

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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I.

THE MEANING AND VALUE OF THE DOCTRINE OF DECREES.

THE proposal to revise the Westminster Standards has brought the doctrine of the Divine decrees into the foreground. The controversy turns upon this pivot. Other features come in incidentally, but this is capital and controlling. This is the stone of stumbling and rock of offense. If election and reprobation were not in the Confession and Catechism, probably the fifteen Presbyteries would not have overtured the Assembly. It is for this reason that we purpose to discuss the *Meaning and Value of the Doctrine of Decrees*, so plainly inculcated in the Scriptures, and from them introduced into the Westminster symbol. We are certain that the Biblical truth of the sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners, and of His just liberty to determine how many He will save from their sin, and how many He will leave to their self-will in sin, is greatly misunderstood by many who profess the Presbyterian faith, and who sometimes describe it in much the same terms with the anti-Calvinist, and inveigh against it with something of the same bitterness. The conservative and the radical reviser meet together at this point, and while the former asserts that he has no intention to make any changes respecting the doctrine of decrees that in his opinion will essentially impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system, he nevertheless practically coöperates with the radical in bringing about a revolution in the sentiment and creed of the Presbyterian Church concerning one of the most distinctive articles of its belief. Because revision, be it conservative or radical, contends that there is more or less that is *un-Scriptural* in the tenets of election and reprobation as they are formulated in the Standards, and that

IV.

A TENDENCY OF THE TIMES.

THAT Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Man and Son of God, who was crucified, and died and rose again, is exalted to the right hand of God, and from his mediatorial throne is administering all things in heaven and earth for His Church, conducting her to certain and eternal victory, is a truth which is held forth in Holy Scripture with luminous prominence for the faith and hope of the Church. But no less explicit is the teaching of Scripture, that over against the Prince of princes and His mediatorial kingdom, stands another prince, who also has his kingdom and subject hosts, over whom, within the limits fixed by the Divine permission, he rules with superhuman power and craft. He is called by our Lord "the prince of this world," nor is this an empty title. For the Apostle Paul reminds the Ephesians that above their earthly and visible enemies were others, spiritual and invisible who from the unseen world were really directing and controlling this unceasing warfare against the children of God. Almost startling are his words upon this subject: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." If this is so, and if there is indeed a king over all these children of pride, then we should expect that just as we can discern evidence of the power of the risen Christ working for His Church, in the world, so also the antagonistic activity of the kingdom of evil would be conducted under superhuman direction and control. Our Lord thus intimates this fact in His teaching, where, speaking of him, whom He calls the devil and Satan, the king of this whole kingdom of evil, visible and invisible, He teaches that the administration of this kingdom is in the nature of the case marked by a certain unity of policy and plan, as the very condition of its existence, such as precludes the supposition that it should be divided against itself (Mt. xii, 24-26). That the student of history may discover evidence abundant of this sublime unity of plan in the history of the world, regarded as that of the advance of the kingdom of Christ on earth, is one of the commonplaces of Christian teaching. Especially in the history of the present century, he must be blind indeed who

cannot see this. But if the Scripture representations of the kingdom of Satan be true, one would expect to be able to have glimpses, at least, of an analogous unity of plan in the conduct of the opposition to the kingdom of Christ. For it is certain that things do not fall out by chance in the kingdom of Satan, any more than in the kingdom of Christ. If this is so, it is plain that it is of some practical consequence, for those especially who lead in the affairs of Christ's Church, to consider the movements and tendencies of the time with this thought in view. If in any age the attack of the powers of evil is directed especially against one part of the system of saving truth rather than another, it must be of importance to be aware of this.

How stands the case then in the present age? Is it possible in the multitudinous movements and tendencies of our time, such as make against the truth of God, to discern any one objective toward which they converge? Is it possible that, in our day, the central object of the enemy's attack, along many varied lines, may be the person of Christ as the Son of God? It were not unnatural indeed that this should be so; and, indeed, perhaps there never was an age in which the great adversary has lost sight of this central truth of the Gospel and secret of its power. For that Jesus is the Son of God, this is certainly *articula ecclesie stantis vel cadentis*. For essential is this even to that other central truth of redemption through His sacrificial death. If Jesus were not the Son of God, then it were impossible that His blood should take away sin. No wonder that Christ Himself then, in His testimony, made so much of this. What was His testimony on this point, and how He wished that it should be understood, cannot be allowed to be doubtful, if the question is to be settled by a fair-minded exegesis of the Gospels. For they uniformly represent Jesus to have explicitly claimed to be the only-begotten Son of God, come down from heaven, from the Father, to give His life a ransom for many. They represent Him to have explained this term in a sense which, while it affirmed His eternal subordination as Son to the Father, yet no less implied identity of nature and attributes with the Father, such as made it possible for Him to say that of Himself which could be true of no creature; namely, that to have seen Him was to have seen the Father. Not only did Christ make this unique and extraordinary claim continually in the course of His ordinary teaching, but at the last, understanding certainly that the Jews regarded Him as by this language claiming equality with God, when on trial for His life, and all depended on His answer to the question, whether He was indeed the Son of God, He solemnly reaffirmed it upon oath, before the highest court of His nation. There can thus be no possible question as to

how Jesus intended to be understood in this declaration concerning Himself. And it was on the ground of this His claim, thus understood, that the Jews—quite properly if the claim were not true—adjudged Him to have spoken blasphemy, and on this ground condemned Him to death. One is not then surprised to find that everything in the matter of our salvation is made by our Lord and His apostles to turn upon the hearty belief and confession of this one truth, that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Son of the living God. It is explicitly said that if a man deny the Son, he therewith denies the Father also (1 John, ii, 23); that the secret of victory over the world, that world which is the irreconcilable enemy of every one who would be the friend of God, is found in this, that a man believe that Jesus is the Son of God (1 John, v, 5). And it is toward this very point, the denial and rejection of the claim of Christ to be the Son of God, that many lines of thought and action in our time are distinctly converging. This is indeed no new thing in the history of the Church; for in the early Christian centuries, as all can now plainly see, the conflict of the truth with falsehood was made to centre chiefly on this point. So now, it would seem from many things, as if the great adversary, finding the time specially suited to this, were again seeking to lead men astray on this question. Of this, such illustrations as the following seem specially deserving of notice.

