth committed to its care, and while learning to understand that truth better by seeing God's purposes as shown in the movement of the world, must test all objects of endeavour by the truth itself.

There remains therefore this great difference between the modern State and the Church, that
the State is frankly utilitarian, and rests upon the basis of expediency; while the Church exists only for the purpose of setting forth necessary truth, and can only exist in such a form as enables it to do this fully and freely.

There is, however, always a certain amount of misunderstanding introduced into any subject by using abstract phrases. Church and State are abstractions, but in actual fact they consist largely of the same persons, and only express different sides of their activity. When men act together as citizens they are the State: when they act together as Christians they are the Church. Behind both Church and State stands the nation; and Church and State alike are organs of the nation, the one for the arrangement of common life, the other for maintaining the principles on which that life is founded. This is a worthy conception of a nation, and one not lightly to be abandoned.

Of course we wish that there was greater agreement about all things in Church and State alike. But we are all agreed that, while different opinions exist, they should have full liberty of expression. If any man thinks that he has anything to say, he is free to say it; and his fellow countrymen are free to make such use of what he says as they think fit. For the purpose of expressing opinions,
men may combine, and form voluntary associations to spread their views and convince others of their truth. This is a right which has been slowly won in the course of our history. It has been won because we all trust in one another's sense of justice, and think ourselves wise enough to weigh and consider every suggestion that is put before us. The State transacts the current business of the nation, and is helped in so doing by the zeal of voluntary associations. In the same way the Church maintains the principles on which national life is founded, while voluntary associations, with different views of ecclesiastical organization, appeal to those who prefer their systems. We have agreed in England that, besides a central authority, we should freely permit voluntary combinations. Both have their place as fully recognized. But these associations cannot take the place either of Church or State. By whatever name they were called, Church and State would equally continue to exist. No rearrangements made on paper would alter the facts. Any violent breach in historical continuity would only waste time in readjusting relations which cannot be severed, and now rest upon a simple basis, worked out by the development of national life.
What do we mean by the National Church? ¹

"The National Church" is a phrase very often used in modern religious controversy. Those who oppose the policy of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England continually use it, in order thereby to claim for the Church of England greater prestige than any other religious body in England can boast. The newspaper of the Church Defence Society is called The National Church. On the other hand, those who direct the attack on the position and property of the Church seem to feel that this claim to be the National Church is a serious obstacle to the success of their campaign. There is no point which they are more eager to try and prove than that the Church of England is not the Church of the nation, in the sense of being the religious body to which the majority of the nation belongs. In

¹ The substance of this paper was read at the Shrewsbury Church Congress in October, 1895.
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the discussions which took place when the bill to disestablish and disendow the Church of England in Wales was before Parliament, there was no point more hotly contested than this question of numbers. On the one side the defenders of the Church said, "Let us have a religious census carried out by the officials of the Government, and then we shall see clearly on which side the weight of numbers lies." "No," replied their opponents, "that would not be fair, for in virtue of your claim to be the National Church, you would include everybody who did not enroll himself as being of another form of religion. And so the census would not show how many the adherents of the Church really were, but only how many were not really adherents of Nonconformity." There is no need to multiply instances. The question of the national character of the Church of England comes to the front in almost every important sphere of her activity, in questions regarding her relations to the State, her relations to other parts of the Anglican Communion, and her relations to her own children, just as markedly as it does in her historical and constitutional controversies with Roman Catholics and Nonconformists. Probably, next to the fact that she is Scriptural, there is no fact which comes more readily to the lips of an English Churchman, who
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is being asked questions about the Church of England, than that she is National.

It may be useful, therefore, to stop and ask ourselves whether we are quite sure what we mean when we talk of the National Church. In what sense does the Church of England claim to be the National Church? What does that claim imply? How can it be reconciled with the statements made in the Creed and in the Prayer-book that the Church is Catholic, i.e. Universal? What are the relations of the national Church of England to this Catholic or Universal Church? Such are the questions which we propose to discuss in this paper.

First, then, what do we mean when we talk about a National Church? There are two theories of a National Church which are nowadays usually put forward in books, in the press, and in platform speeches. Let us see what they are:

1. The phrase "National Church" is used as if it meant the religious body to which the majority of the population belongs. This is the view to which we have alluded above. It is borrowed from the principles of modern democratic politics. It assumes that in religion, as in politics, numbers, and numbers alone, prevail; and that a million and one adherents of a religious body in a given territorial area will constitute a National Church,
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while a million of such adherents will not; just as they would decide a political election, if voters. To prove that more of the inhabitants of a country belong to other forms of religion than that of the Church is thought a conclusive proof against the claim of the Church to call herself "National." Now, of course, if we are inquiring into the importance of the Church as a religious power in the nation, if we are trying to find out whether she is doing her duty or neglecting it, if we are going to argue that her position and property ought to be taken away from her because she is misusing them, the fact that she does or does not command the allegiance of the majority of the people is a very pertinent fact, and one worthy of great weight. But as the reason for deciding the question whether the Church has a right to call herself "National" it is irrelevant. When the Church of England lays stress upon her national character in formularies drawn up in the sixteenth century or earlier, when the State lays stress upon it in Acts of Parliament passed in the reigns of Richard II. and Henry VIII., neither Church nor State can have been thinking of a political principle which was never adopted until hundreds of years afterwards. No one, probably, would pretend that, in the assertion of her national character, made so strongly by and on behalf of the English Church at all times of her history,
and especially at her Reformation, there was any idea of basing that claim on the fact that she commanded the allegiance of the majority of the nation. When the Church of England claims to be a National Church, she makes that claim on a far higher ground than that of the number of her adherents; and she points to the fact that she possesses the allegiance of the majority of the population, not as the ground of her claim to be the National Church, but as evidence of the way in which she is fulfilling her national duties. Claims based upon numerical majorities depend for their force entirely upon modern democratic ideas, and cannot therefore explain a title which existed for centuries before those ideas had any weight whatever in the minds of Englishmen.

2. The second theory with which we are familiar is that a national Church means that particular religious organization which has received legal recognition from the State. In other words, it is maintained that the Church is National because she is Established. Here, again, there is some confusion of thought. If recognition by the State makes the Church National, it is clear that there can be no National Church where there is no National State. The National State must be prior in point of time to the National Church. But this is notoriously not the case. There was
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a National Church in England, in Wales, in Scotland, and in Ireland long before there was a National State or a National Law,—long before men were sufficiently civilized to be able to grasp the idea of an Established Church at all.

People who talk about the Church being National because she is Established are putting the cart before the horse. The process historically is the exact opposite. The Church being National becomes Established. She takes her part, usually a large one, in making the nation; and then receives definite recognition from the nation which she has helped to make. It is true that in most countries where a National Church exists she has that definite and special relation to the law which we call, for convenience' sake, Establishment, and becomes, therefore, still more closely connected with the life and institutions of the nation. But in none of them is the Church National because she is Established, but she has become Established because she was National. Establishment, like numerical preponderance, is the evidence, not the cause, of her national character.

If, then, the Church of England bases her claim to be the National Church, neither on the fact that she commands the allegiance of the majority of the nation, nor on the fact that she has received definite legal recognition from the State, upon what does she base it? Let us turn to history.
for an answer, for history, after all, is the record of the working out of the purposes of God for the welfare of the human race, marred and thwarted though they be by the sin of man. We ask, therefore, what is the idea of a National Church as we find it in history, and what is the special application of that idea to the Church of England?

\(a\). The record which the Bible gives of Christianity in its earliest days shows it to have been from the first the religion of a living Person acting through a living Society. Directly Jesus Christ has left the world, His disciples are found formed into a Society, with definite officers and definite organization. In that Society everything depends for its authority upon its Divine Head, ever present though invisible. The Apostles rule and teach as His ambassadors, in virtue of His authority, which, in His name, they transmit to others. Belief in His Divinity is a necessary preliminary to the sacrament of Baptism, by which a disciple joins the Society. In the sacrament of the Eucharist He binds the members of the Society to Himself by the ineffable gift of His Body and Blood. The Holy Ghost is given by the laying on of the hands of His ministers. By His authority they exclude unworthy members from the Society and readmit them upon penitence. Thus in the Society—the Living Body of which He is the Head—the full results of the
“taking of the manhood into God” by Jesus Christ the Son of God are assured to mankind. In it is quickly seen to flourish, though not without effort, a distinctively Christian morality, especially in the great Christian doctrines of the brotherhood of man, bodily purity, the dignity of woman, responsibility of life. Fitted for universal dominion, it soon overleaps the narrow boundaries of country and race and language, and claims a mission to the whole human race, Jew and Gentile, bond and free. Before we close the epistles of St. Paul we see before us the picture of the Catholic Church in its fulness, with a definite creed to maintain, a definite morality to teach, definite principles of organization and government to obey, and a world-wide mission to undertake.

b. Such is the position of the Catholic Church when the record of Scripture closes. The story of the way in which it endeavoured to fulfil its world-wide mission is taken up by ecclesiastical history, and it is noticeable that, in the early uninspired records of the Church, as in the pages of Scripture, there is no trace of any attempt to establish uniformity of government under one visible earthly head, or uniformity of practice under one rigid system. Autocracy of government and uniformity of practice were alike conspicuously absent from the primitive Church. The Church
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of Ephesus differed in important particulars from the Church of Rome, and the Church of Alexandria from the Church of Antioch. Unity was preserved by a common obedience to common principles, and not by a common subjection to a common government. Even when the Church became recognized by the Roman Empire, when Christianity became adopted as the religion of the civilized world, there was no attempt to copy the autocratic system of government common to the whole civilized world in the secular sphere. When the whole world was ruled politically by one master from his seat of empire at Constantinople, the Church was governed by the whole territorial episcopate gathered together for convenience within five patriarchates.

In the East this conception of Church government has been carefully maintained from that day to this. Owing to the combined effect of the Mohammedan conquest, and the hostility of the Western Church, the Eastern Church has found it extremely difficult adequately to fulfil its mission. Its duty has lain in suffering, and in perseverance, rather than in action. Yet, whenever it has had the opportunity of action and progress, it has uniformly endeavoured to adapt itself to and inspire national institutions, instead of imposing its own organization upon them and crushing them. It has sought
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to develop national life, not to suppress it. In our own days, as the Christian peoples of Eastern Europe have emancipated themselves from the yoke of the Turk, they have organized the Church on a national basis. It is true the process is not yet complete. There are still many difficult questions to be solved. But the principle is clear. In Greece, in Roumania, in Servia and in Bulgaria, there are national Churches in full communion with each other, and with the Church of Constantinople, owning certain duties to the head of the Church of Constantinople as Patriarch, but not subject to his autocratic sway. Where the Eastern Church has enjoyed freer scope for her principles, the result has been clearer still. The triumph of the Eastern Church has been the conversion of Russia, and in the Russian Church is to be found the most complete embodiment of a national Church still existing in the world. In some ways we may think it too narrowly and stubbornly national, wanting in sympathy with other points of view, too intolerant of other forms of thought. However that may be, there can be no doubt of the intensely religious conception of the nation which is held by the Russian people. To the ordinary Russian, the Church and the nation are two aspects of the same thing. They consist of the same people, they have the same object,
dealing with the different sides of man—his relations to God, and to his fellow-man. It is as impossible for an ordinary Russian to conceive of the Russian nation apart from the Russian Church, as it is for him to conceive of the Russian Church apart from the Russian nation. The functions of the two, it is true, are kept carefully distinct. The Russian State does not administer the affairs of the Church, nor the Church those of the State, but the two together express the full national consciousness. One is incomplete without the other.

In the West, when the Church had to address herself to the task of converting the barbarians, who had erected their rule on the ruins of the Roman Empire, she adopted similar principles of action. She adapted herself to distinctions of race, and language, and climate, and institutions, associated herself with national characteristics, fostered national feeling, undertook national education. So much was this the case, that in some parts of the world, such as Ireland and Scotland, the Church was for many years the only expression of national life. In many others it was through the Church that men realized first what it was to be the citizens of a great country, and learned the lessons of loyalty and patriotism. Civilization advanced by the development of nations, and the Church exercised her mission to the civilized world
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by associating herself with national forces. It is true that during the earlier Middle Ages there was also a strenuous movement in the opposite direction, which became stronger and stronger as time went on. From the days of Gregory the Great, in the sixth century, to the days of Boniface VIII. in the thirteenth century, side by side with this development of national Churches, which we have been considering, was being steadily developed the institution of the Papacy. According to the theory of the Papacy the Church is not primarily a society for the maintenance of truth, governed by the episcopate, organized nationally, whose watchword is Freedom; but it is primarily a polity, ruled by one supreme earthly Head, concentrated, uniform, and rigid in organization, whose watchword is Obedience. We see the Papacy growing up gradually in the history of Western Europe from very small beginnings, for very intelligible reasons, as an institution for the purposes of government, just as we may trace the growth of Parliament in England, or monarchy in France. We see it constantly making new claims, establishing new powers, cleverly associating to itself traditions of the government of the Roman Empire, fortifying itself behind a system of scientific law wholly constructed and partly forged in its own interests. We see it entering the lists as a political
rival to emperors and nations. We see it relying upon the arm of force as necessary to its power, and claiming equality as a political State with other States in the state-system of Europe. In its development we find that it has changed the religion of Christ from being a living body, perfect in symmetry, infinite in adaptability, into a cast-iron machine. Each step which it has taken has been at the expense of National Churches. It has ever treated independence of thought or practice as an enemy to be crushed. It has denounced the theory of National Churches as schismatical. But its success has only been partial. The west and south of Europe have fallen gradually under its despotic sway. In the north and east of Europe the Church is still organized on a national basis, and is likely to remain so.

c. In England, as everybody knows, the national forces, after a long struggle, and at great sacrifice, completely triumphed over the Papacy. From the first, although the English Church owed its foundation to a pope, and its organization to Archbishop Theodore, who was sent to us by a pope, it quickly lost all foreign character, and became closely united to the national life. It fostered the growth of national spirit, it pointed the way to national unity. It was the first to suffer in the national struggle with the Danes, it took the lead in showing
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Dane and Englishman how to sink old quarrels in a common patriotism. All through the history of England in the Middle Ages, the Church largely identified herself with national interests. Under the leadership of Anselm and Becket she resisted the iron tyranny of the Norman kings. Under Stephen Langton she won the charter of English liberty from John. She took part in the establishment of Parliament by Earl Simon and Edward I., as the guarantee of that liberty. It was the Church which founded the elementary schools of mediæval England, the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and the public school system. It was the Church which abolished slavery in England, founded hospitals for the sick and almshouses for the destitute. It was the Church which led the way in the higher regions of philosophy and scientific thought, and was almost the sole patron of art. Everything which has conduced to the nobility of the national character and the strength of the national life in England has been in large measure owing to the initiation and superintendence of the Church. Constitutional and personal liberty, national education, active philanthropy, were among the blessings secured to the nation by the National Church. What wonder if Englishmen were unwilling to surrender their National Church into the grasp of a greedy and selfish Papacy?
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We are now in a position to answer the questions propounded earlier in this paper. A National Church is seen to be in no way antagonistic to the Catholic Church, but only to the Papacy. On the contrary, it is an integral part of the Catholic Church, it represents the normal mode in which the Catholic Church exercises her mission to the civilized world. Nowhere is this truth put more simply than in the first page of the English Prayer-book. That page states that the book is "The Book of Common Prayer, and administration of the sacraments and other rites and ceremonies of the Church, according to the use of the Church of England." In other words, it says that common prayer, the administration of the great sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, and of sacramental rites such as Confirmation, Marriage, and the Visitation of the Sick, are all part of the functions and activities of the Church, i.e. the Catholic Church; but the special form in which they are here administered belongs only to the National Church of England. Wherever the Catholic Church is planted in the whole world she will be found calling her children together to common prayer, administering to them sacraments and sacramental rites. But the particular forms of Divine Service which she uses will differ in different places, as language and custom and climate and
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history render it desirable that they should differ. In England the Prayer-book contains the form which is found suitable there. In Scotland, in Ireland, in America, similar, but not identical, forms are used. In Russia and Constantinople other forms prevail, more dissimilar, as would naturally be the case, considering the different history of those countries. Only in those countries where the Papacy has established its power is there absolute uniformity, and that is because it has been the steady policy of the Papacy to destroy all traces of national independence, as far as it could, and impose the Papal service-books upon all countries alike.

