

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute,
OR,
Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

VOL. LVI.



LONDON:

(Published by the Institute, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, S.W.1.)

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

1924.

668TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,
HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W., ON MONDAY, JUNE 16TH, 1924,
AT 4.30 P.M.

ALFRED W. OKE, ESQ., B.A., LL.M., IN THE CHAIR.

At the outset the CHAIRMAN made reference to the sudden death of Major-General Sir George K. Scott-Moncrieff, who presided at the last meeting, and who had often rendered valuable help to the Institute by presiding and reading papers, and also read a telegram from Dr. Schofield, announcing his inability, by doctor's orders, to take the Chair, as had been arranged.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the Hon. Secretary announced the election of the following:—The Rev. E. Morris Wherry, D.D., as a Member, and H. J. Pierce, Esq., and Miss N. Gulland as Associates.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced the Rev. Charles Gardner, B.A., to deliver the Annual Address on "The Philosophy of Modernism."

ANNUAL ADDRESS.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MODERNISM.

By the REV. CHARLES GARDNER, B.A.

WHEN speaking on Modernism one becomes aware that the word is tiresomely vague. Strictly speaking, Modernism was a recent movement in the Church of Rome which was speedily crushed. But it is used generally in a much wider sense for the modern mind, which is at least 300 years old. It includes Biblical criticism; but the critics have always an *a priori* philosophy, and that philosophy is always more or less pantheistic. I am dealing with the Dean of St. Paul's in this paper, not because he is really a Modernist (he is not), but because he touches Modernism at all points, and proposes a way out of its difficulties. I shall here pass over his Bampton Lectures on Mysticism and the Lectures on Plotinus, assuming that you know that he is a Neoplatonist.

Describing an age by its dominant spirit, we may call the nineteenth century determinist, and the twentieth (so far as it has gone) subjective-idealist. Dr. Inge can give a dozen cogent reasons for refusing the first. It regarded the world "as an independent, objectively existing system, and ignored the part

played by the perceiving mind." To explain the nature of things, it forsook the fruits, which Aristotle considered to be the index, and grubbed among the roots. It was pitifully unable to account for the observed facts of life and mind. It was aggressively derisive of the miraculous and supernatural. Dr. Inge has retained this last. Good Platonists like Coleridge and Frederick Denison Maurice had by the aid of Plato withstood the stiff determinism of their time, and passing, like many Platonists of the early centuries to Christianity, gladly accepted its pure and beautiful teaching of the supernatural. But while criticizing mechanical determinism, Dr. Inge is no better pleased with the new idealism. On the surface it seems to defend his monism, but really it divides the world into two—the world of science and the world of the perceiving mind—and to the Dean, as we already know too well, any kind of dualism is a red flag. His escape from the dilemma is by the graduated system of Plotinus, who, by regarding the world as a propulsion and reflection of the soul, and the soul of the spirit, preserved the unity against the background of the Absolute.

Dr. Inge's position is seen more clearly when we study his attitude to the Roman Catholic Modernists and their friends in the Anglican Church. France appears to have produced the largest crop of Modernists. There are the two Sabatiers, Le Roy, Brémond, Laberthonnière, Inge's *bête noir* Loisy, and many others. The best-known English Catholic Modernist was George Tyrrell.

The first difficulty of the Modernists arose from the Higher Criticism of the Bible which could no longer be ignored. Germany had been at work for a hundred years, using her heaviest guns of learning and research. The Bible was found to be so bristling with errors, inconsistencies and contradictions that it was wholly incompetent to carry the weight of its supernatural origin and supernatural story. The result was that the critics set to work to treat the books of the Bible like literature, and to read their story on a naturalistic hypothesis. So long as their attention was fixed on the Old Testament they were not much regarded. But to eliminate the supernatural from the Gospel story leaves a remarkably small residuum. The Virgin birth and the lovely stories of the Infancy, the miracles, excepting some of the miracles of healing which were really natural, the Resurrection and the Ascension, could no longer be regarded as history. It became the ambition of each critic in turn to con-

struct the true story of Jesus and supply the natural reason of His actions. Schweitzer has enumerated all the ways that the critics have tried to tell a coherent story. His own way was the most coherent and least acceptable.

The higher critical results were accepted by the Modernists ; but since they were Roman Catholics, and Catholicism can live only in the atmosphere of the supernatural, they found themselves in an impossible position which they tried to evade by extensive borrowings from the new philosophy.

The supernatural stories were not untrue, and therefore to be dismissed. They were a religious wrapping of what was true in experience. Man's spiritual life involves a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, and this is the inner truth of the legend of Jesus Christ's death and Resurrection. The dogma of the Resurrection is not an historical but a religious truth ; and the Modernists enunciated a theory of two Christs—the Christ of history and the Christ of faith. It was troublesome that a dogma was less true than it was formerly supposed to be. But Le Roy discovered that dogmas can never be an adequate expression of man's deepest religious feeling, and he further remembered that Newman had admitted something like this. If dogma could not in the nature of things express the absolute truth, it was unreasonable to demand that it should be wholly true.

