

by the peculiar manner in which the other records are composed.

Again, therefore, we should think it probable that St. Luke's, like St. Mark's, motive for writing was to do precisely that which our preliminary investigation shows that he has done.

Such I submit is the general impression as to the relation of the Gospels, which a first study of them would make upon the mind of any student who was wholly unbiassed by any preconceived and possibly misleading ideas on the subject.

Supposing this impression to be a correct one, it must necessarily serve to make the following facts stand out in bold relief:—

(1) The two Gospels by Apostles are both seen to be independent documents, *i.e.* without any such repetition as would detract from the originality of whichever was the later written.

(2) The close, and especially the verbal connection between the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke on the one hand, and St. Matthew on the other, does, as a matter of indisputable fact, serve to graft the non-Apostolic text of St. Mark and St. Luke upon the Apostolic text of St. Matthew, and so imparts to the former an Apostolic authority.

To gain this authority clearly may have been the motive for St. Mark and St. Luke writing as they did.

(3) Supposing that St. John wrote before St. Matthew, and that the latter was followed by St. Mark and St. Luke, *each successive portion of the fourfold record must, at the date of its publication, have presented the history in a form complete as far as it went.*

Thus St. John, inasmuch as he explains the manifest historical incompleteness of his narrative, thereby constitutes his Gospel the one record which, without creating any false impression by its omissions, was *suited to have stood alone as a first Gospel.*

We thus get the following results with regard to the four documents:—

(1) St. Matthew's record, when read with St. John's, completes a primary representation of the more personal aspect of our Lord's ministry and teaching.

(2) St. Mark's narrative explains and supplements St. Matthew's history.

(3) St. Luke's Gospel gives a final completeness to the whole record, and notably in the matter of historical sequence explains much which, in the case of extra-Judæan readers especially, must clearly have needed explanation.

I will now deal with each of the Gospels separately, taking them in the order which the above general survey suggests.

(*To be continued.*)

---

## Newman Smyth's "Christian Ethics."<sup>1</sup>

BY PROFESSOR VERNON BARTLET, M.A., OXFORD.

THE "International Theological Library" aims at a high ideal, both as to competence and as to spirit; and hitherto, at least, it has fallen but little, if at all, short of its aim. If Dr. Driver's *Introduction* is full of the best qualities of scientific research, and if Dr. Bruce's *Apologetics* tells of largeness of spirit and profound Christian insight, no less may be claimed for Dr. Smyth's *Christian Ethics*, the first real contribution to this vitally important branch of theology made by an Anglo-Saxon theologian. Its prominent features are thoroughness, balance, freshness; and, underlying

all, a deep enthusiasm which makes the book eminently readable and stimulating. Sanity and wholesomeness are in every line, and the whole book lives.

It is, however, obvious that certain aspects of a book so comprehensive are more fitted than others for notice in these pages. Accordingly, after indicating the general line of treatment, we will try to emphasise those parts which throw light on biblical truth and on the Christian life of to-day.

Admirable, indeed, both in its sympathy and firmness, is the philosophical Introduction, dealing with the relations of Christian Ethics to Ethics in general, to Religion, and to Theology. Its tone is well represented in the dictum, quoted from Martineau, that "conscience may act as human

<sup>1</sup> The International Theology Library, vol. ii. *Christian Ethics*, by Newman Smyth, D.D., Author of *Old Faiths in New Light*, etc. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1892. Pp. x, 498, 8vo; price 10s. 6d.

before it is discovered to be divine." The positive exposition falls into two parts, one devoted to the Christian Ideal, the other to Christian Duties, which latter are classified according as the Moral End involved is (1) self, (2) others, (3) God.

The topics discussed in Part I. are the conditions under which the Christian Ideal has been revealed—a subject involving points of great moment for the present transition epoch in religious thought; the contents of that Ideal, the true *summum bonum*, considered both in itself and in contrast to rival ideals; the stages in its progressive realisation, before and after Christ, its veritable Norm; the spheres in which it is to be realised—the family, the State, the Church, and the indeterminate social spheres, e.g. friendships.