1. In the first place, it is to be observed, that while the immense advance which has been made by man in the past two or three generations, on the one hand, has been made to contribute greatly to the progress of the Gospel, yet, on the other hand, in most unregenerate men, it has developed an immoderate sense of self-sufficiency for the problems of life, individual and governmental, such as naturally inclines such to regard with incredulity the announcement of a Saviour who is not human but Divine. Man has already in the past hundred years done so much to better his condition, why should it not be highly probable that, give him but time enough, in this world or in Hades, he will be able to work out the whole problem of salvation from the evils which beset him? Whereas we used to hear much, in accord with the clear teachings of Christ, of an evil nature in man as the deep secret of the moral evil which afflicts the world—a cause which is evidently of such a kind as to demand for its removal the intervention of Him who made man—many in our day have come to think that they have discovered that the root of the whole trouble is not in man's nature, which they think to be really good, but in his "environment."* Hence it is even fancied that it is quite conceivable that

* This seems to be one of the chief thoughts in the recent novel by Mr. Belamy, "Looking Backward," which, significantly enough, has had such an extraordinary sale.

with continued advance in scientific and ethical knowledge, and increasing skill in its application to the problems of life, man should be able, in a not distant future, so far to improve his environment, that sin and crime, and all the consequent evils, which are as yet so disagreeably intrusive on men's optimistic dreams, should be reduced to vanishing quantities. In any case, whatever the cause may be, there can be no doubt that in the present day, as contrasted with the period preceding, the sense of sin, as involving man in guilt and helplessness for self-redemption, has remarkably diminished. The active pastor and Christian worker, in dealing even with those whom he believes to be truly converted, is often impressed with the contrast in this respect with the experiences recorded of earlier generations.

The bearing of this upon the question of the acceptance of the claims of Christ to be the only-begotten Son of God is evident. For the experience of ages bears constant witness to the truth of the teaching of the New Testament, that although there is no lack of objective evidence of the truth of Christ's claims, yet the conditions of faith in Christ are largely subjective. Thus it is declared broadly that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" and that they are only "spiritually discerned;" and hence with regard to this most central element in the testimony of the Spirit, the supreme dignity of the person of Jesus Christ, it is affirmed that "no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Other men may easily receive Him as the ideal Man, our perfect Example, and in this way a helper, but only those are disposed to receive Christ as a Divine Saviour, who have been brought to some adequate sense of their own guilt and helplessness as sinners against the Most Holy God. In the nature of the case, to all who are filled with the conceit of their own sufficiency to commend themselves to God by their own works, and to overcome by the strength of their own efforts the power of evil in them, a Saviour, who is Himself God incarnate, must ever seem a superfluity. And because the present generation, on account of the wonderful progress made by man in every department of earthly knowledge, has become inflated in a degree perhaps without a precedent in history with vast conceptions of the dignity, power, and the possible attainments of man, it is just in that degree the less inclined to receive the testimony of Christ concerning the deity of His person, and that evil state of man which made redemption without an incarnation of the Son of God impossible.

2. The tendency thus to discredit or reject the testimony of Jesus that He was, in the sense above defined, the Son of God, with a very large class is further strengthened by the extent to which the researches of modern science have extended the known domain of

natural law. So much that until comparatively recent times was imagined to lie outside the working of the forces resident in nature, has been discovered to be due to merely natural causes, operating according to invariable law, that very many feel that however it may still be impossible to account for everything in nature and in history in this way, it is yet, at least, most reasonable to presume that our failure is only due to the imperfection of our knowledge; and that perfect knowledge would probably show us that all was natural, and that the supernatural was merely the hypothesis of ignorance. Hence the extreme difficulty which the men of this generation feel in crediting any story which purports to relate a miracle; and hence it is, again, because this affirmation that Jesus was the Son of God, taken in the sense in which He Himself made the claim, implies the most stupendous of all miracles, in a supernatural birth and Divine incarnation, that already a large class even of nominal Christians find it almost or quite impossible to accept the testimony which the Gospels contain to this effect, and, on that account, grasp eagerly at any theory of criticism or interpretation which may rid them of this intellectual difficulty.

3. This naturalism of the day finds its full expression in various types of evolutionary theory, which, in proportion as they are ably and plausibly argued by many scholars of the most extensive learning and profound research in their several specialties, are more and more widely accepted as probably containing the final solution of the origin of things, and the true philosophy of all nature and all human history. But it takes little thought to see that in such theories there is no logical place for an incarnation; and, therefore, in proportion as they are accepted as established, we must expect to see, as we already do, that with their adherents, faith in Jesus as the Son of God will disappear. It is of great consequence, however, that it be carefully noted that this cannot be said of every theory which by the multitude who are not specialists may be loosely called "evolution." We make the affirmation only of such theories as of necessity exclude, by their very terms, the possibility of the supernatural and Divine as a co-factor in the origin of things. For instance, when men like Mivart and Kölliker decline to recognize in natural selection or the influence of the environment a sufficient explanation of the origin of every form of life, and postulate instead extraordinary births, exceptions to the general law that like begets its like, as the probable decisive factor in the origination of species through descent, it is plain that, so long at least as such decline to dogmatize as to the efficient cause of such *hetero-genesis*, no necessary antagonism in this case exists to the proposition that Jesus was, in the historic sense of the phrase, the Son of God. For on such