What, then, is the idea of a National Church, as we find it in history, and as it is asserted by the Church of England? It is this, that the one Holy Catholic Church, founded by our Lord for the maintenance and extension of His religion among the human race, rightly carries out that world-wide mission in connection with, not in opposition to, the great external forces which mould human nature, such as those of race, language, climate, and political and historical association. The idea of a National Church is not that each nation ought, or is at liberty, to evolve for itself such a religion as happens to please the majority of the population, but, on the contrary, that the Catholic Church, being the guardian of truth,
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ought to adapt itself to national characteristics, and enlist them in its service for the purpose of training the national character in the way of truth. The process, as we see it in history, is nothing more than the carrying out, amid all the imperfections of human nature and the marring of human sin, of the Divine mission, "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations." The Spiritual Society, with its distinctive religious creed, its distinctive moral law, its distinctive ministerial organization, gradually occupies the area of the civilized and progressive world, adapting itself to the peculiarities which political government, racial instincts, influences of climate and social habit may bring about, while remaining true to the fundamental laws of its own being. Strictness in maintaining the essentials of the faith, combined with great elasticity in adapting them to local peculiarities, and entwining them round the very root-fibres of the national existence, have ever been the soundest principles of successful Church progress. They were eminently shown in the gradual building up of national Churches in Europe after the decay of Roman imperial power. They have been observed much more carefully in the East than in the West; for in the East, as we have seen, the Church has always been looked upon as primarily a society for the maintenance
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of truth, while in the West it has been very largely regarded as an organized Government, and obedience has been made the test of orthodoxy wherever the Papacy has been in the ascendant. Still, in spite of the disturbing influence of the Papacy, it remains substantially true that, up to the sixteenth century, the progress of the Church had been carried out by the planting and development of National Churches united in faith and organization, differing much from one another in worship and observance, closely allied to national characteristics, carefully fostering national character. Of these Churches, the Church of England was perhaps the most important, certainly the most intensely national. But, in common with all of them, she claimed to be national, not because the majority of the people adhered to her, not because the Government gave her legal recognition and dignity, but because she formed that part of the Catholic Church which had undertaken the responsibility of educating the nation in the faith of Christ, which had associated herself with the nation's history, which had trained the nation in civilization, which had set her mark upon the national character.

In our day the Church is again seeking to fulfil its mission to mankind by the planting and organization of National Churches. This tendency has already been noticed among the liberated Christian
peoples of the East. It is equally visible among the Anglo-Saxon peoples. In England, Scotland, Ireland, the United States of America, British North America, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, the Church is already organized on a national basis. In some British colonies it is gradually being so organized. Speaking generally, it may be said that, wherever the Anglo-Saxon race establishes itself, the Anglican Church establishes itself too, in the form of an independent voluntary society, of a quasi-national kind—a national Church, in fact, in infancy not in maturity, but bound to grow into maturity as it grows in capacity. As time goes on, it must inevitably grow into stronger and stronger life among the young communities of the world beyond the sea. What the future may bring forth, no one can tell; but if we may venture for a moment to take our stand at the close of the century and look forward into the next, three things seem to be looming clearer and clearer on the horizon. The first is, that the Catholic Church will continue to be in the future, as in the past, the chief influence in the civilization and moral government of the progressive nations of the world. Secondly, that the Catholic Church, if she is to exercise that influence efficiently, will have to choose between two different forms of organization—the organization of autocratic government represented by the modern
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Papacy, and the organization of National Churches in religious communion with one another, but independent in government. Thirdly, that this union of independent National Churches is the form which is evolving itself naturally among the Anglo-Saxon and Slavonic races, to whom the future of the world must inevitably largely belong. Is it for nothing that the Eastern Church has retained so stubbornly principles of ecclesiastical organization which fit in easily with modern ideas of nationality? Is it for nothing that England, insular and national as she is to the last degree, should have been led, even against her own desires, to establish in her colonies, not daughter Churches under a pope at Canterbury, but sister Churches on a national principle? The national character of the English Church never was an assertion against the principle of unity, but against the principle of autocracy. That characteristic it still possesses, and shares it with the Churches of the East. But it is more than merely a defensive weapon against the Pope. It is a theory of the due relations of the different locally organized parts of the Catholic Church one to the other, which has proved workable in the past, is found workable in the present, and under the providence of God promises to be of the first importance in the future to the Church, to society, and to civilization.
Suicide.

Suicide is becoming more frequent among the civilized people of Europe, and notably among the English. The fact is certain: it is assured by an immense mass of statistics accumulated by the European governments, and a crowd of acute and learned students have applied themselves to its investigation and explanation. No one can have entered into the life of the multitude without being impressed by the prominence of suicide. It is a frequent and favourite announcement on the newspaper-boards; its details are recorded at length in the newspapers; it figures in the serio-comic songs which circulate from the music-halls; it is a standing fixture in the romances of the market-place; it is talked about unweariedly wherever the people gather. It may not, therefore, be uninteresting or unprofitable to consider briefly the history and character of this popular crime.

Among the contrasts between ancient and
modern civilization few are more striking than that provided by the prevalence of suicide among the Romans of the Empire, and the almost complete disappearance of suicide in the Middle Ages. We are certainly right in ascribing this contrast to the influence of Christianity. Human life had little sanctity among the Romans: the barbarous shows of the amphitheatre must have broken down in the general mind that awful respect for the life of man which seems almost a necessity of our thought. The Stoic philosophy which so powerfully influenced the nobler minds of antiquity easily lent itself to the justification of suicide. The heroes of the age were self-murderers. No doubt this exaltation of suicide tended to raise the moral level of suicidal motive. Suicide was associated with courage, with the fortitude that endures the worst evils with calmness, with the love of liberty, with high-souled disdain of tyranny, with the self-renunciation of patriotism. Christianity brought into the regions of motive new and cogent considerations. It revolutionized the established order of human thought. Suicide ceased to be heroic: it became wilful rebellion against the will of God. The doctrine of Immortal Life powerfully dissuaded men from the fearful presumption of self-murder. So long as death was thought of as "a dreamless sleep" it had an alluring aspect to the despondent,
the deserted, and the weary of life; but when once the belief in the life beyond the grave laid hold of men, they shrank from the unknown risks of suicide. The law of the Church gave expression to the horror with which the general conscience of Christians regarded the practice. A sixth century council forbade any burial service for those who "inflict upon themselves a violent death." This prohibition, with the equitable limitation to those who acted deliberately, was included in the general system of canon law which was adopted in the West. The development of the doctrines of purgatory and hell increased the horror with which self-destruction was regarded. Insulting incidents attached to the burial of suicides. They were not only thrust out from hallowed soil, but they were barbarously dishonoured. The stake was driven through them, and they were buried at the cross-roads—perhaps to secure the perpetual insult of a grave tramped over by every traveller, the very contradiction of that holy slumber in the tomb which is the privilege of the humblest Christian. Revolting as such barbarity undoubtedly is to every right-thinking person, we should err if we supposed that it had no better justification than the superstitious alarm of an ignorant age. The association of suicide with public ignominy tended to build up in the popular mind a wholesome
Suicide.

abhorrence of the act, and if the prevention of crime be a legitimate basis for determining penalties, then the savage treatment of the self-murderer did not lack justification. The extreme laxity with which the law is now administered appears to encourage suicide, and even a slight reversion to severity is said to have a wholesome deterrent effect.

"The moral standard for thousands is provided chiefly, if not solely, by what is, or is not, punishable in the police-courts, and not unnaturally little harm is seen in what the law ignores or treats lightly."

It is much to be desired that philanthropic magistrates and sentimental coroners would take to heart this very sensible observation of one who had exceptional opportunities for observing the mischievous effects of judicial lenity in the matter of prosecutions for felo de se.

The lenity of the law courts reflects the changed attitude of public opinion. Suicide is now regarded with sympathy rather than with abhorrence. It is spoken of as a "misfortune" rather than a crime. Partly the change arises from a better understanding of the conditions of suicide; partly from that almost extravagant sympathy with wretchedness, as such, which characterizes an age at once selfish and sentimental. The causes of suicide have been investigated with extraordinary ardour. "The
French statistics of suicide enumerate above sixty causes, the Italian twenty-five." Morselli, whose work is accessible to everybody in an excellent English translation, contents himself with the following ten "determining causes:" (1) mental disorders; (2) physical diseases; (3) weariness of life, discontent; (4) passions; (5) vices; (6) afflictions, domestic troubles; (7) financial disorders; (8) misery; (9) remorse, shame, fear of condemnation; (10) despair, unknown and diverse. This abbreviated list is sufficiently gruesome and comprehensive: its principal interest consists in the indication it gives as to the right means of combating the tendency to suicide, which, as we have said, is becoming stronger in modern society.

The deplorable character of this practice may be gathered from this list of its causes. We observe its intimate affinity, on the one hand, with insanity, on the other hand with self-indulgence. Of insanity we have nothing to say: it is manifest enough that suicidal mania is a thing apart, to be treated separately. It can wake no other sentiment in any just and humane mind than that of compassion and pity. It is otherwise with self-indulgence. A robust contempt for the meanness of suicide which is suggested by no nobler motive than the cowardly fear of the consequences of rash or vicious conduct, or the selfish wish to escape from positions of
danger or disgrace, is surely the only legitimate sentiment. The cowardly selfishness of suicide is particularly repulsive when, as is not rarely the case, the act plunges into shame and indigence other persons, wife, children, or relatives. It is then revealed as essentially anti-social, a violation of the unwritten contract which holds together the individual members of the body-politic. Instead of sympathy, we owe to such conduct our indignant censure. Suicide is an act of desertion; it is a betrayal of confidence; it is a gross failure of duty. This is its social aspect, and in these days, when the range and authority of the claim of society upon the individual are being recognized more justly, this aspect may well seem paramount. To Christian thinking, however, the social aspect must always merge in the religious. Self-murder is a breach of the Divine Law. Life is the gift of God, and it entails upon its possessor responsibilities and duties. Redemption adds a yet more pathetic obligation. The Apostle Paul speaks home to the heart of discipleship in all ages, when he reminds Christians that “they are not their own, but are bought with a price.” The history of Jesus Christ prohibits suicide by destroying the validity of all excuses based on the desperate injustice of society or the extreme misery of circumstances. How powerful the example of
Christ's patience has been, the glorious tradition of Christian endurance abundantly proves. The contempt of life which seemed to diffuse over Christian society an intolerable moroseness, has induced that courageous fortitude which rises superior to the most disastrous fortunes, and, by directing attention to the overwhelming decision of Eternity, secures an almost haughty indifference to the trifling and variant judgments of temporal experience.

As the decay of suicide was directly caused by the influence of Christianity, so the increase of suicide must be regarded as an indication of the decline of that influence. It is certainly significant that the extensive repudiation of religion which marked the French Revolution went hand in hand with a remarkable prevalence of suicide. During the Reign of Terror in Paris many killed themselves, and though much must be allowed for the shock of that disastrous time, yet it cannot be reasonably denied that a change of opinion with regard to self-murder made itself apparent in French society, and that this change was in the direction of long-abandoned paganism. The "high pressure" of modern civilized life, especially in cities, brings a great strain to bear upon human nature, and only a developed sense of duty will be found adequate to endure it. Unhappily the tendency is at present
distinctly adverse to the development of a sense of duty. The conclusions of Morselli are on this point all the more significant since he does not adopt the Christian standpoint:

“Our generation has arrived at a complete indifference in the matter of religion, without giving sufficient authority to positive philosophy which would tend to replace it, and without faith in the new moral utilitarianism on which human society must sooner or later be based. But meanwhile sensibility has become refined, while the brain, in an almost constant state of functional excitement, endures with greater damage those sufferings more profound than our fathers knew, and which lead political men of modern times so frequently to the threshold of the asylum and of the gaol, or to the morgues.”

It is evident that a grave responsibility attaches to the education of children in view of the exacting conditions of modern life. Unhappily the dominant policy inclines to minimize the importance of training; and, even where that importance is professedly recognized, the modern antipathy to definite religious teaching neutralizes the concession. Morselli acknowledges the moral inadequacy of the modern educational methods:

“The education which is now given to children assists the precocious development of the reflective faculties, of vanity, and of the desires.”

He would find the cure of suicide in education, of which the effect would be—
"to develop in man the power of well ordering sentiments and ideas by which to reach a certain aim in life; in short, to give force and energy to the moral character."

Christians will have no difficulty in accepting these statements. The history of the past abundantly confirms the impressions which lie on the surface of Christianity. In definite Christian teaching must be found the best security for a wholesome and thorough moral discipline; and in a wholesome and thorough moral discipline must be found the only sufficient antidote to the suicidal tendency of modern life. Here it is, perhaps, needful to add a warning. Under the influence of current political controversies we have generally come to associate education almost exclusively with the elementary schools. It cannot, indeed, be doubted that the schools have an importance which can hardly be exaggerated: it seems almost impossible to compensate from other sources for a thoroughly defective system of teaching in the schools. Especially important are the schools among the working classes, for the conditions of their life practically take out of the hands of fathers the leisure and even the qualifications for teaching their children. Nevertheless it is vitally important to remember that education is the task of the home as truly as of the school, and that the home begins its educative functions earlier and continues them later than
the school. Moral education, the development of character, is the special task of the home; and where the home fails to fulfil its duty the results are plainly disastrous. It is abundantly evident that drunkenness is the immediate cause of most suicides. It is manifestly within the power of the humblest and most ignorant parents to train their children in habits of temperance. By so doing they will protect them in the most effective way from the temptation to suicide; and their task is made easy by the assiduous efforts of the Church. In most English parishes there are "Bands of Hope" worked by the clergy, with the expressed design of encouraging habits of temperance among children. It will be the parent's wisdom to take full advantage of those excellent organizations.