Such, then, is the general morphology of the book. But we have reserved for further reference certain chapters viewing the life, which animates the moral organism, more from the inside, as the dynamic element in Christian experience. But before proceeding to exhibit their contents, let us see where the previous "survey of the ethical nature and history of man" has already placed us.

From it "we have now gained some conception of the Christian Ideal as the highest conceivable moral good; and also we have learned how, in the age of the Christ, the *new birth* of the Christian personality has been brought to pass. We shall have to do in the following chapters with the last and highest product of man's moral history, that is, with the *new man* in Christ Jesus," in his social as well as in his more strictly personal aspects (p. 214). It will at once be observed how the author brings to the front the "new birth of the Christian personality," or the specifically Christian consciousness, as the basis of what follows. If we know aright its essential instincts and desires, we shall know the secret of Christian Ethics, the life of the "new man," spite of all the infinite applications of which it is capable. Accordingly, we find a chapter devoted to the Christian Consciousness, with a view to the discovery of the forms in which the true *summum bonum*, both as individual virtue and as social good, is realised.

What, then, is its virtuous principle upon which the several Christian virtues or graces depend? Dr. Smyth's answer is happily stated. As "Faith was said to be the material, and the Scriptures the formal principle of the Reformation," so "in Ethics we may say that Love is the material, and

Faith the formal principle of Christian virtue. The Christian character is formed by faith: it lives in love. It is constituted what it is through faith, but it consists in love. Or, we might say, love . . . in its receptive and formative principle is trust; and faith, in its positive and active power, becomes love.<sup>1</sup> Faith passes into love which abides. And love remains love only as it always trusts."<sup>2</sup> Love then—love which in finite spirits ever involves faith or trust—is the ultimate form of virtue in Christianity. How simple is all this, and how scriptural! For "God is love; and he that abideth in love, abideth in God and God in him." And yet how necessary that the old should ever be made new to us. If, then, faith as a moral energy, involving the very principle of virtue itself, is of the nature of the virtuous, is it meritorious? If so, is salvation after all a matter of merit? Certainly not in the ordinary sense of "works." "Faith has character"<sup>3</sup>—is an aspect of regeneration—"and is good, so far as it goes," and is accordingly imputed for righteousness; but of itself it has no merit that deserves, though it does qualify for, salvation, which is ever "of grace." For "the new moral life, the salvation which is to be gained will consist in the real union of faith and its Object, not in any virtue of the faith apart from its Object." Works, or merit wherein any could "boast," are thereby excluded. Still "as an act of trust,—a giving of personal confidence,—it implies an outgoing of self towards another, which is love in the moral germ at least of it."

This Love, when full grown, manifests itself in three phases or moments, viz. as self-affirmation, self-impartment, and self-finding in others—according to the deepest paradox of the gospel, "he that loseth his life shall find it." No doubt the first member of this triad will not bear emphasis, as will the other two; but none the less it needs recognition, ere we suffer it to be absorbed as implicit in the other aspects of love, on which frail humanity can better afford to dwell. But implied it must be; for "to love worthily is at the same time to be worthy of love;" and in this sense a certain self-reverence is needful, if ethical personality is to be preserved. Witness even the Cavalier's couplet—

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honour more."

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 6.

<sup>2</sup> I Cor. xiii. *fin.*

<sup>3</sup> See John iii. 18-21, vi. 29.