a hypothesis it remains, at least, quite thinkable that the efficient cause of such extraordinary births should be the direct creative act of a personal God; and, if so, then such a theory, assuming it to be established as the truth, instead of being antagonistic to the Scripture doctrine of the incarnation, would furnish a truly remarkable analogy to the Scriptural teaching on that subject. For such a theory supposes that in the origination of new orders of life there have been two factors; the one, indeed, being descent, but the other, the intervention, of some cause, to science unknown, which has operated possibly *ab extra*, and which may, therefore, conceivably enough, have been the creative intervention of a personal God. But what is the teaching of the Gospels as to the birth of Jesus Christ, but just this, that in His birth there were two factors; the one descent, in that He was born of the Virgin Mary; "of the seed of David according to the flesh;" the other, Divine intervention, in that "the Holy Ghost came upon her," and "the power of the Highest overshadowed her;" so that Jesus, the Son of Man, was also, according to the spirit, the incarnate Son of God. Let it not be understood that we are arguing for the truth of such a theory; but it is of much importance in view of the exceedingly loose application of the term evolution, that we do not confound theories which really so profoundly differ. Indeed it is much to be regretted that the word evolution should be applied to such a theory of origins equally with the theories of a Darwin or a Hæckel. It is a great mistake, as Schmid,* *e. g.*, has shown, to suppose "origin by evolution" and "origin through descent" to be equivalent phrases of coextensive meaning; or to imagine that if descent in any case be regarded as proven, that this, therefore, involves the acceptance of a naturalistic evolution, with all its momentous consequences in morals and religion.

With this very necessary limitation and explanation of terms, we may now repeat the affirmation that the present extensive acceptance of various theories of evolution, by the most inevitable logical necessity, tends to the rejection of the testimony of Jesus to the deity of His person. It is quite impossible to see how any theory which would explain the whole origin of everything by a naturalistic evolution, whether that evolution be ascribed, as in theories of the Lamarckian type, to a tendency *ab intra*, or as in those of the Darwinian type, to influences *ab extra*—can find any place for the affirmation that Jesus was the Son of God, miraculously born through incarnation in the womb of a virgin. For it is the fundamental assumption in all theories of this class that, even if there be a God, who in the beginning created all things as to their substance, or at

* In his "Darwinian Theories."

most, as Darwin supposed, originated a few first germs of life, He has never yet in any way since that first beginning been directly concerned in the origination of any individual or species. But if this be so, and this be a complete account of nature or of history, how then can any one consistently affirm that Jesus was the Son of God, in the sense of the Gospels? For it is the most essential thing in their testimony on this subject that, while Jesus was indeed connected by descent through the virgin with the race of man, He yet owed His existence, as He appeared among men, to a direct and purely supernatural act of God, the Holy Spirit. It is thus plain from the bare statement of the case, that with such teaching every naturalistic theory of evolution stands in the most direct and irreconcilable antagonism. For if Jesus came into the world after this manner, and was thus, in an exclusive sense, the Son of God, then no such theory of evolution can be longer regarded as a true and exhaustive account, either of nature, or of history; for here is one stupendous exception to the supposed law; and where there has been one, who can say with confidence that there may not be others, either in the past, or in the future? And, on the contrary, if any of the fashionable naturalistic theories be accepted, it follows by inevitable necessity, that there can never have been an incarnation, and therefore that the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God must be rejected. For a Christ, indeed, who should be the result of evolution, the consummate flower of humanity, a place might be found in such theories; but then, a Christ who should be a product of evolution, would not be Christ, the Son of God, as set forth in the Gospels.

Nor is this the only difficulty in the way of such a supposition. For the Christ of the Gospels, the Christ of history, appears at the wrong place and time to be accounted for in that way. To imagine Him to have been the product of the environment in Palestine in the first Christian century, were but extravagant folly; while, moreover, His appearance were far too soon for the theory. For it must be confessed that for all the boast that is made of human progress, the race as yet shows no signs of having even approached to the possible evolution of a Christ. By common consent an immeasurable distance still separates the Man of Nazareth from all other men, however great, and pure, and noble; and it is very noticeable, that it is just those who are most like Him, who most appreciate their own distance below Him. How utterly incredible then, on the assumptions of a naturalistic evolution, that there should have been such a Being so far back in history! The only place for an evolved Christ—if we may be pardoned such an extravagant and impossible supposition—would be, not in the first century nor yet in

the nineteenth, but in a future which must as yet be incalculably distant.

It is easy to see, therefore, that the inevitable tendency of the acceptance of any theory of evolution, properly so called, must be to the denial of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and therewith of the whole Christian system as based upon that affirmation. It is thus not without reason that we call attention to the present prevalence of such theories, as seriously menacing the faith of Christendom that Jesus was in truth the Son of God. That not a few, nevertheless, who accept more or less fully such theories, yet do not take this open step of the denial of the deity of Christ, is no doubt true, as we may rejoice to believe; but this does not affect the fact as to the necessary logical consequences of such philosophies; consequences which, alas, too many have so far accepted as to have fallen into utter doubt, if not unqualified disbelief, of the affirmation of Jesus Christ, that unlike all other men He "came down from the Father," "out of heaven."

4.* With the doctrine of evolution is closely connected, as is well known, a certain influential type of higher criticism of the Scriptures. For it is plain that the account, for example, of Israel's history, as hitherto understood by the Church, does not at all agree with what any theory of evolution as applied to history would demand. From an evolutionary point of view, it is incredible that there should have been such an elaborate ritual prescribed at so early a period in Israel's history as the time of Moses. The so-called "priest-code" must therefore be assigned to a much later date, and higher criticism must be invoked to justify this reconstruction of the history. Now in the teachings of the modern radical schools of higher criticism and interpretation of the Old Testament (and New Testament) Scriptures, we cannot but recognize another trend of thought which, if unchecked, must powerfully and effectively tend to weaken and destroy the faith of men in the infallible authority of Jesus Christ as the Son of God incarnate. That this is so one would think no intelligent person could deny or doubt. For it is certain that the books which profess to give the life and teachings of our Lord represent Him as habitually referring to the Old Testament Scriptures as a final and infallible authority on all subjects as to which He appeals to them. This is a fact so evident as scarcely to admit of dispute. In particular, to instance one of the most momentous points in the present discussion regarding the Old Testament, whereas many of our modern critics insist that the so-called Mosaic law is not Mosaic, but the product in great part of a much later age, Christ constantly assumes and affirms its Mosaic origin and inspired authority. Such, at least, is the most natural and,