In another direction there is great need of parental exertion. It is most desirable that children should be trained to regard suicide with horror, as being, what it certainly is, a heinous offence against God and against society. Suicides are unhappily of such frequent occurrence that, probably, hardly a week passes without their being discussed in the home circle. It is difficult to over-estimate the importance which attaches to the adoption of a right tone in such discussion. Children should become accustomed to hearing self-murder talked about—if, indeed, the subject
must be talked about at all—as a disgraceful and guilty act, instead of hearing it referred to in terms of sympathy and even admiration, as is now but too commonly the case. And surely the wise parent will exercise some oversight over the literature which his children read. Many startling circumstances have recently forced attention to the pestilent influence exercised by the cheap sensational literature which is devoured by the children attending the elementary schools. It will be found that suicide has a considerable place in those compositions, and that it is always presented under a very alluring sentimental guise, infinitely demoralizing to the youthful student.

Public opinion will prove itself the principal influence making for improvement; and public opinion is but the result of manifold individual effort. If all whose place in society enables them to "form opinion" would take in hand the very necessary task of arresting the tide of false sentiment which, perhaps by virtue of an inevitable reaction against the brutalities of the past, now sets so strongly in the direction of suicide, much would be effected. The clergy can do something, especially by definite teaching in confirmation classes and sermons; the editors of popular newspapers can do more, notably by abandoning the sensational descriptions and emotional leaderettes;
coroners can avoid the mischievous expressions of opinion in which they are apt to indulge; magistrates can really punish for attempted suicide. By the combined exertions of all a better state of feeling could be created, and the crime of self-murder referred back to the category of general abhorrence from which it has so largely emerged.
The Old Testament an Essential Part of the Revelation of God.

What is the permanent value of the Old Testament? The difficulty of answering the question lies in this, that the value is so multiform. The New Testament scholar claims it as his most important aid to understand the language, the style, the thoughts of the writers whom he is interpreting. The student of letters, again, cannot dispense with literature which will rank with that of any nation in its variety, its beauty of form, its sublimity and intensity. But neither of these values are to our present purpose. Neither will it be necessary, with a view to it, to discuss details of the Higher Criticism. No doubt it is quite true

1 Cf. Dr. Driver, "Sermons on the Old Testament," pp. ix.-xix. Dr. Driver summarizes the grounds on which he bases the permanent value of the Old Testament as being "partly its fine literary form, partly the great variety of mode and occasion by which the creed and practice of its best men are exemplified, partly the intensity of spirit by which its teaching is penetrated."
that many of the conclusions that are claimed for that criticism are very perplexing. In the first place, they tend to upset the traditional theory of the dates and methods of the composition of many of the books; and the situation is as perplexing as it was, fifty years ago, to a simple botanist who had been trained to classify flowers on the Linnaean system to find the Linnaean arrangement discarded and a classification by natural order substituted: but the result of the change was to leave the flowers themselves as beautiful as ever, and to make their relationship and growth more intelligible. In the second place, the criticism emphasizes, far more than before, this human element in the Bible, and seems to allow of methods of production which would not be sanctioned by a modern literary morality. But we have long come to recognize heartily the principle of development in the Bible on the far more important line of personal morality and righteousness: if God could sanction lower stages of moral action in life, while moving onward to the full manifestation of His righteousness, is it less credible that He should sanction lower stages of literary method in the revelation of His truth? We do not give up our faith in Reason because in its name serious mistakes have been made and wrong conclusions, e.g. that the sun goes round
the earth, sanctioned and taught; we do not give up our belief in the Church because in its name cruelties have been perpetrated or injustice acquiesced in: so neither need we nor shall we surrender our faith in the Bible as the Word of God, even though it sanctions lower stages of action, or though its writers have not hesitated to attribute to a great founder, such as Moses, that which was really the subsequent outcome of his principles.

"How the record was brought together, out of what materials, at what times, under what conditions, are questions of secondary importance;"¹ we are, therefore, justified in going forward with the confident assurance that, whatever conclusions may be reached, there will remain a permanent value for the spiritual life: the inherent beauty of the religious truths will not be less beautiful; their relationship and growth may become more intelligible.

We put these questions aside, and also the relation which the Bible bears to the Church, although the authority of either cannot be adequately discussed without taking the other into account. Our aim is to treat the Old Testament as a revelation, as the authoritative record of God's dealings with mankind, and especially with one

¹ Bishop Westcott, "Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews," p. 493.
favoured nation—the nation to which the fuller revelation of Christianity was ultimately given.

That fuller revelation claims to be an account of the way in which, through the life of Jesus Christ, God revealed His love to all mankind; in which the capacities of human nature were seen at their highest point; in which reconciliation was made for the sin of the whole world; in which peace with God and brotherhood between men was made possible for all within one Church; in which all creation was brought back to fulfil its ideal purpose.

If, then, we have so full a hope, so complete a revelation, what is the value any longer of that which is less full and less complete?

The answer is twofold.

1. We value it because it paved the way for the more complete. This value comes home with special force to our own age, for “in the face of the historical spirit of the age, the study of past theology can never be regarded as a piece of religious antiquarianism.”¹ And again, it has been finely said that as we always retain hope for a son who keeps his love for his parents, so we shall never despair of an age which retains its love for its own past.² This instinctive gratitude for the past

¹ J. R. Illingworth, in “Lux Mundi,” p. 182.
² Sabatier, “S. François d’Assise,” p. 3.
should be as true of a Church and of a revelation as of an age. In this spirit we recognize gladly all those movements after truth, all the faith in the gods, all the belief in human nature, all the adumbrations of the Incarnation, all the rites of sacrifice, which are found in the religious books of other nations. But whatever can be said of them must be said with tenfold strength of the Old Testament: it, and not they, historically produced the New Testament. No other nation had in it such an element of progress and movement both upward and onward; no other set of religious books put forward so pure, so high, so growing a conception of God's nature, or so hopeful a faith in man: for the Psalter is as strong an expression of the possibilities of man's righteousness as it is an outpouring of his penitence and sense of dependence.¹

Christians, then, cannot neglect or despise the Old Testament. Their relation to it was one of the earliest problems which they had to solve. The Gnostics in the second century, and the Manichæans in the third and fourth centuries, pointed to all the

¹ "No competent student is ever likely to deny that our increased acquaintance with the religious literature of the ancient world has emphasized the supremacy of the Old Testament Scriptures. They still stand in lonely eminence, as they have always stood, immeasurably superior to all else of their kind." (J. R. Illingworth, "Bampton Lectures," p. 173.)
traces of a lower morality, such as the polygamy of the patriarchs and the kings, the cruel wars of extermination sanctioned by Moses, the treachery of Jael, the imprecation against the nation's enemies found in the Psalms and the Prophets, the anthropomorphic representation of God, and they urged that God's hand could not be seen there, that the Christian Church must cut itself free from Judaism and the Old Testament. In the same way a modern theologian has boldly said that, "for our ethics, the Old Testament is superfluous."¹ But both in ancient and modern times the Church has absolutely refused to take this line. Her writers have refused to cut the Gordian knot by declaring that God's hand was not there.² They could not deny God's presence through the whole history, and they pointed out that morality must be judged relatively to the age in which each patriarch or saint lived, and that God's revelation of Himself is necessarily like that of a father revealing his will and thoughts to a growing child, "here a little, and there a little, line upon line, line upon line." To take one instance, which has often proved a stumbling-block, the


III.
conduct of Jael in killing Sisera: of her it has been well said by Dr. Liddon,—

"Jael is only eulogized because she lived in an age and in circumstances which extenuated what was imperfect or wrong in her act. She could not have been pronounced blessed had she been a Jewess, much less had she been a Christian. And a Christian cannot, if he would, place himself in her position, or divest himself of that higher knowledge of the will of God which has been given him."¹

This progressive character of Christian morality is, of course, clearly marked in the Sermon on the Mount, especially in our Lord's treatment of divorce, but it was realized explicitly in the Gnostic and Manichæan controversies. These earlier stages were not banned as the work of the devil: they were God's handiwork, right for the time, and with a permanent value as the stages which lead up to the fuller revelation. Though a ministration of death and engraved only upon stones, it was glorious. The old wine was good.

But if a child may never forget the love and gratitude which he owes to his parents, neither may he merge his own personality in theirs. He may not act as the Chinese man of seventy years old is said to have done, still playing about on the floor with his child's toys when in the presence of his parents. He has his own life, which is not theirs. So, too, Christianity is Christianity, and

¹ Dr. Liddon, "Sermons on the Old Testament," p. 93.
not Judaism; Judaism is the parent, not the child; the Old Testament may be even unduly exalted, if this element of progress is not recognized. This has been done at times when acts of cruelty have been imitated, or when the laws of the Jewish Sabbath have been transferred to the Christian Sunday without any consideration of the difference. The Old Testament is "sometimes the foreshadowing of the New, sometimes its foil," but it is never its facsimile. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has written *incomplete* across the pages of the Jewish Scriptures. "Even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth."  

"So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by; and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters."

2. But we value the Old Testament, not for the mere historical fact that it has produced the New, but for its intrinsic importance. We value

1 Dr. Liddon, "Sermons on the Old Testament," p. 64.
2 2 Cor. iii. 10.
3 Cf. Gore, "Bampton Lectures," p. 195: "For us the older Scriptures stand not as adding anything to what is revealed in Christ, but, in part, as giving *in adequate perfection* some elements of the perfect religion—as the Psalms express for ever the relation of the soul to God, and the Prophets the eternal principles in the Divine government of the world."
it as a child after he has grown up values a good parent, recognizing how much of truth and guidance he owes him; and perhaps we may fairly single out as our main debt to it the fact that it is the revelation of a living God. The gospel has been described as "the consummation in life of that which was prepared in life,"¹ and the Old Testament is the record of this preparation in life. Every side of human life is brought within its scope; and God is seen to be no mere abstraction, no far-off watcher of a machine which He has created, but a Living Being, giving life, upholding life, controlling life, consecrating its every manifestation.

The mere form of the Old Testament is an illustration of this truth. The Bible is not, like the Koran, one book bearing the stamp of one man's intellect; it is a library, and the books on the shelves come from many centuries, through many minds, in many forms.² History, moral codes, ceremonial rites, songs of national victory and of personal religion, philosophic discussions of the perplexities of life, the sententious utterances of practical wisdom, the cries of pessimism, the lyric of love-poems, the preaching of the prophets, all alike are used as instruments through which God touches life, and through life reveals

¹ Bishop Westcott, "Epistle to the Hebrews," p. 480.
² Cf. Dr. Sanday, "The Oracles of God," pp. 2, 2.
Himself. There is here a greater variety of form than is offered in the New Testament.

But this truth goes deeper than the form of the books. Thus, the very first chapter of Genesis strikes at once the note of this wide extent of God's life. His interests are not limited to human life: all creation is His work, and its continuance is provided for by Him. The whole universe is knit together in one bond; it is good in itself, and has its aims before it is finally made to subserve the interests of man. And we have just a hint given us of the happy intercourse between God and man, of the true, natural, unmarred development of God's gifts and man's capacities, which might have been possible, had man's self-will not clogged and postponed that development. The great mass of the Bible narrative (from Genesis iii. onward) is, no doubt, concerned with the restoration of fallen man; in the technical language of theology, it favours the Thomist view that the Incarnation was due to man's fall: but these two first chapters are on the Scotist side, and hint that had there been no fall, the perfect intercourse of God and man would have been the true outcome of the Creation.

Again, while the Bible soon specializes upon the history of the Jewish nation, yet it reminds us that God has not lost sight or care of the other
nations of the world. The Jewish nation is selected that it may be trained to be a source of blessing to all the nations of the earth. And meanwhile we have glimpses of true religion and of real virtue in those nations. In Melchizedek we have an illustration of the heathen priesthood and its power of blessing; in Balaam, of heathen prophecy, and its power of reaching, however blindly and unconsciously, to truth;¹ of heathen virtue in Job, praised both by God and man as “a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil,” and winning from God a special power of intercession for others. The very title of the Lord’s Anointed, the Messiah, is applied to the heathen Cyrus,² and the prophets always imply that all the surrounding nations are under Jehovah’s control, and look forward to the time when they will consciously acknowledge His rule.

But the mass of the Bible is concerned with the history of the Jewish nation. It treats it as a chosen people, chosen indeed for a special task rather than for a special privilege, or, rather, endowed with special privileges with a view to

¹ May the fact that God speaks to Balaam through an animal, which is so exceptional in the Bible, be a link of connection with the many ways by which heathen soothsayers divined through the sounds of animals?
² Isa. xlv. 1.
of the Revelation of God.

a special task. Now, it is worth while to notice in passing that this idea of God's special choice, of His "preferential action," which used to be a difficulty to many minds, as seeming to imply favouritism, has been strengthened and developed by the progress of biological study. Science with its application of the principle of natural selection has made far more intelligible the principle of a Divine supernatural selection, which puts the Divine approval on certain views and calls them truth, on certain moral instincts and calls them right, on a certain people and fits it for special works, and calls it God's elect nation. "Science has adopted an idea which has always been an essential part of the Christian view of the Divine economy, and has returned it again to theology, enriched, strengthened and developed." ¹

We will, then, confine ourselves to this special training of the Jewish people as recorded in the Old Testament; and we will dwell on two points of permanent value.

I. God manifests Himself in history. Over and above His self-revelation in Creation and in conscience and in reason, He manifests Himself in historic actions: the God of grace is a God of gracious action;² and this gracious action has

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² Cf. Bruce, "The Chief End of Revelation."
taken centuries in which to work itself out. Here is the great contrast between the New Testament and the Old. The New Testament covers a period of seventy years; if it is taken by itself, the action of God in the Incarnation seems sudden, startling, out of relation to the ordinary facts of life: then we turn back to the Old, and we find that something akin to this act has been working for centuries; we find a great purpose worked out in all the realities of daily life and of national history,—worked out through progress and retrogression, through success and failure, by means of men of like passions with ourselves. As the subsequent history of the Church has been called "a cordial for drooping spirits," so, "whatever things were written aforetime were written that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4).

This sense of the vastness of the periods through which God has worked His will gives us hope in hours of perplexity, but it also lifts our whole conception of what we mean by God and His work and worship, and deepens the reverence with which we think and speak of them.