If the gift of oneself to another be more than *relative* self-effacement, it is spiritual suicide. And against this Holiness, latent in the highest love whether in man or in God,—as is finely adduced to meet Pantheism,—presents the needed limit. But this safeguarded, love's proper self-importation has free course and is glorified; not only in the absolute self-sacrifice of Christ, but also when the Christian "lays down his life for the brethren." But the consideration just mentioned at once leads our thought on to the third or last moment in love's life, its blissful self-finding or realisation in the perfected sense of joint-life with the beloved *alter ego*. How matchless, then, is the motive involved in such "love of God shed abroad in the heart" of the man that truly loves Him! He, the Infinite *alter ego* of the loving soul, if the phrase be allowable, carries in His bosom, and commends to the love of each, the countless spirits whom He calls our brethren. And yet there are those who hotly deny that there is or can be such a thing as "Christian Ethics," other than ethics in general, "independent ethics," which as such know nothing of a "Father of Spirits." Gladly we may admit that even "naturalistic" ethics may for the time, at least, revere the moral order simply as human. But we are at a loss to understand how certain moralists can refuse to confess that their reverence would be deeper, steadier, and more assured, could they recognise in the human but the adumbration of the Divine.

Thus far, "from this supreme ethical principle of love, . . . we have obtained a threefold division of the virtues, viz. righteousness (holiness),<sup>1</sup> benevolence, and sympathy," or vicariousness. "These are the three primary colours of love. From each one of these, in secondary combination with the others, further specific virtues may be derived." And this is done in detail in the part, entitled "Christian Duties," in the course of which "the Social Problem" meets with earnest and sympathetic notice. But though every chapter will repay perusal, we must return to the pages in which our author verifies his analysis of the Christian moral consciousness, by the complementary "biological" or genetic consideration of the Christian personality, as seen in the experience of the "new birth." Beginning with the preparation of the soil of

<sup>1</sup> "Righteousness, as subjective regard for our own moral being, is holiness; as objective regard for the persons of others, it becomes justice."

Humanity in which the individual is sown,—a soil which, in Christendom, is potentially of a regenerate order, whereof baptism is the symbol,—Dr. Smyth traces the process through the stages of awakening to "the moral disharmony of our nature," the "sense of personal helplessness, dependence on some higher Power for deliverance," until, "through acceptance of the gospel and personal trust in Christ, the moral nature receives new energy, and springs forward to hopeful obedience. A new heart is gained for duty and for all moral endeavour." For, as Chalmers would have said, "the expulsive power of a new affection" is realised, and the soul issues "a declaration of spiritual independence" in the face of the now broken power of sin; though the formation of the Christian character, "the new man," is yet a task of future joint-labour with God rather than a *fait accompli*. The true Christian will not be content to remain a Christian in general, but he will strive to become a Christian in the particulars of his daily life. This is the truest "applied Christianity," though it must not stop short at personal holiness, often falsely so-called, for holiness is "love made perfect" in every relation of life. Such is its positive, its essentially Christ-like, form. And in this process of putting on the "new man," really, in daily experience, the immense significance of the fact that Christian Ethics have, as exemplar, a realised ideal in Christ, and no mere nebulous abstraction, like the ideal "wise man" of antiquity, emerges into full power and splendour. "Let this mind (character) be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"—what Christian does not know the power of this appeal? But even it fails of its full efficacy, until the unique resources of motive present in the gospel are brought into full play, with the recognition of that "other Comforter," the inner Upholder and Developer of the Christ-life in the believer, the Spirit of holiness and love: "who worketh in us to will and to do" of God's "good pleasure,"<sup>2</sup> by fashioning within the heart desires and petitions, tending towards "the image of Christ," albeit they are at first but "unutterable groanings" of the aspiring spirit.<sup>3</sup>

These and kindred truths constitute the "Christian moral motive power," to which Dr. Smyth devotes his last chapter, and make Christianity to be also the absolute morality. For, as he truly observes, "Ethics are finally a question of motive power." "Moralism" is Christianity become legal

<sup>2</sup> Phil. ii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 26.