until recent days, the practically universal understanding of His words. In no less than sixteen passages, if we include the parallels, do the Gospels bring His witness on this point before us. Thus He refers (John iii, 14) to the narrative of Num. xxi, 9, *et seq.*, concerning the plague of fiery serpents, and the raising up of the brazen serpent by Moses; also (John vi, 49) to the work of Moses in connection with the feeding with the manna in the wilderness. Twice He refers to Moses formally as law-giver, invested with rightful authority over Israel even to His own day. He said (Mt. xxiii, 2,) that "the scribes and Pharisees" sat "in Moses' seat," and that for this reason all things that they commanded, the people should observe and do; and still more explicitly (John v, 46), He appeals to the Mosaic origin of the law which goes under his name, as a fact not to be disputed, and which sealed the guilt, of those who, thus accepting it, rejected Him of whom Moses wrote. Again, according to Matt. viii, 4, Mark i, 44, and Luke v, 14, he refers to the law concerning leprosy, as given in Leviticus, chaps. xiii, xiv, as of Mosaic origin; in Matt. xix, 8, and Mark x, 3-9, also to the Jewish law concerning divorce, recorded in Deut. xxiv, 1-4, as given by Moses; and yet, again, in Mark vii, 10, to the laws found in Ex. xx, 12, xxi, 17 (cf. Lev. xx, 9), concerning obedience to parents, and death as the ordained punishment for the cursing of father or mother, under this formula, "Moses said." In Luke xx, 37, again, He cites Ex. iii, 6, as words which "Moses shewed at the bush;" and in John vii, 22, yet once more, He speaks of the ordinance concerning circumcision as having been given to Israel by Moses, thus alluding to Lev. xii, 3. It is not merely the number and various character of these references, nor yet the way in which He thus appeals to the Mosaic law, which is most significant; but still more notable, with regard to the present controversies, is the fact, which Prof. Bissell has with abundant reason emphasized, that in these various passages Christ "directly imputes to Moses legislation belonging to each of the three great parts into which many modern critics divide the Pentateuch, and refer to widely separated periods of time."* Now, we have no desire to press these words of our Lord to the utmost extent of the meaning which they might not unnaturally bear; but surely no fair exegesis can make them imply less than this: that He meant to be understood as endorsing the universal belief of the Jews of that day which regarded the law, in each of the parts to which He refers, as having been given by revelation to Moses, and hence the Word of God, to be regarded as of Divine authority.

But now what is the reply of that radical school of critics and interpreters which is in our day having so extensive and powerful

* "The Pentateuch, its Origin and Structure;" p. 43.

influence upon the rising generation of expounders of the Word? Notoriously just this: an absolute and categorical refusal to accept this testimony of Christ as decisive. It is strangely insisted that to accept His testimony on anything connected with the criticism of the Old Testament would be unscientific. To cite the often quoted words of Kuenen, it is said, "We must either cast aside as worthless our dearly bought scientific method, or we must forever cease to recognize the authority of the New Testament" (and therewith, be it observed, the testimony of Jesus as therein given), "in the domain of the exegesis of the Old." We would not say anything harsh and uncharitable; we would not venture to bring sweeping charges against the personal loyalty to Christ of those who accept the conclusions of this school, and work upon its postulates. The Lord alone is Judge of the heart; and we can easily believe that in the case of some such, at least, the heart may be nearer right than the head; and that the grace of God in the heart may even prevail over logic, though at the expense of consistency. None the less, it is undeniable that to the average common sense of the great body of believers, learned and unlearned, the contradiction between such critics and Christ seems absolute and irreconcilable, and the logical consequence of this contradiction inevitable; namely, that we must follow either Christ or the critics, but that we cannot follow both; that if we must accept as final truth the conclusions which are insisted on with such dogmatic confidence, by many of our modern scholars, then we must admit that Jesus of Nazareth was mistaken; mistaken in that He thought that these Levitical laws were a revelation to Moses, when in fact they were not; thought that He recognized in them the Word of His Father, when, instead of this, they were in large part human inventions of a far later age. But if this be granted, then—we must press the question with all possible urgency—how can one by any device escape the apparently unavoidable conclusion that Jesus could not have been the Son of God in any such sense as He claimed? It is very easy to speak lightly or with scarcely covert contempt of these anxious questions which a large number of devout—and not always ignorant—Christians are asking in these days; but the question will not and cannot be thus suppressed; answered it must and will be, in one way or another, by all; answered, alas, no doubt, in many cases, as already by not a few, by an outspoken denial of the infallible authority of Christ, and therewith, by necessary consequence, of that most momentous claim of His that He was the Son of God, come down from heaven to reveal unto men in obedient life and sacrificial death, the Father, and thereby fulfill the law of Moses, who, He said, "wrote of Him." And so it is that in the extensive teaching and

too extensive acceptance of such critical theories, we are constrained to recognize another powerful movement of thought tending in our day by logical, and too often actual, consequence to the denial that Jesus is the Son of God.