A few instances will make this plain.

a. God is revealed in the New Testament as the universal Father, whose chief attribute is Love. To us it may seem strange that such a conception
should not have been revealed earlier, yet it is easy to see how readily it might have been perverted by minds untrained in other thoughts of God. The idea of love degenerates very quickly into that of a weak good nature; and even the idea of Fatherhood may be misunderstood. The heathen treated God as their Father, but it meant to them little more than the physical ancestor of their race; it carried with it no sense of obligation upon themselves as sons to show a character worthy of God. The Jews, again, had the conception of God as the Father of the whole race, but the thought was not carried out to individuals: the ordinary Jew would not have prayed as a child to a father. Hence the Old Testament shows us the gradual preparation of men's minds to embrace so high a conception of God. God was probably known to the Jews at first, as to surrounding nations, by some title, which simply expressed the idea of lordship or ruling; or, again, as with the surrounding nations, He was thought of as the embodiment of strength and power (El), as, in His unity, comprising every element of strength, combining all that surrounding nations attributed to their gods (Elohim). Then a great step was taken in advance: the conception of God was clearly separated off from that of the surrounding Divinities. Israel's God was quite distinct from
them: He was Jehovah, "I am that I am," the eternal living Power, whose characteristic was activity, ever alive to the needs of His people, choosing them, guiding them when chosen, ready to interfere on their behalf,—one who had at His command the hosts of heaven, and so was able to guide the armies of Israel in battle (Jehovah Sabaoth). Gradually the moral features of His character were emphasized: He was the God of the moral law, merciful and gracious, yet not willing to clear the guilty; a jealous God, who demanded the entire service of His people; above all, the Holy One of Israel, who stands high above the earth, who requires that His people shall keep themselves separate from sin, who punishes His people that He may purify them. Thus the moral teachers drew out the moral character of God; while, on the other side, the thinkers emphasized the wisdom which had been from the beginning with Him, guiding the plan of creation, and watching over the fortunes of the chosen people. So many-sided was the conception of God! Such ages did it take before the full revelation was possible! Then at last He, who had revealed Himself in creation, who had spoken through the prophets, whose hand had been felt in history, revealed Himself in His fulness in a Son who could witness to the full scope of the Father's
heart; and those who had recognized His sovereignty, His strength, His living activity, His righteousness, His wisdom, could welcome His Love. The strength, the moral sternness, the jealousy, the holiness have not passed away. They lie behind the Father's Love, which becomes a stronger, more bracing, more stimulating power when it is felt to include them all, and to be able to use each as its instrument.

b. The New Testament gives us in our Lord the type of a perfect human character. In Him we see that the nature of man is akin to that of God, and, therefore, can be united with it; we see it glorified by service and obedience, and rising to its fullest height through the sense of constant filial dependence upon a Father; and in the strength of this dependence able to put by temptation, able to know the Father's will, sensitive with sympathy for every child of the Father, strong in indignation against all hypocrisy and cruelty, against all that thwarted the Father's will; ready to face death itself rather than be disloyal to that will.

But how little were men prepared at first to accept this as the ideal of man! And the Old Testament shows how human capacity was gradually developed, how man was trained to be conscious of the power of self-sacrifice and service,
of the dignity of his own nature. He is trained in the thought that man can represent God to his fellows: the king rules as the vicegerent of God; the prophet speaks for God, laying down with authority His commands both in the moral and political sphere; the high priest blesses for God. Again, the character of man is trained: in Abraham man is taught the power of faith, of standing alone among men through trust in God, of preferring the future to the present; in the moral code man is taught that obedience in morality is absolutely necessary for God's service; by the prophets his intellect is trained to understand the method of God's working; in the Psalms he is taught the language of true emotion, whether of penitence or of praise. Prophets and Psalmists alike bear the strongest witness to man's consciousness of the possibility of intercourse between God and himself, i.e. to the reality of inspiration. Once more, the detailed lives of the great men of the Old Testament—such as the story of Abraham willing to sacrifice his own son, of Joseph refusing to sin against God, of Jeremiah witnessing boldly to an unpopular truth among his own people, of Daniel

1 Cf. Dean Church, "The Discipline of the Christian Character."
facing death for his religion,—the ideal picture of the suffering servant of the Lord led as a lamb to the slaughter,—all opened men's minds to realize the greatness of self-sacrifice and of holiness. Even the cruel exterminating wars against the surrounding nations, whose religion was befouled with immoralities, and the language of denunciation in the Psalms against the enemies of the Lord were necessary stages to teach a true hatred for sin. This treatment of human nature is all the more striking that it is perfectly natural. The writers do not treat their characters as types, or illustrations of moral truth; they treat them as men, with the virtues and vices of men: that is the charm of the Old Testament, that its characters are so true to human life; this is its great value for teaching the young. We, looking back upon them, can see that they serve a higher purpose, training our minds to appreciate the truest ideal. If that ideal came to us only in the life of our Lord it might seem hopelessly above us: in the Old Testament, we see the various elements, which go to make up that perfection, existing among men like ourselves; and again, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, we have hope, for ourselves and for our fellows.

a. But the Old Testament takes no shallow optimistic view of human nature; it recognizes
fully the meaning of sin. And here, too, the seriousness of sin is emphasized in a way different from that in the New Testament. It is true that nothing can emphasize it more than the fact that it needed that the Son of God should suffer upon the Cross in order to undo the work of sin. But that is a doctrine which appeals only to those who believe in our Lord's Divine nature. We turn back again to the Old Testament, and we find much that leads up to this serious view of sin. The sin of Adam brings sorrow, toil, and death upon himself, and confusion on the face of nature; in the historical narrative the sin of Joseph's brethren brings distress upon them years after their guilt;¹ the sins of the fathers are visited upon their children; the sin of the individual, such as Achan or David, affects the whole nation; the consequences of sin pass out at once beyond the sinner's control. On the other hand, it takes centuries before man knows fully the meaning of sin, sufficiently for entire redemption to be possible. God trains man to hope for recovery from the first; He gives the law to deepen the knowledge of sin; He provides atonement for individual sins in the ritual of the temple; He rises up early, and sends forth His messengers to plead "Why will ye die?" to all

¹ Gen. xlii. 21.
sinners; the intercession of Job prevails for his children and his friends; the intercession of Moses and Phinehas for the whole nation; the servant of the Lord bears the grief and carries the sorrows of others. In the light of all this education, we can see how natural is the New Testament view that the sin of Adam had affected all humanity; what a natural climax it is that God should give His only Son to undo the evil, and that His intercession should affect the world.

d. No less strikingly does the Old Testament widen for us the conception of worship. The New Testament shows us the bloom, the flower of worship—the worship in spirit and truth; but the Old Testament shows the growth of the flower, shows us all that is needed for the growth to be real.

On the one hand, we have the worship of the temple, and all that is associated with the thought of sacrifice. Here we have the great national festivals, in which the great moments in the nation's life, the great days of the agricultural year, or the commemoration of great historical events in the nation's past were made subjects of grateful praise, or the nation's need for atonement was the subject of intercession. Here there is no thought of the needs, the sins, or the blessings of the individual worshipper's own life: he is
concerned only with the praise of Jehovah's glory; he is lifted out of himself by the tidal wave of a national enthusiasm. The ritual rises in dignity and magnificence with the greatness of the festival. But the individual's life is also consecrated by sacrifice: the individual offers of his substance as a sign of tribute, of allegiance to God as his King; he calls God to share his food with Him as a symbol of fellowship with God; where he has become ceremonially unclean he offers sacrifice that he may be purified; where he has committed sins of ignorance he offers the sin-offering for atonement. Sacrifice is put forward as the natural expression of man's feeling towards God, "the response of love to love, of the son to the Father, the rendering to God in grateful use of that which has been received from Him,"\(^1\) the expression of allegiance and of fellowship; but also the expression of the sinner's feeling towards an offended God, longing for return, willing to make actual sacrifices for it, eager to shelter himself under the shadow of that which is purer than himself, eager to be sprinkled with new life that comes from elsewhere. Probably as time went on and the nation became more conscious of its failures and sinfulness, the thought of atonement came more home to it, and

\(^1\) Westcott on "The Epistle to the Hebrews," p. 281. Compare the whole section on "The Pre-Christian Idea of Sacrifice" (pp. 281-292).
The ceremonies of the great Day of Atonement more prominent in the conception of sacrifice; but we shall not appreciate the Lord's work duly unless we see in it the spiritual fulfilment of allegiance and of fellowship, as well as of atonement; neither will our own worship be adequate, if these various forms of sacrifice do not find expression in it.

On the other hand, we have the worship of the synagogue, just organized within the limits of the Old Testament, with its service of prayer and of teaching. Experience had shown that the service of the temple was not sufficient; it was necessary that the knowledge of the law should be widely diffused, that men should be trained to understand as well as to worship. The Christian Church has often been treated as the offspring and child of the synagogue, but it is no less so of the temple. For its complete worship it must embody all the principles which were embodied in both.

e. In exactly the same way did the experience of the Jewish nation show how many-sided must be the regulation of religious life, if it is to be permanent. It was not sufficient that a prophet like Moses should lay down the moral ideal, or that the later prophets should raise the spiritual conception of Jehovah's nature: it was necessary also that the priest should organize worship, and ensure the due regulation of ritual; it was necessary
further that the scribes should apply the rules to the difficulties of daily life, and should take measures to secure the permanence of the knowledge of God. Prophet, priest, and scribe all contributed their quota to the growth of the Old Testament canon, and also to the regulation of Jewish life; neither the canon nor the life was complete without all three: and this combination condemns any one-sided Christianity, whether it lays undue stress on a high philosophic ideal, and makes preaching its only instrument, or lays undue stress on acts of religious worship, and makes mere ritual acts its one aim, or lays undue stress on good works of philanthropy, to the neglect of the worship of God.

In these and many other ways is it true that the Old Testament strengthens our faith in a way that the New Testament cannot exactly do, because it shows us the work of a living God stretching through centuries of time. Touch the New Testament where you will—its conception of God, its conception of man, its conception of sin, of redemption, of sacrifice, of worship, of an ordered religious community—and you find that the roots of the conception run up into the distant ages; they do not stand alone, but they have their confirmation in the needs and the experiences of
countless generations of mankind; and this is one of the strongest proofs that they are true.

II. In another point the Old Testament stands in contrast to the New, and comes as a useful supplement to it. It exhibits God's method of working through a nation. It teaches that the individual gets his true life through belonging to a nation, and that in its turn the nation has a responsibility, a righteousness, a blessing or a condemnation.

This truth has two bearings, one of which is taken up in the New Testament, the other is not. On the one hand, it teaches us that no individual stands alone in God's sight: he inherits his blessings as a member of a nation; he worships as a member of a nation. "The religious subject, the worshipping individual, Jehovah's son, was not the individual Israelite, but the nation quä nation," \(^1\) and the individual only in virtue of belonging to that nation. Now this truth has passed over, and been widened in passing, into the Christian Church; there, too, the individual finds his development only through his relation to the whole body, and can claim its blessings only so far as he is loyal to the body. In this respect the Old Testament only strengthens the truth by illustrating its action on a lower level.

\(^1\) W. Robertson Smith, "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 248.
But the other side of the truth is the reality of a nation's life and responsibility. This finds scarcely any expression in the New Testament; and that for several reasons. The New Testament is occupied with the narrower unit of the individual soul or the wider unit of humanity; for the moment the intermediate unit of the nation falls into the background. Nay, more than that, as far as New Testament writers deal with the unit of the nation, it is in a destructive spirit, it is to break down the thought of national privilege: "in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile." The national unit had got into a wrong position; it had had its value even as the religious unit: but the time had come when this was no longer right. The universal Fatherhood of God was proclaimed; and no tie of national privilege, any more than ties of position or wealth, were to separate man from man, or make any difference in God's sight as the ground for religious blessing. Man, as man, was the object of God's love; all are one in Christ Jesus. Again, the Christians of the New Testament were not in a position to speak to, or to guide, the rulers of the nations. They could give advice to their fellow-Christians as to the duty of subjects towards the Imperial rule; they could enjoin prayer for kings and all that are in authority: but they could
not lay down rules for emperors or principles of national duty. Yet nations still existed as nations; they still had their duties and responsibilities and privileges, intermediate between the family and humanity: and a time came when the Christian Church could control their legislation. Then it was that the value of the Old Testament was felt. No doubt mistakes were possible and were made; it was not possible to transfer the details of the legislation for a small agricultural people to an imperial or commercial nation,—to apply, for instance, Isaiah's protests against foreign alliance or international commerce to modern times: yet the prophetic ideal of a redeemed nation in which righteousness should be carried out, the prophetic interpretation of Jewish history which saw Jehovah's punishment in national calamities and Jehovah's blessing in national prosperity, the prophetic demand for justice and liberty, the prophetic protest against the oppression of the poor, told upon legislation and is still a political influence. "Savonarola, besides reviving a pure gospel, was a great preacher of civic righteousness: he became so by his lectures upon Amos and other prophetical books. From his day to our own there never was a European city or nation moved to higher ideals of justice and charity, without the reawakening of those ancient voices
which declared to Jacob his sin and to Israel his transgression.”¹

A living God working through centuries of activity, working in every form of civilization, but working especially through a nation—that is the picture which the Old Testament presents to us. In Bishop Butler's words, "the general design of Scripture is to give us an account of the world as God’s world;"² and therefore the Church has carried the Old Testament, no less than the New, to Gentile nations as well as to Jews. She admits that the Old is always subordinate to the New; she supplies in her Creed a guide to the central teaching of both Old and New: but she puts both into the hands of her converts. And the Old Testament justifies her trust no less than the New. The missionary finds in it guidance for dealing with elementary stages of civilization; the mother finds simple stories by which her child’s faith and courage are awakened,—the preacher, an inexhaustible store of character, true to life and revealing moral truth in every page; the religious soul finds in the Psalms all the expression that it needs of faith and hope and penitence; the pious student turns back from the

¹ G. A. Smith, “The Preaching of the Old Testament to the Age.” Hodder and Stoughton, 1893.)
revelation of the New Testament, and finds fore-shadowings, hints, types, of the Incarnation or the Cross in details of the earlier narrative. Just as when we know the issue of a drama, we turn back and find hints of the issue where we had not noticed them on our first reading; or, as the biologist who knows the final structure of an animal can interpret the meaning of each line or curve in the embryo: so he who knows the meaning of the revelation of the Gospel, can find traces of similar truths in the earlier Scriptures, nay, finds the same truth there—the Presence of One God ever working for one end, the redemption of man. "The believing soul is never anxious to separate its own spiritual life from the life of the fathers."¹

We may venture to prophesy that the Old Testament will justify this trust even more in times to come. It is but a half-worked diamond mine. Bishop Butler saw this, and showed by what methods it would be worked more completely. "As it is owned that the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come

at—by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. . . . Nor is it at all incredible that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before. And possibly it might be intended that events, as they came to pass, should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture.”¹ That prediction is being fulfilled: archaeology, literary criticism, the study of the growth of institutions and of doctrines all bring their tribute to the Bible; and it is the Old Testament, even more than the New, which is the gainer. Meanwhile, the social needs of our age are giving a new value to the ideals of the prophets, and the comparative study of other religious books shows that the Old Testament stands supreme to all but the Christian books in the width and depth and purity of its conception of the living God.

¹ Butler, “Analogy,” ii. c. iii.
THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

By the Rev. W. Sanday, D.D., LL.D.
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"Canon" is one of those words which have several meanings that are apt to run into each other. The phrase "canonical books" is in this respect something like our "standard books," where the word "standard" is ambiguous. It may mean either "books which set a standard," or "books which come up to a standard." The earliest examples of the word "canonical" (dating from the first half of the third century A.D.) seem to have primarily the latter sense rather than the former. This appears from the fact that we find also the passive form "canonized books," i.e. books to which a standard has been applied and which satisfy that standard. Later, towards the end of the fourth century, the other sense comes to the front; "canonical scripture" means, in the first instance, rather scripture which is recognized as authoritative.

It may be little more than an accident, but the
The word "canonical" appears something like a century and a half before "Canon," as applied to the Scriptures. When this word does appear, its sense is simpler: it means "a fixed or settled list" of the inspired books. The word "canon" had come to have frequently the sense of an "authorized list." Still, however, the old associations adhere to the word, and often assume a greater prominence. The list of the New Testament Scriptures is authoritative as well as authorized.

The Canon of the New Testament is thus the list of books recognized and accepted by Christians as sacred. And the history of the formation of the Canon has, therefore, a double aspect: it is concerned with the process by which the separate books came to be collected into a single volume; and it is concerned, also, with the process by which they came to be invested with a character of authority or sanctity.