by the evaporation of its dynamic element,<sup>1</sup> the redemptive aspects of the gospel—the historic Christ and the eternal indwelling Spirit, who causes the mystic Christ to “come again” and take up His abode with the watchful disciple. It is here that “Moderatism” in all ages has failed; not in its moral emphasis. In fact, if the Moral Ideal be the distinctively Christian one, it carries along with itself its own motive power. For motive power is not a mere “divine frenzy”; it is divine “truth” seen as such. And if any desire to realise the force of this, let them steep themselves in the very sunshine of those fine chapters of the *Kingdom of God*, in which Professor Bruce unfolds Christ’s Idea of God and of Man, and he will ever after understand what Christian Ethics owe to the “theology of Christ.” Yes, after all, we are but coming to appreciate more fully Vinet’s profound aphorism: “Christianity is morality sown in the soil of Grace.”

<sup>1</sup> Note the frequency of the term “power” in the Epistles.

With hearts glowing afresh under the stimulus of the great gospel ideas of God as Love indeed, made most manifest in Christ, and of Man as the object of solicitude to such a God, let us thankfully open our eyes also to the garnered wisdom as to love’s true issues and aims, which Dr. Smyth’s *Christian Ethics* so amply presents to our regard; and then, awaking from all spiritual listlessness, press on to realise the prayer of the great pioneer in this, as in other phases of the Christ-like life: “And this I pray, that your *love* may abound yet more and more in *knowledge* and all *discernment*.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Phil. i. 9. One cannot help admiring the insight of Wesley, when he fixed on “perfect Love” as the synonym of Christian Perfection. Too often, no doubt, his ideal has been suffered to degenerate into something like mere emotionalism, sadly lacking in ethical conscience. All the more grateful should we feel for the new study of Christian Ethics as such, to give definite ideals to Divine Love, and so to “make it through constant watching wise.” From such an interpretation, especially in these days of revived zeal for Christian Perfection, we may hope for the noblest results, in characters that shall supply the true Christian Apologetic.

## The Public Worship of Presbyterian Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. D. DOUGLAS BANNERMAN, D.D., PERTH.

THE Rev. Charles G. M’Crie’s Cunningham Lectures deserve a very cordial recommendation to your readers. The author leads us over a wide field. Beginning, in his introductory chapter on “Celtic and Anglo-Roman Worship,” with a glance at the Druids in the pagan past of Scotland, he ends, in the last “note” of his Appendix, with two meetings, still in the dim future, to be held by the “Scottish Church Society” in May and November next. His object is to give an impartial historical account of the origin, growth, and development of the order of public worship which has prevailed in this country from the Reformation to the present day, whenever “Scotland has been free to carry out her chosen and beloved Presbyterian polity and ritual.”

Within the limits and under the conditions which Mr. M’Crie has laid down for himself, he has done his work faithfully and well. After an interesting sketch of the state of things in Scotland

as regards worship previous to the sixteenth century, he describes, in successive chapters, the formative period of the Scottish Reformation, as influenced in respect of worship by the Anglican Prayer-Book in its different forms, and by the Service-Books of Frankfort, Strassburg, and Geneva; the period of the Scottish Book of Common Order; the period of the Westminster Directory and the Covenanters; the period of the Revolution, and “Decadence in Worship,” as in other things, during the eighteenth century; and the period of “the Modern Renaissance,” especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. Fifteen “notes,” several of them being of considerable length, form the Appendix. In it such topics are dealt with as the Scottish Service for Visitation and Communion of the Sick in the twelfth century, the Scottish Collects on the Psalms in the sixteenth century, the Offices of Reader and Exhorter in the Church of Scotland, Revisions of the Westminster Directory in England, Australia, and Tasmania, the Communion Office of the Westminster Directory, theologically and historically considered.

<sup>1</sup> *The Public Worship of Presbyterian Scotland, historically treated.* The Fourteenth Series of the Cunningham Lectures. By Charles G. M’Crie, Minister at Ayr. W. Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London. 1892.