5. It is indeed true that among those who accept, or at least see not how to escape assenting to these radical conclusions of this anti-Christian criticism, there are some who, because of the grace of God in their hearts, yet decline to draw what seems to be the last and inevitable inference touching the person of their Lord. In a word, they cannot give up faith in Jesus as the Son of God, even though, for the time, the conclusions of reason seem to contradict the affirmation of faith. Hence they are found earnestly seeking, in a spirit worthy of all praise and sympathy, to devise some theory by the aid of which they may be able to reconcile what they regard as the established results of the radical criticism, with faith in Jesus Christ as in very truth the only-begotten Son of God. Of such attempts to construct an eirenicon, the most promising, in the opinion of many, is found in the application to the problem of the modern theory of the *kenosis*, as offered to the Church of to-day in explication of the profoundly mysterious facts of the Lord's earthly life, as set before us in the Gospels. This theory has been variously elaborated, as theologians know, with more or less of logical consistency and completeness, by such representative men as Thomasius, Martensen, Ebrard and Gess; but it is not necessary for our present purpose to enter into a minute analysis of their agreements and differences. We will only remark in passing that it seems very difficult, when one once enters on this line of speculation, to stop short of the last extreme of a *kenosis*, absolute and total, as set forth, *e. g.*, by Gess. In this, its most logical and complete development, the theory stands, if we rightly understand the matter, essentially as follows: While it is affirmed that our Lord was at one and the same time really and truly God, and really and truly man, it is supposed that He was this, not because according to the Nicene understanding of the Scripture, in the unity of His person as the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, there were two separate and distinct natures, divine and human; but, rather because He, as the pre-existent Son of God, by an act of voluntary self-limitation, reduced Himself, so to speak, to the dimensions of humanity. That is, the Son of God, the eternal Logos, so really and truly became a human soul, that He not only ceased to be omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, but even to be self-sufficient and independent. Thus, the eternal communication of life from the Father to the Son in the Trinity, throughout the whole time of our Lord's humiliation, was interrupted; and, for the time being, the second person of the Trinity,

though still, as to essence, truly Divine, was yet, as regards all the attributes of humanity, sin only excepted, simply a man. No one who has looked into the writings of such men, *e. g.*, as Gess, will speak contemptuously of this theory, or of the exegesis by which it is sought to support it, any more than of the devout and reverent spirit in which the theory is worked out. And it is the most natural thing possible that we should see, as we do, some devout and believing theologians, troubled by the apparent bearing of the arguments of the radical critics, which they see no way to answer, against the doctrine of the absolute deity of Christ, turning hopefully to the theory of *kenosis* as affording a possible solution of the difficulty, and pointing the way to the longed-for reconciliation between reason and faith. For if we grant the essential thought of the *kenosis*, that our Lord in His incarnation assumed all the limitations of our humanity, sin alone excepted, it then becomes easy to suppose that, notwithstanding His miraculous and Divine origin, He was subject to all the imperfections of knowledge common to the wisest men of His generation. May we not then suppose, without prejudice to His deity, that with regard, for instance, to the origin and authority of the Levitical law, through the limitation of knowledge inseparable from His humiliation, Christ shared an error with His uncritical countrymen? And may we not thus, accepting some such kenotic theory, find the way of escape, for which so many devout and spiritual souls are anxiously seeking, from the sore pressure of the radical Old Testament criticism upon our faith in Jesus, as in truth and verity the Son of the living God?

Of this we are not so hopeful as some appear to be. For, even if we accept the theory of *kenosis*, a grave difficulty will still remain in applying it to the problem presented by the radical criticism. For the incarnation and humiliation, howsoever explained, was for the purpose of revealing unto men the Father. Christ declared that He was Himself such a perfect revelation of the Father unto men, that to have seen Him was to have seen the Father that sent Him. Moreover, as was indeed necessary to this end, Jesus claimed repeatedly to have a perfect knowledge of the Father. He said, for example, "No one knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him;" and again, "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not; but I knew Thee." Whatsoever therefore may have been the limitations of knowledge under which He came in His incarnation and humiliation, it is certain that we cannot say that this limitation extended to His knowledge of the Father; since this would have been to defeat the very purpose for which He came into the world, and would contradict His repeated claim to a knowledge of the Father which was perfect and

absolute. Surely, if possessed of such knowledge, it is quite inconceivable that, thus knowing the Father, He should yet not know His Father's Word from the word of man; and should have ignorantly mistaken for the Word of the Father, certain forgeries by designing Jewish priests of exilian or post-exilian times. How then, even should we grant, for argument's sake, the truth of any theory of *kenosis*, is it possible to carry this theory of self-limitation in knowledge so far as is imperative, if it is to afford any relief in the case before us? For it is evident that such limitation in knowledge must itself have a limitation; namely, the knowledge which Christ had must not be so far limited as to be inconsistent with the purpose of the incarnation to reveal the Father perfectly to men, and so to contradict the constant claim which Jesus made to perfect knowledge of the Father.

But, for our part, we feel a still graver difficulty in the application of the theory of *kenosis* to save our faith in Jesus as the Son of God, under the pressure of modern criticism; even this, that, as it appears to us, in its necessary logical development, it will conduct to a denial of the absolute deity of Christ, no less certainly than the critical theories referred to. In this matter we desire to speak with all possible justice and charity. To charge many of the eminent, learned and devout supporters of the theory of *kenosis* with any personal wavering of faith in the absolute deity of Christ, would be a great wrong. We are so perfectly sure of the sincere and profound love and loyalty of many such to Christ as their Lord and God, that we are convinced that if they should come to see that this or any theory was incompatible with the recognition of the supreme deity of Christ, they would be among the first to reject it. But we speak not of the actual beliefs of supporters of this theory, but of what seem to us to be its logical issues, if consistently carried out. The question is not as to what is the position of the present teachers of the theory, so much as to what conclusion is it likely to lead the more logical of their disciples. As regards this then, speaking with all humility, as is ever fitting on a subject so profoundly mysterious as the interior relations of the Persons of the blessed Trinity, the case seems to us to stand in this wise. We receive in their historic sense the affirmations of the Nicene and Athanasian creeds touching the Holy Trinity, as fully supported by the Word of God. In particular, we accept the statement concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, that He is "the Son, eternally begotten of the Father, God of God, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father." But, in the teaching of the Scriptures, as in the language of these creeds, it seems to be logically involved that the relation between the Father and the Son, which is expressed