In this history there are two main epochs. Roughly speaking we may place these at about the years 200 A.D. and 400 A.D. By about the year 400 we may say that the New Testament was in all respects practically identical with our own. I say practically, because there were still some exceptions—outlying Churches in which an older usage prevailed. But by this time the great mass of Christians and all the leading Churches used a
New Testament which contained the same books as ours, and regarded them with a like veneration. This state of things need not detain us. Its minutiae belong rather to the special student than to the general reader. The real centre of interest is the earlier period, circ. 200 A.D., when the Canon of the New Testament was not yet formed but forming.

The Canon was still forming, and not yet formed: but, when we come to look at it, the wonder is that the process should have gone so far as it has. Here we are coming to a region where there is some difference of opinion; but even if we take the lowest view possible, it is remarkable how much had been done towards the definition of this second volume in our Bible, at once towards the collecting of the books of which it is composed, and the investing of them with their authoritative and sacred character.

It is at this point that the interest increases, and that the question no longer touches specialists only. There is a natural desire to know how the process came about, and how far its results were really fixed. It is this desire which the present paper is an attempt to satisfy, and its object will be to discriminate as far as possible between those points which are certain and generally admitted and those which are still more or less debatable.
It may be well to range what we have to say under these heads: (I.) The extent of the contents of the New Testament at about the year 200; (II.) The estimation in which it was held; (III.) The main steps in the process by which this position of things had been reached; (IV.) The causes by which it was brought about; (V.) The significance and value of the Canon of the New Testament.

I. THE EXTENT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AT ABOUT THE YEAR 200 A.D.

I. The Solid Nucleus. Among the many signs of the definite existence of a New Testament at the date which we have chosen, the clearest and the most conspicuous is the fact that an actual list of the books received by the Church has come down to us which the great majority of scholars assign approximately to that date. This list is called from its first editor, the Italian Cardinal Muratori, the Muratorian Fragment on the Canon. It is described as a "Fragment" because it is mutilated both at the beginning and at the end. It is written in barbarous Latin, which may or may not have had a Greek original: on that point scholars are divided. But corrupt as the text in its present shape undoubtedly is, and in spite of all its defects and obscurities, the document is one of extraordinary value. Who would have expected beforehand, not only that we should have evidence for the existence
of the New Testament as a sacred book within little more than a hundred years of the composition of the latest of its contents, but that we should have a list, and a reasoned list, of those contents as at the time accepted by the Church? This is what the Muratorian Fragment gives us. It was written in any case in the West, and very probably at Rome.

The list which it presents to us does not in all its details agree with that which we should infer from the abundant indications in the writers of the period. There are local and individual peculiarities in it, as there are in most documents of the kind. But when we compare the Muratorian Fragment with the almost contemporary writings of Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and other more scattered and fragmentary pieces which have come down to us, there stands out a group of books which we may fairly call the "solid nucleus of the Canon," because it remains unchanged from this time onwards, and the remainder of the books of our present New Testament are added to it gradually by a process of accretion. This "solid nucleus," consists of the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, and the great majority of Churches would add the First Epistle of St. Peter and the First Epistle of St. John.
There are, as we have said, a certain number of local and individual varieties. The Muratorian Fragment, for instance, adds a second Epistle of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse of St. John, as well as that which bears the name of St. Peter. These last belong to the class of debatable books of which we shall speak presently. We are looking at the Canon at a time when it is in mid process of formation. Discussion is in the air. There are a number of books the claims of which are being weighed. Some will ultimately be rejected, and some accepted. But through all this process the Four Gospels, the Acts, the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, and, in a slightly less degree, the two leading Epistles of St. Peter and St. John remain substantially unchallenged. Too absolute expressions should not be used. Even within these limits, questions had been, and were still to be raised. We shall touch upon some of them under the next head. But for the great mass of Christians, and for the leading Christian Churches, the Four Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles of St. Paul, i St. Peter, and i St. John already formed a sacred volume, which might be added to, but did not admit of any diminution.

2. Other Books ultimately admitted. The other books, which lie outside this solid nucleus but ultimately found a place in the Canon, fall into
two classes. Some of them were books which already had their supporters who claimed for them canonical value, though they also met with opposition. Others were books which were as yet only current in certain localities, and won their way gradually to a wider recognition.

(a.) Disputed Books. We shall see presently that there was a certain amount of minor questioning even about some of the books which fall in the first class of those most firmly established. But two books are conspicuous among the rest as having been from an early period the battle-field of conflicting opinions. Both were books which possessed very early attestation. It was not that they were unknown, but that, being known, their authority was differently estimated. The Epistle to the Hebrews shares with that to the Romans and the First to the Corinthians the distinction of being quoted at length in the oldest Christian writing outside the New Testament. This writing, the so-called First Epistle of Clement, was written from Rome, and in the name of the Roman Church, somewhere between the years 93 and 97. It quotes the Epistle to the Hebrews quite unmistakably; and yet we find that in Rome and in the West, which as a rule followed in the wake of Rome, that Epistle was for fully two centuries not allowed a place in the Canon. The reason seems to have
been the defective evidence as to its authorship. One writer, Tertullian, boldly sets it down as the work of St. Barnabas; and we may infer that there was a limited tradition to that effect, perhaps derived from Asia Minor. But, speaking generally, the Western Church could assign no author to the Epistle, and at least refused to class it under the Epistles of St. Paul. In the East, on the other hand, the Epistle passed as St. Paul's. Scholars like Clement of Alexandria and Origen had too much insight into the characteristics of style and literary composition to regard it as the work of St. Paul's own hand, while they saw in it traces enough of the apostle's thought to refer it less directly to him. In such circles the opinion prevailed that the Epistle was written by St. Luke or St. Clement of Rome, disciples of St. Paul, and expressing his mind. The Epistle thus found a way into the Canon of the Eastern Church, and so by the end of the fourth century passed into that of the West.

The Apocalypse had an opposite history. It was for a long time rejected in the East, and championed in the West; and here it was the Western influence that ultimately prevailed. As in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the evidence for its use begins very early. More than this, it is expressly referred by Justin, writing about
the year 150, to the Apostle St. John, and there is no lack of other testimony ascribing it to him. The doubt therefore was not as to authorship; or, at least, if the authorship was questioned, it was on other grounds than historical tradition. The cultivated and highly intellectual theologians of the East were shocked at the gross interpretations put upon the symbolism of the Apocalypse by some of their more illiterate brethren; and this led to the suggestion that the "John" who saw the vision was another than the Apostle. Some went even so far as to refer the book to the heretic Cerinthus. The prejudice against the book was strong, and it was long before it was overcome—partly, perhaps, because it was taken under the ægis of the great Athanasius.

(b.) Books not yet generally known. The remaining books of our present New Testament—that is, five of the seven Catholic Epistles—came in one by one by a process which seems to have been attended by little discussion or controversy. In the case of some the attestation begins earlier, in the case of others later. We have seen that the Muratorian Fragment already recognizes the Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. John. The Second Epistle practically carries with it the Third, because no one doubts that both have the same author and the same authority. But it is a curious
fact that, just in some parts of the West we find traces of the Second Epistle without the Third, and even (as in the Muratorian Fragment) apparently to its exclusion. This can hardly be more than an accident—however it is to be explained. The latest claimant for admission, so far as our extant evidence is concerned, is the Second Epistle of St. Peter. This, we are expressly told by Origen, was doubted in his day. Accepted at first by a minority in the Church, it gradually won its way to recognition. The doubts in regard to it have been revived strongly in modern times; and it is, perhaps, the only book of the New Testament as to which we cannot feel sure that its place in the Canon will be ultimately vindicated.

That there should have been a certain number of books which came in, as it were, by driblets, is in no way surprising, but rather what we should antecedently have expected. Though the civilization of the Roman Empire was high, those were not the days of the printing press and the general post. The early Christians belonged for the most part to the lower middle and lower classes. Many a Church lay off the great high-roads, and had but scanty means of communication. A letter sent to it, if copies were not made of it promptly, might easily pass into obscurity; and even when it came to be sought for, it would take some time to set the
whole cumbrous machinery in motion, to get fair copies made and despatched, first to the smaller centres, and through them to the greater. And indeed the actual process would rarely be so systematic even as this. The less prominent of the Apostolic writings "filtered" into use by slow degrees; they were checked and detained and interrogated on their way by the Bishops and teachers of the Churches to which they came—not, of course, by the elaborate methods which we might use now, but still not without reflection and caution; and thus they passed on from Church to Church, until, if the verdict was favourable, they finally took their place by the side of the books which had preceded them.

3. Books excluded. The process of the formation of the Canon is as much a process of rejection as of authorization. We are not to suppose that the books of our present New Testament were the only works that presented themselves with a claim to acceptance. In the second century of our era a number of writings were in circulation which carried with them, or aimed at carrying, some sort of weight, and ministered more or less to the edification of the Church. It was a real problem where the line was to be drawn; and although but little direct discussion has come down to us, we can see that a good deal of discussion took place towards
the end of the second century as to the books which should be received and the principles on which they were to be received. When the Church came to formulate its mind on the subject, the principle it selected was that of *Apostolicity.* Its New Testament, the standard of its faith, was to be the work of Apostles. As a matter of fact, this principle is not carried out consistently. The Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, the Acts, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, at least, were not written by Apostles. The difficulty was got over by pointing out that, if not by Apostles, they were at least by companions and near disciples of Apostles, or "Apostolic men." But this was, in truth, an after thought. The books were received, where they were received—and we have seen that, for a long time, the reception of the Epistle to the Hebrews was limited—not so much on the ground of their authorship, as because they held an established place in the use and affections of the Church which acknowledged them. They had gained this place before the question was consciously raised and any answer to it formulated; and the books held their ground because they had struck their roots too deep to be displaced. So many single Churches were of the same mind with regard to them, that their position was secured in the Church at large.

Thus, behind the principle of Apostolicity, there
was that of *reception by the Churches*. The first, as we shall see later, marks an historical fact as well as the second; but as a formula it is rather a theory of the learned, invented to explain their practice, while the latter is the potent force in determining popular opinion.

By the end of the second century the recognized test that a book deserved a place among the New Testament Scriptures, was coming to be its Apostolic origin. But then the question arose, What was Apostolic? And this question was no idle one. Various writings were current in the second century which bore the name of Apostles, but were not really composed by them. These were, for the most part, fabrications of the Gnostics, intended as the vehicles of their secret teaching. Besides these, there were some few compositions of a more harmless character, mostly associated with the name of St. Peter.

Outside these more or less deliberate forgeries, there were also writings of real value, letters from one Church to another, and treatises of edification without an owner, which went back to ancient times and had won for themselves a certain respect.

The duty fell chiefly on the Church, at the end of the second century, of deciding amongst these competing claims; and as we look back upon its work it is impossible not to regard it with gratitude.
and admiration. The work was not complete. A gleaning was left for the two succeeding centuries. But the main portion of it was done, and what was done did not need to be undone. When we come to look at the reasons alleged, so far as there is any record of them, we may find them here and there open to criticism. But universal experience teaches that verdicts are often wiser than the ostensible reasons given for them. And the series of verdicts which gave us the New Testament, both in what was admitted and what was excluded, have been endorsed to an extraordinary degree by the judgment of posterity.

II. THE ESTIMATION IN WHICH DIFFERENT BOOKS WERE HELD.

1. Equality of the Old and New Testaments. If the Christian Church had had to form its conception of a sacred book from the beginning it would hardly have reached so advanced a stage so soon. But it had such a conception ready to its hand. The mould was there, waiting for contents to be poured into it. The New Testament was simply modelled upon the Old. In the time of our Lord, at the very beginning of the Christian era, and some way back before it, the Jews already had a volume to which they appealed as authoritative and sacred. We are familiar with the "It is said," "It is written," of the Gospels and Epistles;
and we know the use which was made of the Old Testament by our Lord and by the Apostles; and this, if more masterly and penetrating, did not imply a higher degree of ostensible reverence than that which was paid to it by Jewish Rabbis. The Old Testament was a part of the inheritance of the Christian Church; and when that Church came to erect its own standards it was natural, and, indeed, a matter of course, that they should take a similar shape—a Book of the New Covenant by the side of the Book of the Old Covenant. These very phrases are already found (actually or by implication), in the writings of Melito of Sardis, between 170–180. It is clear and indisputable that writers like Irenæus (circ. 185) and Tertullian (circ. 194–220) range the books which they accept of the New Testament strictly with those of the Old.

But the keen eye of criticism has observed, or thinks that it has observed, a certain difference of usage, not everywhere, but in certain quarters. In the first place, there is the question how far the New Testament writings are exactly equated with those of the Old Testament. An ordinary reader might well read through the whole of the extant Christian literature for the half century 175–225 without discerning any difference. It is admitted that there is no difference in Irenæus,
Tertullian, the Muratorian Fragment, and many other writings of the period; but it is claimed that this does not hold good for Clement of Alexandria and one or two others, as well as in particular for the Syriac-speaking Churches of Mesopotamia. The point is, to some extent, arguable, but it need not be argued. If the observation were true, it would be only what we should expect. Between a sacred book long recognized as such and a sacred book in process of obtaining recognition there would naturally be some little difference. The wonder is, not that it is so great, but that it is so small, and that there is so little of it as there is.

Curiously enough, though, when we come to think of it, quite naturally, the balance soon changes. Whereas during the greater part of the second century the Old Testament took precedence of the New, and whereas at the end of the century something like an equilibrium was being reached between them, by the middle of the next century a distinct preference is given to the New Testament over the old. In this respect the language of Novatian, a Roman writer and the founder of a sect, though strictly orthodox in doctrine, who flourished about the year 250 A.D., is significant. Comparing the inspiration of Prophets and Apostles, he says—
There is therefore one and the same Spirit in Prophets and Apostles, but in the one for the moment, in the other always. In the one, not to reside in them permanently; in the other, to abide permanently: in the one case, given in moderate measure; in the other, poured out in its fulness: in the one, vouchsafed scantily; in the other, bestowed freely."  

There is quite a foundation of truth in this view.

2. The Four Gospels. At the year 200 the great mass of Christians accepted Four Gospels, and only four, those which are now found in our Bibles. Of this there is conclusive proof from Rome, from Gaul, from Africa, from Egypt, and Asia Minor. In some regions there might be a greater freedom in the use of other Gospels besides, but even there a clear line was drawn between these and the Canonical Four.