in Scripture by saying that He is "the only-begotten Son," cannot be regarded as one which was determined or is continued by the voluntary will of either the Father or the Son, but rather, as the Nicene fathers taught, by the necessity of the nature of the Triune Godhead. For otherwise, we might suppose a time when the relation began, and, again, a time when it might end; which would again seem to imply a possible change in the interior nature of the Godhead inconsistent with the Divine immutability; and, moreover, would shut us up to the inference that the Son of God was dependent for His existence, as the Second Person, upon the will of the Father, an assumption which cannot be logically reconciled with His absolute deity. But granting the doctrine of the *kenosis*, at least in its most logical and complete form, it seems to involve of necessity just this consequence which, in full accord with Scripture, the Nicene doctrine denies; namely, that the relation of Christ, the Second Person, to the Father, the First in the Godhead, is dependent on the will of the Father. For, if we understand Gess and those who think with him aright, the sending of the Son from the Father into the world meant precisely this, that therein the relation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, by the voluntary will of the Father, was suspended, and in fact continued interrupted during the whole period of our Lord's humiliation. But if this be the true account of the matter, how can we escape the conclusion that the Son of God was and is dependent for His existence, as such, on the will of the Father; in a word, was a dependent person? And if so, again, we see not how it is possible to escape the inference that Christ could have only been the Son of God, at most, in a high Arian sense. Thus, however, such a theory may permit us yet to say of Christ, with Origen, ἐθελοποιήθη, it forbids us, no less than the theories of the radical critics, to affirm His absolute equality with God. As regards, therefore, the drift of the times towards a denial of Jesus as the Son of God, from the theory of the *kenosis* we fear more than we dare to hope; we fear lest, however little this be thought of, or desired by its advocates, it may be found in the end rather to have weakened than confirmed the faith of the Church in the absolute deity of Christ.

6. Yet another force in modern life, of quite a different kind, must be named as a factor of growing importance, if we accept competent testimony, in its influence on the popular belief of modern Christendom in the deity of Christ. It is the position of influence which the Jewish nation, within the present generation, has come to assume in education, the press, and in general literature. That the Jew should be mentioned in this connection, or that any one should imagine that the faith of Christendom in Jesus as the Son of God,

should have anything to fear from the Jews, will doubtless seem very strange to all whose attention may not have been directed to the facts which illustrate this matter ; but in naming Jewish influence, in addition to what has been mentioned already, as a source of danger to Christian faith, we are only expressing what has of late years been repeatedly emphasized, by such calm, dispassionate observers as, *e. g.*, the elder Delitzsch, the late Prof. Christlieb, Prof. Godet and others. Many, no doubt, will be surprised by such words as the following from the last named of these eminent men :

“ The whirlwind, which is now carrying the world captive, is the inspiration of the Jewish spirit. . . . As a careful observer remarks, * ‘ There is not one of us who does not already, whether consciously or unconsciously, do homage to this power.’ . . . It is the Jewish mind which is guiding the religious and moral movements of society in our day. Journalism, and the lesser literature, belong to it almost entirely, especially in Germany. . . . More and more are they the representatives of the Jewish race, who shine in art and take precedence in science. . . . After having favoured, and brought about the triumph in every place of the anti-Christian tendencies of the day, the Jew will boldly proclaim the fall of the Christ of the Gentiles. Was it not the sole mission of Jesus, and of Christianity, to spread abroad among the heathen nations, the worship of the God of Abraham? This work is now accomplished. . . . The latest self-accommodation of Providence to the idolatries of the Gentiles—the adoration of Jesus—has but to give way, and mankind will have reached its goal.” †

While we do not endorse every anticipation of this eminent writer, whom we cannot always follow, these words of his seem certainly deserving of attention in their bearing on this subject. It is hardly supposable that men of such a position and character as Prof. Godet, and the others named, are all frightened at a mere fancy of their own, which has few or no facts to justify it. There is no lack of such facts.

In considering the facts to be directly mentioned, we have to remember that that is true of the Jews which is true of no other people ; that as a nation they are characterized, in a peculiar sense, by the maintenance of a formal, *national* repudiation of the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God, and the Messiah of Israel. In this respect their position is quite distinct from that of any heathen people. As a nation, more than eighteen hundred years ago, through their official representatives, they sat in formal judgment on the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God, and rejected them ; and to this day, as a nation, they are a unit in their maintenance of this unwavering denial that Jesus was the Son of God. Their unique position among the other nations is due simply to their position on this point. On secondary matters, there is indeed a wide difference among themselves ; but on this point, there is no difference.

* Osman Bey, in “*La conquête du monde par les Juifs.*”

† “*New Testament Studies,*” pp. 383, 384.

The so-called 'Reformed Jew vies with the orthodox Jew of the old Talmudic school, in his active hatred to the worship and adoration as God of this Jesus whom their fathers crucified. Now, it is evident enough that if, by any combination of circumstances, this nation, occupying such a religious and spiritual position, and possessed moreover, as all allow, of exceptional average intellectual power, should find itself in a condition in which its ablest men of culture should be enabled to exercise a powerful influence on the education of the public mind, this could bode no good to Christian faith. It would of necessity have to be reckoned as an influence hostile, in the highest degree, to the faith that Jesus was the Son of God. But the significance of the situation of to-day, as bearing on the present discussion, is that this, in fact, is precisely what we see. The emancipation of the Jews in the present century, through the largest part of Christendom, and their consequent admission to equal advantages with their Gentile neighbors in education, as in social and political life, has brought about just this condition of things. The extent to which the Jews, in all lands where they exist in any numbers, have succeeded in placing themselves among the educated and educating classes, and in obtaining most important positions for the education of the coming generation, and for moulding the thought of the masses through the press, is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the nineteenth century. It is so manifest and significant a fact as to be the frequent subject of anxious comment, by the most sober and thoughtful observers of the day upon the continent of Europe, where this Jewish movement is most conspicuous. The testimony as to the facts, is uniform and undisputed. In Italy, for example, according to a recent number of the *Jewish Chronicle*, we confront such facts as these. In the Faculty of the University of Pisa, nine of the professors are Jews; in Naples, three; in Turin, seven; in the Academy of Rome, fourteen; in the University of Bologna, nine; in the Instituto Superiore of Florence, eight; in all fifty Jewish professors in the highest institutions of learning, in a land where they number only about 40,000, in 28,000,000. In France, in like manner, we find the highest education, to a most remarkable extent, in the hands of Jews. In Paris, in the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, of the staff of thirty-five professors, seven are Jews, comprising such men as Oppert, Jos. Halévy, Weil, the Derenbourgs, *et al.* In the universities of Germany, whither go so many of our young men, from both America and Great Britain, in 1887, out of 1326 professors, ninety-eight were Jews; a figure the more significant, not only because they are scarcely two per cent of the general population, but because it represents an increase in their number of forty per cent within five years. And that we