But when the literature of the second century is examined, traces come out of a certain amount of discussion and controversy, as to the relative claims of the Three Synoptic Gospels, on the one hand, and the Fourth Gospel on the other. It is well known that in one corner of the Christian world the opposition to the Fourth Gospel went so

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1 Novatian, "De Trinitate," 29: "Unus ergo et idem spiritus qui in prophetis et apostolis, nisi quoniam ibi ad momentum, hic semper. Ceterum ibi non ut semper in illis inesset, hic ut in illis semper maneret, et ibi mediocriter distributus, hic totus effusus, ibi parce datus, hic large commodatus."
far as to end in an actual denial of its Apostolic authorship. This was by the so-called "Alogi." The exact degree of importance to be attached to this opposition is a point on which opinions somewhat differ. The Alogi do not seem to have amounted to a sect, but were rather a small literary coterie, which appeared first about the year 160, at Thyatira, in Asia Minor, but seems afterwards to have transferred its operations to Rome. Their motive appears to have been a fanatical antagonism to the rising sect of Montanists, who made a special appeal to the Fourth Gospel. To defeat this, the Alogi called attention to apparent discrepancies between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics, on the strength of which they refused to accept the former. They do not seem to have alleged any grounds in history, or tradition, which, so far as our materials go, is unanimous in ascribing the Gospel to the Apostle. The scepticism of the Alogi is in no way remarkable; but there is something rather remarkable in the fact that they seem, in spite of it, to have been considered good Christians—at least, they were not expelled from the Church. This is indicative of a state of opinion different from that which prevailed very little later. It was undoubtedly one of the charges against Marcion the Gnostic, that he rejected three of the Gospels on which
the Church had set its seal. But the difference was, that Marcion was a heretic through and through, while the Alogi were militantly orthodox in all other respects than this one, and they were engaged in fighting the battles of the Church against a sect which appeared at this time aggressive and formidable. This is by no means the only instance in early Church history in which such services caused a lenient view to be taken of delinquencies which might otherwise have had more notice.

Still older than this disparagement of the Fourth Gospel, and apparently in no connection with it, was a like disparagement of the First Three Gospels by comparison with the Fourth. This comes out in the Muratorian Fragment, which lays some stress on the fact that neither St. Mark nor St. Luke were themselves eye-witnesses of the events which they relate, and at the same time gives a somewhat striking picture of the circumstances under which St. John composed his Gospel, the reverence with which he is approached by those around him, and the Divine sanction expressly given to his undertaking.¹ After telling a similar story as to

¹ The text, with some little emendation, runs as follows:—"Quarti Evangeliorum Joannes ex discipulis. Cohortantibus condiscipulis et episcopis suis dixit: Conjejunate mihi hoc triduum et quid cuique fuerit revelatum alterutrum nobis enarremus. Eadem nocte revelatum Andree ex apostolis, ut recognoscentibus cunctis, Joannes suo nomine cuncta describeret."
the origin of the Gospel, Clement of Alexandria adds that St. John, under the inspiration of the Spirit, finding that the other Evangelists had narrated the physical facts of our Lord's life, himself undertook to write a "spiritual Gospel." ¹

The view is probably correct that these allied versions are both ultimately traceable to Asia Minor and to a date not later than the middle of the second century.²

3. The Acts of the Apostles. It has been contended that, although the book of the Acts was included with the Gospels and the Pauline Epistles as the common property of all Christian Churches, and although it undoubtedly possessed the full prerogatives of a sacred book in those as to which we have the fullest evidence, it was not everywhere placed on this high level, but that in some localities a lower place was assigned to it, more particularly at Alexandria. The evidence for this is derived from the writings of Clement, the one Alexandrian author of the second century whose works have come down to us. The writer of this paper, after looking into the matter as well as he could, does not think the evidence at all sufficient. Even if it were, the question would arise how far Clement, who has many individualities as a writer, could be

¹ Euseb., Hist. Eccl., vi., xiv. 5.
² See especially Harnack, "Die Chronologie der Altchristlichen Litteratur" (Leipzig, 1897), p. 684 ff.
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taken as a sample of a whole Church. But, however this may be, there is no reason why we should not accept the observation if it were found really to hold good. When we come to speak of the process by which the Canon was formed, it will be seen to be perfectly compatible with it, that one book here or there should be less highly esteemed than another. The question is really one of fact.

In the case of the Acts a great deal of evidence can be produced on one side for its equal estimation: that on the other is really very doubtful; but by all means let it have such weight as it deserves.

4. The Pauline Epistles. A like contention is made, and a like answer may be given to it, in regard to the Pauline Epistles. These, too, it is said, are not to be placed strictly on the same footing with the Old Testament and the Gospels. It needs the acuteness of a practised criticism to make out a difference. All over the Christian world the Epistles of St. Paul are treated as a sacred book. Even at Alexandria they are commented upon and allegorized just like the older Scriptures. Of all the instances which may be thought to make for a different estimate the best are perhaps two, one from the extreme West, the other from the extreme East. The first of these is an interesting little scene, fresh from the life,
which it may be worth while to quote as it stands. In the year 180 a group of Christians suffered martyrdom in the obscure town of Scillium, in the Roman province of Africa (the modern Tunis). By a special piece of good fortune the minutes of their trial have come down to us, and that in two forms, Greek and Latin. For some time the Greek only was known, which runs as follows:—

"Saturninus, the pro-consul, said to the holy Speratus: 'So you persist in being a Christian?'
"The holy Speratus said: 'I am a Christian.' And all the rest of the saints said the same.
"Saturninus, the pro-consul, said: 'Don't you want time to think this over?'
"The holy Speratus said: 'In so good a cause there is no room for reflection or deliberation.'
"Saturninus, the pro-consul, said: 'What sort of works have you got in your cases?'
"The holy Speratus said: 'Our books, and, besides, the Epistles of Paul the holy man.'
"Saturninus, the pro-consul, said: 'Take a reprieve of thirty days to see if you can come to a better mind.'"¹

This is the Greek version; the Latin is still more terse and original. It drops the deferential epithets. Speratus is no longer "the holy Speratus," but "Speratus" simply; "The rest of the saints said the same thing," becomes "With him all agreed." The words which are important for our purpose also become simpler. The question is, "What have

you in your case?” and the answer, “Books and letters of Paul, a righteous man.”

When the Greek only was known it was argued that the Epistles of St. Paul were separated from the other sacred books. This is rather less clear in the Latin. We must, however, remember that, in any case, the words were addressed to a pagan governor, and so were naturally toned down to his apprehension: under such circumstances, we should not look for a full expression of Christian sentiment. Nor do they really denote a low measure of this: the Apostle of the Gentiles is spoken of in terms of veneration, which is not the less warm because it is not couched in technical language.

From the other end of the Christian world we have a curious statement respecting the Canon. “The Doctrine of Addæus” (i.e. Thaddæus) is a Syriac work, perhaps of about the year 400, but containing some older materials. It says—

“The Law and the Prophets and the Gospel, in which ye read every day before the people, and the Epistles of Paul which Simon Cephas sent from the City of Rome, and the Acts of the Twelve Apostles which John the son of Zebedee sent us from Ephesus; in these writings shall ye read in the Churches of Christ, and along with them shall ye at the same time read nothing besides, because there is nothing else in which the truth which ye possess is written besides these Scriptures, which ye hold fast in the faith, to which ye were called.”

1 Quoted from Harnack, “Das N. T. um das Jahr 200,” p. 106.
The critical eye discovers here, again, a distinction between the Pauline Epistles and the Acts, on the one hand, and the Gospels (or rather "Gospel" i.e. the Gospel Harmony known as the "Diatessaron," much used in the early Syriac-speaking Church) on the other. It is inferred that, at first, the Gospels only were known in this Church, and that the Pauline Epistles and the Acts came in later. The inference is not stringent; but, if it were, why not? Edessa (the modern Urfa, where the massacres took place the other day), the centre of this Syriac-speaking Church, is some way beyond the Euphrates, and it is likely enough that all the Christian books, which of course had to be translated, did not reach it at once. This argument, too, may well be left to count for what it is worth.

III. THE MAIN STEPS IN THE FORMATION OF THE CANON.

We have seen that the formation of the Canon had a double aspect. It involved at once the collection of a number of writings, originally independent of each other, into a single volume, and the definite attribution to these writings of an authoritative or sacred character. The first half of the process is comparatively mechanical, but it is none the less important. It was not accomplished all at once, but the one larger
collection was preceded by smaller collections, the two most conspicuous of which were considerably anterior to the year 200.

1. The Collection of the Four Gospels and of the Pauline Epistles. The circumstances under which these collections were made are obscure. We have no direct record of anything connected with them. All we can do is to fix the time at which they first emerge into sight. And it must be remembered that the literature bearing upon this period is so scanty that the collections may very well have been in existence some time before they become visible.

(a.) The Four Gospels. The Muratorian Fragment assumes that the Church recognizes Four Gospels and no more. The same assumption is made by Tertullian and by Clement of Alexandria. But earlier than any of these, there is a well-known passage in Irenæus, written about the year 185, in which the fourfold group of the Gospels is treated as a fundamental law of the Church, deeply rooted in the nature of things. The very strong wording which he uses would have been impossible if the group had been only recently found. For Irenæus it goes back into the dim distance of antiquity. The fourfold Gospel came to him as a heritage of the immemorial past. To put an exact figure to the terminus a quo implied by this is hardly
possible. A distinguished scholar has recently fixed it at about 155. This may be taken as practically a minimum.

Somewhat earlier than Irenæus, i.e. probably not later and perhaps some time before the year 170, is that remarkable document the "Diatessaron" of Tatian. The doubts are now entirely dispelled as to the tradition that this was based directly on our Four Gospels. We have substantially its actual text, and we can judge for ourselves. But it would hardly have entered into the mind of the author to compose such a work if the Four Gospels had not been already separated from other works of the kind, and if they had not begun to form a unit by themselves.

With Tatian and Irenæus the perfectly clear evidence for the use of the fourfold Gospel ends. Evidence which is less than clear we pass over. Now we may, if we please, like the scholar above mentioned, interpret the evidence before us rigorously, and say that the witness of Irenæus holds good only for himself and for the Churches of Gaul and Asia Minor; and the witness of Tatian, also, only for himself; while that of the Muratorian Fragment, Clement, and Tertullian does not reach back much beyond the date of those writers and of that document. Such a

1 Harnack, "Die Chronologie, etc.," p. 282.
conclusion is precarious, because it turns very largely on our ignorance and the absence of material. But in any case the fourfold Gospel is traced back to the home and to the time of Polycarp, the aged bishop of Smyrna, to whom Irenæus had listened in his youth, and who had been himself a disciple of St. John. Whether it really had its rise in this quarter, and how much more widely it prevailed in the Christian world at the middle and during the third quarter of the second century, we do not know.

(b.) The Pauline Epistles. If the collection of the Four Gospels can be traced back at least to the end of Polycarp’s life, the collection of St. Paul’s Epistles can be traced back with much probability to his earlier manhood. For it is a notable fact that his brief Epistle, written as it would seem about A.D. 110–117, quotes or refers to no less than nine of the thirteen Epistles. The inference lies near at hand, that Polycarp had the collection of those Epistles before him. And this inference is confirmed by the further fact, that the heretic Marcion, about the year 140, had a regular Canon of ten Epistles of St. Paul, which he took as the authoritative basis of his teaching, though he dealt with them cavalierly enough, cutting out freely such parts as did not please him. His list included all our Epistles except the Pastorals.
We shall be safe in saying that the Pauline Epistles were formed into a single collection before the year 117, and the Four Gospels before the year 150. Our materials hardly enable us to say more.

2. The Attribution of a Sacred Character to the Canon. It is easy to exaggerate the change which came over the books of the New Testament when they came to be included in what we call "the Canon." As a matter of fact, the change is often exaggerated by critical writers. Still there was a real change; the estimate of the books by the Christian Church at the year 200 differed in some respects from the conception which was in the mind of the writers, as well as from that which would be in men's minds at the moment of their publication.

Let us look at the Gospel of St. Luke. If we take up his preface we see him sitting down to write a historical work by the same methods which would have been employed by another historian. He is conscientious in his researches; he takes care to go to the eye-witnesses of the events, and to their companions; and he has evidently done all in his power to elicit the truth. He cherishes a certain confidence that the facts, as he has narrated them to his friend or patron, may be relied upon. Still this is not quite the same thing as a sacred book.
There are no traces in either of St. Luke's writings that he was conscious of contributing to what would be afterwards regarded as a sacred volume.

St. Matthew and St. Mark are more didactic. But if we take, for instance, the account given by Papias of the origin of the latter Gospel, we shall find in it nothing that takes it out of the common order of historical compositions. The author bases his work on the narratives which formed part of the teaching of St. Peter. He writes down what he remembers as carefully as he can; that is all. The Fourth Evangelist is theologian as well as historian. Indeed it may be said that the theologian takes precedence. But so far as he is historian, his credit rests on the ground that he was an eye-witness; and his veracity is guaranteed from without.¹

In the Epistles no doubt St. Paul speaks with authority; and yet he draws a clear distinction between his own words and those of the Lord.² His letters are almost without exception purely occasional in their origin. They are written to meet pressing needs of the moment; the writer's horizon is for a long time bounded by the near prospect of coming judgment, and nothing would seem to have been further from his consciousness than

¹ St. John xix. 35; xxi. 24. ² 1 Cor. vii. 10, 25.
that they should be taken as standing authorities for centuries after his death.

The one book of the New Testament which does distinctly put itself forward as a sacred book, and expressly claims the properties of such a book, is the Apocalypse, of which we have seen that the position in the Canon at the year 200 was still doubtful.

It thus appears that, between the motives which entered into the composition of the books and the reception which awaited them as they left the hands of their writers—between these, on the one hand, and the estimate put upon them at the end of the second century, there is a real interval, and there has been a real development. We shall, perhaps, be better able to understand the nature and course of this development when we have discussed the next question which presents itself to us—the causes which led to the formation of the Canon.

IV. THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE CANON.

In what might be called the critical theory of the formation of the Canon two propositions stand out most prominently. One is, that it was a sudden event, not appearing before the last quarter of the second century. The other is, that it was due to the deliberate action of the Church,
and, in particular, to the initiative of the Churches of Asia Minor and Rome, to meet the aggressions of Gnosticism and Montanism.

I. The Alleged Suddenness of the Appearance of the New Testament Canon. No doubt it is true that, when we take up the testimonies for the existence of the Canon of the New Testament, we are at once struck by their bulk as we approach the end of the second century (from Irenæus—or, say, from the year 185—onwards), and by their comparative scantiness before that date. But in all questions of Church history, and indeed of any history for which the materials are few and unequally distributed, we have to ask ourselves the question how far any given appearance depends on the nature of the facts which lie at the bottom of it, and how far on the chance distribution of the evidence which happens to have come down to us. Now, the Christian literature of the closing years of the second century and the first half of the third is copious; not so much that the writers are numerous, but that their works which are still extant are of considerable volume. It was therefore inevitable that there should be a marked disproportion between the body of evidence derivable from this period, and that collected from the scanty products of the period which preceded it. There may have been some real suddenness in the
appearance of the New Testament Canon, but it is easy to suppose it much greater than it really was. No one reading Irenæus, or the Muratorian Fragment, or Tertullian, or Hippolytus, or Origen would come away with the impression that the forming of the Canon had been sudden. Irenæus and Tertullian very conspicuously, but also Origen, who represents the Church which is supposed to have been most backward in falling into line with the rest, all lay stress on the continuity with which the Scriptures of the New Testament have descended to them directly from the Apostles. And we may be sure that there was in fact a real continuity; for such things as the appearance of the Canon are rarely sudden. They are prepared for below the surface, long before definite and tangible enactments appear above it. We might be sure that this must have been the case with the Canon even if the circumstances did not require it, as we shall presently see that they do.