may expect to see a yet stronger representation of Jewish influence in the world's chief seats of learning, at least in Europe, in the immediate future, is the more evident, when it is observed that among the students, in the leading universities of Europe, the Jews are represented in a yet larger proportion, far exceeding their proportion in the general population. Their number varies from about one-tenth, as in the University of Berlin, to nearly one-third, as in the University of Buda-Pesth, where of 3100 students, 1072 are Jews, and that in a country where they are only four per cent of the population. As the natural result of this, according to a leader in the London *Times*, "A permanent epidemic of alarm at Jewish encroachments prevails, to which Vienna is as subject as Berlin. . . . The entire circle of the liberal professions, as well as finance, is almost in the exclusive possession of Jewish practitioners. . . . Jews are eloquent at the bar and in Parliament. They heal the diseases of Christians, and guide their views through the press." The late Prof. Christlieb is only one of many witnesses to the fact stated by himself to the writer, that "almost the entire liberal press of the German Empire is in the hands of the Jews." In France, the position of the Jews, as the educators of the public mind, through the press, is scarcely less commanding. It has been stated on good authority that, in Paris, there is only one paper of any note which is not under Jewish control.

Of course, it is quite in the spirit of this age of universal toleration and equality, to make light of all this, and regard this increasing influence of the Jews in the highest seats of learning, in the learned professions and in the press, with indifference, as a matter of no serious consequence or significance. But surely no earnest and thoughtful Christian, when once the facts are brought before him, will be able so to regard it. Certainly to any one who believes that Christianity is more than a system of ethics, and that faith in the claims of Jesus to be the Son of God and Saviour of men is essential to its very existence as also to personal salvation, it is not and cannot be a matter of no serious import that the education of the young, as in Germany, should be so largely passing into the hands of a people distinguished equally by their exceptional ability and their hostility to evangelical faith. This fact must certainly be reckoned among those tendencies of our times which lead toward the denial of the supreme deity and lordship of Jesus Christ. This effect is already to be observed, if we may trust careful observers, in the world's educational centres. Thus a Berlin correspondent of the New York *Independent* writes regarding the German cities as follows:

"The de-Christianization of the masses in the cities of Germany, which German Christians deplore so much, has resulted not in mere

religious indifferentism, but to a great extent in an active antagonism to the Church and to the social order founded upon Christian principle. When after the repeal of the law compelling parents to have their children baptized, it was learned that in the next twelve months one thousand infants had not been baptized, a leading Berlin paper exclaimed, 'Hurrah for the first thousand heathens in Berlin.' And then the writer adds, in full accord with the universal testimony, 'The Berlin press, with the exception of such conservative periodicals as the *Reichs-Bote*, the *Kreuz-Zeitung*, and the Catholic *Germania*, are nearly all in the hands of the so-called reformed, *i.e.*, rationalistic Jews. To their influence, to a great extent, must be ascribed the especially deplorable religious, or, rather, irreligious, condition of the German metropolis.'"

It should need no argument to show what must needs be the bearing of this new and most remarkable position of the Jewish people upon the immediate future of Christian faith. One can hardly conceive a more effective means to weaken and destroy the faith in Jesus as the Son of God with the masses of the people, a more effective propaganda of unbelief than a press which, as in France and Germany especially, should in any great degree come under Jewish influence or control. Nor can we in America afford to ignore this feature in the outlook, because as yet it is chiefly on the continent of Europe that the malign anti-Christian Jewish influence is making itself felt. For with the present facility of intercommunication among all the nations of the world, and especially between Europe and America, it is impossible that any great movement of thought on either continent should not sooner or later make itself felt upon the other. In ever-increasing numbers our young men go to the German universities year by year, to be exposed to the full force of whatever anti-Christian influences may there be brought to bear upon them. And not only so, but to this continent also are coming of late years in increasing numbers these same Jews, bringing with them their inextinguishable hostility to the religion of Christ, and above all to the doctrine of the supreme deity of Christ. In the last seven years no less than 150,000 Jews have come to America. In the four years ending with the year 1886-7, are reported 86,454 Jewish immigrants as landed in the port of New York alone, of which number 25,778 entered in the last named year. Even this number was exceeded last year. We may be sure that they come here, despite popular prejudice, to rise—as they do everywhere that full liberty of competition is given them—to positions where they will make themselves powerfully felt in their influence upon public opinion.

Nor may we wisely count too much on the comparative smallness

of their numbers. In every land where they are found under similar conditions, their influence, as the above facts show, is out of all proportion to their number in the general population. Already, few as they are among our 65,000,000, they are beginning to make themselves felt. As is well known, one of the leading dailies in New York is in Jewish hands; and we hear the like from San Francisco and other American cities. We are only speaking in accord with the judgment of some of the wisest observers of our times, when we repeat that we must take note of this rising influence of the Jewish nation in education and in literature, as a factor already of appreciable power in the anti-Christian movement of the day; a factor, moreover, which is likely, if we may judge from present appearances, to make itself felt yet more powerfully in the immediate future than in the past. What the full flood of this Jewish influence may mean for Christendom, it is yet too soon to predict; but the tide is still rising, and so long as the Jew remains an unbeliever in Christ, it can bring with it no blessing.