2. The Influence of Gnosticism and Montanism. There is no necessity to deny that Gnosticism and Montanism exercised some influence on the formation of the Canon. Throughout the middle of the second century the Gnostics were active in literary production; and one form which that production took was the issuing of works which bore the names of Apostles and "Apostolic men," such
as might serve to supply a sanction for their own fantastic novelties. On a far more modest scale, the Montanists were also putting forward writings which claimed to be prophetic. On both sides the Church found itself compelled to take a stand. It had to distinguish between what was truly apostolic and what was falsely apostolic. It put the stamp of its approval on the one, and signified its rejection of the other.

While doing this it also discussed the claims of other works more neutral in their character (e.g. the "Shepherd" of Hermas). Having once fashioned its tests (apostolicity, and reception by the Churches) it was not difficult to apply them.

But here, again, more seems to have been made of the opposition to Gnosticism and Montanism than really was due to it. We must not forget that both Gnostics and Montanists vied with the orthodox in the reverence which they paid to the books of the New Testament, the attitude of the Gnostics toward which was strikingly different from their attitude towards the Old. The most powerful body of testimony for the Fourth Gospel between the years 135-180 comes from the Gnostics, Basilides, Valentinus and his followers. The first commentary written upon that Gospel, which treats it, not as a history, but strictly as a sacred book, is by one of these followers, Heracleon. The
Montanists, on the other hand, subtracted nothing from orthodox beliefs; they only sought to add somewhat to them. Tertullian, the champion of Montanism in the West, was devotedly loyal to the Scriptures. It would be absurd to suppose that against antagonists such as these the Church for the first time invested the New Testament with the attributes of sanctity. The one thing which it did was to cut out some of the rank growth of spurious writings which had sprung up round the New Testament. Hence it is not surprising that for the advocate of the view of which we have been speaking the process of the formation of the Canon was mainly a process of "reduction." It was really more than this. And the moment we come to see that it was more, we see also that it was not due, or only to a small extent due, to the opposition to Gnosticism and Montanism. So far as the formation of the Canon is concerned, these aberrant forms were only partially aberrant. The line of descent from the Apostles to the end of the second century did not lie wholly outside, but in part through them.

To seek the solution of the problem of the New Testament Canon in the opposition to Gnosticism and Montanism is another example of the mistake which is specially common in writers who have a just claim to the title of "scientific," of having recourse
to some side issue where the true cause really lies close at hand. We have seen that, in the first instance, the books of the New Testament were not written consciously as sacred books. But, for all that, from the first they possessed a high, and, in part, the highest authority. The one *ultima ratio*, the highest court of appeal for Christians, higher than anything Apostolic, higher even than the Old Testament, was, from the beginning, the "Words of the Lord." The Gospels contained these, and, in so far as they contained them, they spoke home to the hearts of Christians with a force which nothing could surpass. They also contained the "Acts of the Lord," which all Christians regarded as vitally bound up with their salvation. It was not in the habits of the time to distinguish nicely between the authority of a record and that of the thing recorded. The one threw back a glory over the other. And two at least of the Gospels bore, in addition, the prestige of Apostles, while the remaining two were also connected with Apostles by no more than one short remove.

The great Apostle of the Gentiles wrote, and he spoke, to his converts in a tone that did not admit of question. It was not to be supposed that his authority would be dimmed by his glorious martyrdom. On the contrary, his name was linked with St. Peter's, and the two Apostles who, against
their will, had been thrown into a kind of rivalry during their lifetime, were joined in the reverence of Christendom after their deaths. The collection of St. Paul's Epistles is at once a mark of this reverence, and contributed to it. There may have been occasional disparagement here and there; but this for the most part (as in the Clementine Homilies) took place outside the pale of the Church. The great body of Christians treasured up the writings of Paul, "the holy man," and gladly numbered them among the books which they set apart as sacred.

In like manner the authors of the Catholic Epistles had each wielded high authority in some special sphere; and the admission of their writings to the Canon was only the permanent attribution to them, when dead, of the same authority which had been accorded to them when living.

If it is said that this authority (and the sacredness which was another name for it) was in its nature vague and undefined; and if it is said, further, that some of the ideas read into it at the end of the second century and onwards did not belong to it originally, we may admit that this was so. It is not a misfortune, but the reverse, that the exact nature of the authority to be ascribed to the Scriptures has never been formally defined by the Church Catholic. To say that the
authority was somewhat vague is by no means to say that it was low. And if some elements have been introduced into it which were not there from the first, and cannot now be wholly justified, we have but to remember that those were only the attempts made by fallible men to express their sense of the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the Word of God. The form may not be exact, but the intention was sound.

The one thing which it is most important to realize is that the formation of the Canon was no mere episode in the history of the Church, no mere piece of calculated policy devised to meet certain transient needs—such needs may have had an influence, in the way in which temporary causes do help to determine the course of great movements, but they were in any case quite subordinate. The Canon was really the natural, and we may say necessary outcome of fundamental forces at work in the Church. It fixed and made permanent for all time as much as could be saved of the original expression of those unique spiritual impulses in which the Church had its birth. It secured to the Church for ever what was most indispensable in the life and words of Jesus, and in the acts and writings of the Apostles. For such a work as this the main motives must not be sought outside. The love, gratitude, and veneration of Christians
were motives sufficient, guided by the wisdom of leaders, many of whom we do not know even by name, and, above all, guided by a Providence the designs of which were beyond their ken.

V. THE SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON.

The scholar to whom allusion has more than once been made stows away in a foot-note to one of his works the verdict that no "greater creative act can be mentioned in the whole history of the Church than the formation of the Apostolic collection, and the assigning to it of a position of equal rank with the Old Testament."¹ It was a great act, but hardly a creative one. Nothing was put into the writings that was not there already. The authority with which they speak did not come to them from without, but was inherent in the writings themselves. What the Church did was to place the collected books upon a pedestal, where it claimed for them the veneration of Christians, not only at the moment, but for all time. This means that Christians had before them for ever afterwards a law, a motive, an ideal, an inspiration. And the wonderful thing is that law, motive, ideal, and inspiration were so entirely right and not wrong. How easy it would have been to make a mistake! how

¹ Harnack, "History of Dogma," ii. 62, E.T.
easy to select a mixed book which mingled dross with its ore or reduced the high-pitched standard of its companions in the volume to the level of commonplace! Surely we may see the hand of Providence in the fact that there has been no such mishap as this! And is it not also a mark of a special providence that, after nineteen centuries of earnest study, the contents of this little volume have never been exhausted, but still point on to heights beyond any that the world has yet attained?
Undenominational Religious Instruction.

I.

The idea of undenominational religious teaching may be said to have first taken effective form, so far as this country is concerned, in 1870. It had no doubt been theoretically defended by many persons before that date, and was in actual operation in the schools of the British and Foreign School Society; but it was not till the year 1870, the year which saw the passing of Mr. Forster's Education Act, that the kind of religious instruction called "undenominational" was formally recognized by English law, and received for itself the enormous privilege, granted to no other form of religious instruction in England, of drawing for its financial support upon the rates. These two great advantages, of legal recognition and rate-aided support, have naturally given a great impetus to undenominational teaching all over the country, and mark the year 1870 as the point from which our
present discussion of the whole subject should begin.

What was it that made undenominational religious instruction attractive to so many persons in 1870, and why, in particular, was it then thought right by Parliament to maintain it, and it only, amongst forms of religious instruction, from the rates? The answer to each of these two questions will be found to be very much the same. For the first time, in 1870, the State had determined that schools should be set up in every part of the country, and that the cost of these schools, at least in those towns and districts where the various religious bodies were unable to undertake it, should be thrown upon the local rates. Everybody knows these rate-aided schools nowadays; they are called board-schools, and they are managed by bodies called school-boards, which have by law the power of levying a rate on their behalf. In 1870 the question which confronted people was, How about religious teaching in these new rate-aided schools? Shall there be any at all? and, if so, of what kind shall it be? Eventually, Parliament laid it down that every school-board should decide for itself whether it would or would not have religious instruction given in its school or schools. But Parliament also went on to say that, if a school-board did determine to give religious
instruction in its schools, it was not to use any formulary distinctive of any particular denomination: that is to say, to use the phraseology which was current at the time and has since become stereotyped, the school-boards were only permitted to give "undenominational instruction" in the subject of religion. Parliament took this course for two main reasons. In the first place, it was eminently desirable that, as the religious instruction given in the new rate-aided schools was to be supported by the rates of all, it should be of such a character as to be acceptable to all; in the second place, it was held at that time by a large number of good men, and ultimately by Parliament itself, that it was possible to distinguish the points on which all the Christian bodies were agreed from those on which they differed, and that by confining the religious instruction in elementary schools to the points of agreement and ignoring those of difference, a kind of religious instruction for children might be arrived at to which no reasonable ratepayer could take objection.

The subsequent history of elementary education in this country has shown that, in 1870, Parliament was mistaken both in supposing that it would be so easy to find a common Christianity which all Christians alike would agree to receive, and in thinking, so far as they did think, that those great
Christian bodies in England which had hitherto maintained the principle of denominational instruction in their schools, would gradually surrender to the new system. But it is not my purpose in this paper to write a history of religious instruction in elementary schools since 1870. I desire only to investigate the meaning of undenominational religious instruction, and the arguments by which its advocates defend it, and to state the reasons why, in my view, Churchmen must continue to oppose it. And I have only alluded to the legislation of 1870 because I am thereby enabled to make two points, in regard to undenominationalism, at the very outset, which are of considerable importance.

The first of these points is that, by the admission of those who advocated it, undenominational religious teaching is not the natural or the best way of teaching Christianity, but only a way forced upon us by the existence of our unhappy religious divisions. Thus, if we grant for the sake of argument that it is possible to find a "common Christianity" which is taught alike by all the principal bodies into which Christendom is divided, by Roman Catholics, by Greeks, by Anglicans, by Wesleyans, Baptists, and so on, we must nevertheless allow that this substratum, so to call it, of the Christian Faith, will be of a very meagre kind; or,
in plain words, that the children who learn this "common Christianity" will learn only a very few of the truths of Christianity, and these necessarily in a more or less vague and informal manner. Or, to put it in another way, it seems clear that under such a system the great truths of Christianity, though a skilful teacher might be able to bring them nearly all in, would have to be dealt with only in the abstract or in their general aspects; any attempt to deal with them practically, to instruct the children how to apply them concretely to the case of their own individual souls, would introduce at once the most serious controversies which have disturbed the Christian world. For instance, under the undenominational system the teacher would be at liberty, no doubt, to speak to the children of the Incarnation, of the Atone-ment, or of the High Priesthood of Christ; but it is quite clear that he could not say a word of the ways in which the practical fruits of these things are to be appropriated by the individual soul, of the Church, the Sacraments, and the Christian Ministry. Yet every one must surely see that, in the case of children, Christian habits of religion are no less important than Christian doctrines of religion, that we ought to impress on them what they have to do at least as emphatically as what they have to believe, and that therefore a
system which at best can only deal with doctrines in the abstract, and can say nothing at all of the concrete observances which these doctrines must involve in practical religious life, begins very evidently at quite the wrong end.

This defect in undenominational teaching was frankly allowed by those who set it up, and was lamented by them. What they said in answer to the objection which has just been urged was, that undenominational teaching was, from the nature of the case, a compromise, and intended merely to meet the need for day-school religious teaching; its shortcomings, they strongly urged, could all be made good either by added teaching at home, or through the systematic religious instruction of the Sunday school to which the child belonged. Something may be said later on in regard to this argument; let me hasten now to indicate the second point which I desired to make in regard to undenominationalism as it came before the world in 1870. Whether the undenominationalists of that time were right or wrong in thinking that there were certain doctrines common to all the principal Christian bodies, at all events the central Christian doctrines were the subjects of that religious instruction which they desired to be given to the children. Those who were responsible for the passing of the clauses
connected with the teaching of religion in the Act of 1870 undoubtedly did mean to teach Christian doctrines in the elementary schools; and if they had been asked what they meant by Christian doctrines, they would have said they meant those doctrines upon which the whole Christian world was agreed, namely, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the doctrine of the Incarnation of our Lord, and the doctrine of His Atonement. In view of what has happened since, it is of the highest importance to remember that the teaching of Christian doctrine, though limited to such Christian doctrine as it was supposed all the larger Christian bodies would accept, was unmistakably the intention of the original undenominationalists of 1870.

II.

It is frequently and justly held to be one of the gravest weaknesses of undenominational religious teaching that it excites little enthusiasm either in the teacher or the taught. The teacher finds himself compelled to present the leading Christian doctrines in a manner calculated to offend as few persons as possible, and therefore necessarily with considerable vagueness of outline; the child, unless unusually intelligent and sympathetic, finds
little that appeals to its imagination or applies to the ordinary circumstances of its life. On both sides the religious lesson tends to assume the place of a lesson amongst other lessons; and this tendency is not counteracted as it might be, and usually is, in "denominational" schools, by the zeal of the instructor, whether clerical or lay, for the particular form of Christianity which he professes himself. Yet, on the other hand, it is quite certain that, however little enthusiasm there may be for undenominational religious teaching amongst teachers and taught, there is an almost fanatical devotion to it on the part of large classes of the population in England. It may be fairly said, indeed, that this devotion has prevailed more than anything else to make undenominational teaching widespread, and to preserve to it still a great measure of force and life. What is it, then, that, in spite of the confessed vagueness and unsatisfactoriness of undenominational teaching, has attracted to it so warm a regard on the part of so many Englishmen?

Many answers have been made to this question, as that Englishmen are fond of compromise, that they are indifferent to logical considerations so long as they can get an arrangement which works well, that they have not as a nation much instinct for theological speculation, and so on. But though
these several causes undoubtedly co-operate in their degree, they can hardly be said to constitute the root-cause to which the whole phenomenon is primarily due. This root-cause supplies the occasion for all the others, and to it all the others are subordinate. It is to be found in the different attitude which persons who believe in undenominational instruction and persons who believe in denominational instruction respectively take in regard to the Bible regarded as a means for imparting religious instruction to the young.

According to the belief of those who defend undenominational religious instruction—that is, according to the belief of nearly all Nonconformists and of some Churchmen—the Bible, even as it addresses itself to children, "speaks for itself." In other words, it is held by those to whom I refer, that the main thing you have to do in giving religious instruction to a child is to bring him or her as soon as possible into intelligent contact with the Bible, or, as it may perhaps be better put, with the Bible-message. Let the child become familiar with its Bible: let it read there of the Being of God and of His mighty works, of the coming of God the Son and His loving work for the children of men, of the life-giving power of God the Holy Ghost and His sanctifying Grace; and you will find that the child will
abundantly discover all the religion which it requires, and that your dogmas and creeds and catechisms are altogether of secondary value. Of course those whose faith in the doctrines of the Holy Trinity, or of the Incarnation, or of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is itself unsubstantial and hesitating will not say all this, or promise all these results upon the child’s intelligence; but they also will be apt to maintain that the most successful way of "teaching a child religion" is to familiarize it early with its Bible, and leave it to gather up the lessons which lie ready and unmistakable upon the sacred pages. And the point which I especially desire to emphasize is, that all this work of religious instruction is held to be accomplished, so far as human agencies are concerned, simply by bringing the message of the Bible into contact with the understanding of the child. Not, of course, that the undenominationalist would say that there was anything magical or mechanical in the matter; he would say, and so far say rightly, that through the word the Holy Spirit spoke to the reader: but he would maintain—and here, I take it, we get the essence of the undenominational view—that between the word and the reader there need be interposed of necessity no human interpreter, no catechism, or creed, or formulated doctrine,
This being so, we may without difficulty see why it is that so many religious persons support the kind of religious instruction given in the board-schools, in spite of the fact that it is vague and indefinite, which they admit, and in spite of the further fact, which they admit also, that little or no guarantee is taken in regard to the qualifications of the teacher for the work. They are content because they have secured what they regard as the fundamental point. The Bible is put into the hands of the children. The conceptions formed of religion by the children may be vague; the teaching may be indolent or insincere; these are undoubtedly points that should be attended to, but, after all, they are secondary; the vaguest or least sincere teaching cannot alter the fact that the child has its Bible, and can read it for itself; and therefore things can never go very far wrong.