Illustrations of the subject of this essay might easily be added, but when we consider the nature and importance of the movements indicated, these will probably suffice to show that the Church of to-day has to confront, along several distinct lines, a convergent opposition to the most vital article of her faith, that Jesus was the Son of God, in that sense for affirming which He was sentenced by the Sanhedrim to death. The fact is profoundly suggestive. We are able, assuredly, with exceeding joy and thankfulness, to discern along many diverse lines, abundant evidence that the glorified and enthroned Christ is directing, on earth, all the movements of nations and churches, overruling all with a view to the speedy evangelization of all nations, and the ultimate victory of His Church over all her enemies; ordering all things with a unity of aim in the preparation for the predicted triumph of His kingdom, which fills the heart with wonder, admiration and praise, the more that it is studied. But do not such facts as those which have been above set forth, reveal also a common counter-movement from many directions upon the central fortress of Christian faith, the article of faith in Jesus as the only-begotten Son of the Father, such as suggests that, on the anti-Christian side, an unseen Power is using and combining, within the limits permitted by the Lord for His own glory, diverse movements of thought and action for the attempted destruction of Christian faith, in that which is the central glory of our holy religion, God manifest in the flesh for man's salvation?

But we are, after all, not so much concerned with these facts and their apparent significance as bearing on theological speculation, as to indicate their practical importance. It is true that no man, who believes the promises of God's Word, can have any doubt as to the

issue of the great conflict between the Son of God and the prince of this world ; but none the less does it befit God's people to study the great world-field, and so discover the form which the campaign may be assuming, so that like the children of Issachar of old, having "understanding of the times," they may "know what Israel ought to do." If there be indeed much reason to believe that, in a more evident manner than for many centuries, the great enemy of Christ and His Church is combining his forces for a direct assault upon the person of our Lord, seeking to lead men on to the denial of His supreme deity and lordship, in so far, certainly, it becomes the duty of those especially who lead the Church, and specially direct her thought and life, whether from the pulpit, or through the press, or in chairs of public instruction, themselves to be watchful, and careful to estimate aright the bearings of things, and warning the people, to seek in every way to counterwork and counteract the enemy upon this line. How this may most effectively be done is a most important question, and might well be discussed at length. We can only, in bringing the present paper to a close, make one or two practical suggestions.

As remarked in the beginning, the deepest reason for all denial of Christ's claims is found, not in the lack of evidence, but in the spiritual condition of men. Men who are proud of their intellectual and other attainments, who are satisfied with themselves, and hold the most exalted opinions of the sufficiency of man to achieve his own salvation and commend himself to God, see no occasion for a Saviour who is God manifest in flesh, and are therefore predisposed by this their spiritual position, on the one hand, to undervalue the evidence for the deity of our Lord, and, on the other, to give the most ready acceptance to everything which may seem to cast doubt upon or contradict His claim to be the Son of God. But on the contrary, when men see the sad reality of their case, and begin to appreciate in some measure the truth of the Scripture testimony as to the guilt and helplessness of man under sin, then a Saviour who is God, becomes an evident necessity, and they will be just in that degree slow to yield assent to plausible arguments which, if valid, would deprive them of all hope for salvation. And this fact, already referred to, points us to one of the most important and essential means by which we may hope successfully to counteract this tendency to denial of the Son of God. We can only hope to do this as we insist, all the more strenuously the more that men resist the testimony, upon those aspects of revealed truth which most humble man and most magnify God. This, it is to be feared, is by no means the fashion of our day, however it may have been in a now by-gone generation. One hears now more of the glory of man the man of the nineteenth century, than of the glory of God ; more.

of man's natural excellence and goodness of heart, than of the unapproachable holiness of God; more of the working of evolution in history, than of the working of the fall in history; more of moral reform, than of regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost; more, in a word, of what man may be expected to do for himself, than of what God has done and what he needs to have God do for him. Far enough from the spirit of our age are those words of Isaiah, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" But for this very reason all the more this needs to be the key-note of our preaching and teaching. For only by such preaching and teaching as shall by the power of the Holy Ghost convince men of their guilt and abject helplessness shall we succeed in awakening that sense of spiritual need and utter self-despair which is the necessary spiritual prerequisite to the faith of the heart that Jesus is in truth the Son of God.

To this end, in view of these convergent tendencies of our day to the denial of Christ's deity, we shall do well to bring the law of God in all its searching power to bear on the consciences of self-satisfied men; and also with the law we shall insist upon that which is most central in the Gospel, namely, the Son of God "made sin for us who knew no sin," that we might thus and only thus "be made the righteousness of God in Him." It matters not that men do not like in these days to hear of atonement by the blood of the holy Victim as the indispensable condition of pardon of sin and reconciliation with God; for this very reason all the more must we preach it, and therewith the Divine glory of the person of Christ, as that which gives the great atonement its preëminent value. Let us confidently use these truths. When the apostle Paul went forth to preach the Gospel among the unbelieving Jews of his day, railing at Christ and His disciples, we read that he simply insisted upon that truth which they rejected and most of all detested; "he proclaimed Jesus that He is the Son of God." It is a lesson for the Church for to-day, confronted anew by Christ-rejecting Judaism, as by anti-Christian oppositions of a mistaken science. All the more, let her centre her testimony upon Christ Himself. Nothing is better suited to convince of sin and humble man to the uttermost than the doctrine of a crucified Son of God as the atonement for human sin; and in such preaching and teaching we may be sure we can safely depend upon the power of God the Holy Ghost, working together with the Word, to convince those who hear, that Jesus of Nazareth was in truth the Son of God, who was crucified for our sins and is now exalted to the right hand of God, "to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sin."

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