I think it will be allowed by all who stand up for the undenominational teaching of Christianity that the above is a perfectly fair statement of their general position. In putting it forward I have had no desire to speak disrespectfully of those who maintain these views; they number amongst them many men of whose piety there can be no doubt, and who are animated by as strong a desire as any of their opponents can possess to make the rising generation Christian. Nor do I wish to deny that
in practice the undenominational system often succeeds better than might have been expected; the teachers have come largely from colleges in which considerable importance is attached to the study of Divinity, and the influence of the vast number of denominational schools tends to keep the undenominational schools, even in matters of religious instruction, upon their mettle. But I have wished to make clear beyond doubt the exact point at which denominationalists and undenominationalists are at issue; and I believe myself to have found it in the differing attitudes which they respectively take regarding the manner in which the Bible should be used as a means for imparting religious instruction to the young. It remains for me to indicate the Churchman's point of view, both in regard to this particular question of the proper use to be made of the Bible, and to the undenominational system generally.

The Churchman, I take it,—and by Churchman I mean here "member of the Church of England,"—accepts with as much heartiness and sincerity as the Nonconformist or undenominationalist the general view that the Bible is the source and fount of the religious instruction which should be given to the children. The difference between them lies in the fact that the Churchman does not think, and the undenominationalist apparently does, that the
child, having its "open Bible," may be trusted to gather from it one by one the great facts and doctrines which its contains. I am not speaking now of points of history, or geography, or language, about which the child who studies the Bible will often have to turn to its teacher; to that extent we all agree that the Bible will always need interpretation and an interpreter. I am drawing attention to the broad and undeniable fact that the Churchman thinks it necessary to provide the child with a considerable apparatus for apprehending and understanding the scheme of religious doctrine contained in the Bible; whilst, on the contrary, the undenominationalist imagines that he can dispense with everything of the kind. Every one knows, for instance, that in a Church school we teach the Church Catechism to the children; and that one of our gravest complaints against the Act of 1870 is that it prevents our teaching the Catechism in a rate-aided or board-school, even in a parish where all the children are Church children and all the rate-payers desire it to be taught. Why do we attach such importance to teaching the Catechism? Emphatically because we do not believe that it is enough simply to bring the child into contact with the Bible, and then leave it to pick up the doctrines which the Bible contains for itself. In all ages the Church has been accustomed to put into the hands
of her members, both adults and children, summaries of the doctrines which are contained in the Bible, and catechisms which, by means of question and answer, easily learnt by heart, impress firmly upon the mind of the learner the points on which the greatest amount of importance is to be laid. She has found it to be a plan which answered admirably in the past, and she can see in the circumstances of the present century no reason why it should now be abandoned.

A little thought will show that the Church's practice is founded on the truest philosophy of education. We do not, when we are teaching a child arithmetic, think it enough to teach him his figures, and then leave him to worry out the rules for himself. We make use of the fact that we ourselves are acquainted with arithmetic, and we guide the child on its way, stating and explaining the rules for it, and arranging them in the order in which they may most easily be learnt. Above all, we exercise our authority over the child in order to make him give due attention and labour to each part of his lesson; we know very well that if he were left alone he would always be doing what was easy or what took his fancy, and would try and depreciate the importance of what gave him trouble. We do the same in teaching to young people any subject whatever, and for the very
simple reason that there is no other method by which we can effectively teach. But, so far as I can understand the undenominationalist, all this is to be reversed when we come to teach the child religion. In that sphere, it would appear, we are to abstain carefully from placing at the service of the child any knowledge of the doctrines contained in the Bible which we may previously possess. We are to get him to read his Bible, and we may perhaps explain to him any historical, geographical, or literary difficulties which he may come across; but we are not on any account to give him any theological explanation of the Bible, or, if we do, we are only to do so in the vaguest possible way. Even the Apostles’ Creed, that brief document in which the Church has from time immemorial summarized the doctrines of Christianity for her children, and to which it is difficult to understand how any orthodox Christian can take exception, is taken from us; to allow this, our opponents say in effect, would be to prejudice the mind of the child at the outset by presenting it with an interpretation of the Bible which is of no more than human origin. The principle must be carried out to the bitter end; the child and the Bible are to be left, as far as possible, face to face and alone together. And the child, mark you, comes from a home where it has little opportunity of acquiring or being
encouraged to acquire intellectual habits; whilst the Bible is a literature, not a book, and, except as its contents are simplified, summarized, or in some way explained, is exceedingly difficult of comprehension for a child. Certainly, if the object of Bible instruction in day-schools be, as most people suppose, to give the children some elementary knowledge of the doctrines of their religion, then the undenominational manner of doing it, considered simply as a method of teaching, seems as ill-calculated to accomplish its end as it well can be. In this point of view, it is at least worth the notice of sincere and Christian undenominationalists, that their particular method of teaching Christianity always has the hearty and ungrudging support of persons whose wish it is to be rid altogether of Christianity as a religion.

Of course I shall be told that I am putting the case in a one-sided way, and that no supporter of undenominational teaching in day-schools ever supposed that, taken by itself and in school only, the undenominational method was likely to give the child a properly definite notion of Christian doctrines. "Of course," they will say, "the day-school instruction must be supplemented by that given at home and in the Sunday-school; in that way the defects which you point out will be remedied." I have no desire to be one-sided,
and I have already alluded to this contention on the part of undenominationalists. But what is it worth? A great many of the children of the more prosperous of the working classes certainly go to Sunday-school, and some few of them may occasionally receive religious instruction at home; I do not think we can say more. There remain, particularly in the large towns, a vast number of the children of the poor who go to no Sunday-school, and who cannot reasonably be supposed to get any systematic or definite religious teaching at home. They are of the poorest class, the class which finds home, food, and clothing alike difficult to obtain; they are probably not of the class which the world calls respectable, and they are just the class about which the Church and all religious bodies ought to be most anxious. The one lever by which they can be lifted is the day-school, into which the law compels them to go; we may be quite sure that the religious instruction they get in the day-school is all they ever do get. If undenominationalists admit, as they so frequently do, that the undenominational system of the board-schools requires to be supplemented by teaching in the home and the Sunday-school, supposing it is to be of much good to the children, they ought to tell us how the class of children to which I allude is to be
provided for, children who get no teaching at all from home or Sunday-school, but are entirely dependent on the religious instruction they get in the day-school. It would be a poor answer to say that they are a small class, even if it were true; but it is not true. They are a large class, and a class which is increasing with the growth, the rapid growth of the great cities; they are peculiarly a problem of the present day; and no solution of the religious difficulty in elementary schools which leaves them out can be considered satisfactory.

But I must frankly say that, for myself, I do not greatly believe in the ability of Sunday-schools to supply what is wanting in undenominational religious teaching. The teaching in Sunday-schools is not infrequently of a very second-rate order, and affects strongly but few of the children. Again, Sunday-school comes but once a week, and all experience goes to show that religious subjects ought to be taught on week-days like other subjects of instruction. I gladly own indeed, that the religious instruction given in board-schools, undenominational though it be, has better results than one would theoretically expect; and I put that down partly to the fact that the Bible is in this country still interpreted in the light of Christian tradition, partly to the
fact that a very large number, perhaps the majority of the teachers employed in the undenominational schools have been brought up under the influence of definite systems of theology. Both these facts are of a kind which Churchmen may well be thankful for. But they are also facts which might at any moment cease to be; indeed the general maintenance of the traditional interpretation of the Bible in England has been largely due to the determined stand of the supporters of voluntary schools, and would be greatly imperilled if these schools were destroyed. Because the general state of things is a little better than it might have been expected to be, that can be no reason why Churchmen should give up their hostility to a method of teaching Christianity from the Bible which they believe, both on theological and educational grounds, to be an entirely mistaken one.

Of course this root-error which Churchmen find in undenominationalism, namely, that it sets out to teach the Bible to children without the help of any creed or catechism or doctrinal formulary, as a man might try and teach arithmetic without the help of the multiplication table, branches out into many results, in each of which we find a new reason for condemning the undenominational method. Thus we oppose it because from the nature of the case it is vague and incomplete in the treatment
of religious instruction. It is vague, because it is afraid to state any Christian doctrine clearly lest it should be called "dogmatic;" and it is incomplete because it is obliged to leave out in its scheme of religious instruction everything which is characteristic of some Christian bodies and not of others. How can Churchmen, for instance, who believe in Infant Baptism, be content with a system of religious instruction which does not allow them to say a word to baptized children about Baptism? Again, undenominational religious teaching, as given in board-schools, is not only at best vague and incomplete, but is also quite uncertain in its extent. In some board-schools it only means reading the Bible without note or comment. In others it rests upon a good paper syllabus of study, but the syllabus is never really worked through. Just as the casual majority of a school-board may decide, so is the religious instruction given; sometimes meagre, sometimes full, sometimes a reality, sometimes a farce. Well, indeed, might the present Bishop of Chester call the religious instruction of the school-boards "a sliding scale" of religious instruction. For these three reasons—its vagueness, its incompleteness, and the utter uncertainty of its extent in this place or in that—undenominational religious instruction will continue to be opposed by all who think (and they
are the majority of Christians) that, whatever else the religious instruction of the young may be, it must at least be definite.

III.

There remain two more considerations to be noted in connection with Undenominational Religious Instruction. The first is that, so far as this kind of teaching has gone, it has shown a tendency to become more vague rather than less vague with the passing years, to concentrate the attention of the children more and more on the facts and narratives contained in the Bible, and less and less upon the doctrines, even the central doctrines, of the Christian religion, and generally to treat the Bible much rather as a collection of interesting literature than as the fountain or source whence may be drawn the Truths which should rule the spiritual life of men. The second is that, much as we Churchmen mistrust this particular form of religious instruction, we have no desire to oust it from the possession of those who value it; all that we ask is fair-play for the form of religious instruction we ourselves prefer; we do not ask that our own form should be given any kind of monopoly.

1. In the first section of this paper I drew
careful attention to the fact that the original supporters of undenominational teaching—the bulk, that is, of those who passed the Act of 1870—did not desire to banish doctrinal instruction altogether from that teaching, but simply to limit the doctrines taught to such doctrines as were held to be common to all the larger Christian bodies. But it will have been observed that when, in my second section, I came to deal with the objections which Churchmen have to make to the undenominational form of religious instruction, I wrote as though by undenominational instruction were always meant the mere familiarizing of the children with the contents of the Bible, without any attempt to impress upon their minds any doctrine or doctrines therein asserted, even a doctrine or doctrines of the most fundamental and generally received kind. I did so because there appears to me to be just that difference between the undenominational teaching of the board-schools, as it was meant to be in 1870, and the same teaching in the same schools as, in my judgment, it tends to be at the present time. It was the London School Board Election of 1894 that gave to Churchmen their great object-lesson in the fact of this change. The out-going majority contended, as it will be remembered, that in directing their teachers so to teach from the Bible as to impress upon the
children the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, they were but adhering to the intention of their predecessors on the first London School Board, who had undoubtedly desired that these doctrines, as part of the common heritage of all Christian Bodies, should be taught to the boys and girls in attendance at board-schools. The other side endeavoured to make out that this was not the case; but their ablest and most logical leaders did not trouble themselves very much about what the first Board might have done or intended. They took up the broad and quite intelligible position that it was of the essence of undenominational teaching, at least in day-schools, that the children should simply be as it were presented with the contents of their Bibles, and that no doctrinal instruction whatever, even as to the Godhead of Christ, ought to be given by the teachers. That is the present contention of the Undenominational party; and in the face of this contention it is useless to deny that the outlook is very grave, at least for those who hold that the outlines of the Christian religion should form a part of the regular day-school curriculum of children in as many of our elementary schools as possible. Am I saying too much if I say that, up to recent years, the undenominational system of the board-schools has been preserved from doing as much harm as it might
have done because the Bible facts were interpreted, if half-unconsciously, yet really, to the children in the light of a still strong Christian tradition; that we saw, in 1894, events which went far to weaken the prescriptive right of this tradition, and to make it possible for the teacher to deal with Bible-facts from any point of view he liked, provided of course it were not dogmatic; and that in all this there is a new and very urgent call to Churchmen, both to maintain their own schools, and to exercise to the full extent they legally can their own rights as citizens over the management of board-schools?

It appears to me that, whether we look at the undenominational system theoretically, in regard to its views as to the most effective way to teach from the Bible, or historically in relation to its actual and visible development, we ought as Churchmen to watch it incessantly, to be ever ready to supplement it where we can, and to maintain unflinchingly the superiority of the denominational method for purposes of effective religious instruction. There is, in fact, no duty laid upon the Church in our generation more imperative than that of exposing the weaknesses and the dangers of what is called undenominational religious instruction.

2. But, in saying this, I do not wish to be misunderstood. As I have said above, we Churchmen,
much as we mistrust undenominationalism, especially in the schools, do not wish to oust it from the possession of those who like it. It is well understood that a large number of parents do prefer such religious instruction for their children; we have not the slightest wish to do anything which may prevent them from giving full effect to their wishes. The grievance of Churchmen in regard to religious instruction in elementary schools is not that undenominational instruction is given in some of these schools, but that it is the only form of religious instruction in elementary schools which is supported with the full resources of the public purse. With the best intentions in the world the authors of the Act of 1870 committed a twofold injustice, and the effects of it have hindered the progress of popular education in England ever since. They first assumed that the undenominational form of religious instruction was that which the country as a whole desired—an assumption which was far from being the fact in 1870 and is yet farther from being so now; and they then proceeded, not only to endow the undenominational system with public money, which they had a perfect right to do, but also to decree that no other form of religious instruction should be endowed with public money except in a minor and inferior degree, which was a plain outrage
upon the whole doctrine of religious equality. The schools of the Church and those of every other religious body which values denominational religious teaching are, in short, and have been for twenty-six years, under grave pecuniary disabilities as compared with their undenominational rivals. This state of things we maintain to be opposed to the first principles of justice, and we desire to abolish it. That is to say, we desire that denominational schools should be put in as good position, so far as the public purse is concerned, as undenominational schools are. We do not ask, and we have never asked, that any injustice should be done to undenominational schools, or that those who prize them should in any way be hindered from setting them up. We only ask that the State should grant the same facilities for building and maintaining elementary schools to those who dislike undenominational religious instruction as it already grants to those who like it. In the matter of religious instruction in the primary schools, let there be, absolutely and perfectly, fair play all round.