The attempt to make Newman the father of Modernism is a venture of faith rather than a fact. Dr. Inge, Dr. Newman and the Modernists alike insist on the inadequacy of dogma to express the whole truth. But that was no innovation. St. Anselm, to mention only one orthodox theologian of the Middle Ages, affirmed the same thing. The inadequacy of dogma forced St. Anselm and the Modernists to opposite conclusions. He considered that dogma was less than the truth : they, though they do not say it, that truth is less than the dogma.

The representational nature of dogma led, in France, to the formulation of the Modernist school under the name of Symbolo-fidéisme, Auguste Sabatier and Ménégoz being reckoned the chief founders. The modern use of the word symbol changed its primitive meaning that a symbol is the thing symbolized. To-day a symbol is *not* the thing symbolized ; if it were, there would be little to criticize in the new symbolism. Dogmas are symbols, and so are those events in the career of the whole Christ that cannot be brought under the heading of the natural.

The separation of the symbolical Christ of faith from the true Jesus of history was a crass bit of dualism, scarcely atoned for by the assertion that the unity lay in the symbolism.

Modernism, which was nothing if it was not radical, proceeded to criticize Plato and, by the mouth of Laberthonnière, declared that Plato's ideas were of things and not of life, that his philosophy was mechanical, since it made history the gradual unrolling or revelation of what was written in the scroll. This departure from Plato led to an exclusive emphasis on life and will. The real world was the will-world, the force was ever-changing life. The will to believe became an autonomous life-will process grandly immune from the shafts of history and criticism. Here was Modernism bowing to Bergson and throwing itself into the arms of a Pragmatism that brilliant William James, with the aid of Fechner, was already pushing towards pluralism.

The Modernist revolt against Plato scatters the last remains of the New Testament left by the German critics. Loisy, outdoing the Germans, expunged the synoptic story until very few authentic words of Jesus were left, and Jesus Himself appeared the most pathetic of those enthusiastic and deluded men at the beginning of our era who supposed themselves to be the Messiah. The death of Jesus on a cross was a tragic climax to His career. The casting of His body along with those of the two thieves into a ditch may touch our pity, but it should have put an end once for all to the obstinate Jewish expectation of a Messiah.

Loisy has written an elaborate treatise on the Fourth Gospel. This, of course, cannot be brought into harmony with the synoptic gospels interpreted according to Loisy, Tyrrell, Schweitzer and the whole eschatological school. But it was for a time supposed by the Higher Critics to have some religious value. It is this remnant respect for an allegorical book that the revolt against Plato has destroyed. With the passing of Plato, the magnificent Logos-Christianity passes too. Cut the Platonic parallels out of St. John's Gospel and Epistles, out of St. Paul's Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, out of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the wreckage of the New Testament is complete indeed.

Dr. Inge feels as deeply as any Modernist the Bible problem. He has looked at the pitiful figure of a deluded Christ left by the critics, and he will not for one moment accept it. Such a Jesus would have been an impotent cause for the actual effects

in history. But here comes his difficulty. The synoptic authors represent Jesus saying repeatedly that the Kingdom of God will come with power, and that He Himself will return in His own generation. If Jesus really spoke thus, He was deceived in a matter of supreme importance, and is, therefore, to be discredited like all fanatics. If He did not expect the immediate end, He has been mis-reported, and the problem shifts to an examination into the credibility of the Gospel narratives.

We have already seen that Dr. Inge is scornful of any kind of supernaturalism or dualism. Therefore, when he reads the synoptic gospels he has to discount the stories of the Birth and Infancy, Resurrection and Ascension, most of the so-called miracles, and many of the words attributed to Jesus. This drastic treatment leaves, perhaps, the Sermon on the Mount, a few parables and a few isolated sayings, but the residuum is far too slender for the vast superstructure of historical Christianity, and too narrow a basis even for a more *récherché* scheme of religion or philosophy.

With these grave difficulties Dr. Inge looked yearningly at the French Modernists, and at the sharp distinction which they made between truths of faith and truths of fact. For a moment he thought that they had "laid the foundations of a new apologetic on this distinction."* But only for a moment. Perhaps his English sense of truthfulness rose in revolt. Anyway, he dismissed symbolofidisme because of its dualism of faith and science, and also because he remembered that when the gods become symbols they are already in the twilight, and it is the twilight of sunset and not of sunrise.

Dr. Inge's teaching of the representational nature of dogma, together with his acceptance of much Bible criticism, were the reason of his being mistaken for a Modernist in the early years of this century, and the coupling of his name with that of Loisy by Archdeacon Lilley in his *Modernism: a Record and Review*.

Archdeacon Lilley quotes from Dr. Inge's *Faith and Knowledge* passages about dogma which might have been written by Loisy himself. He says: "If I had been asked to name an English theologian who would unreservedly appreciate what I had taken to be the position of M. Loisy, I should at once have named Mr. Inge."†

The Archdeacon, who has more right than any other English

* *Truth and Falsehood in Religion*, p. 99.

† *Modernism*, pp. 76-87. (Pitman.)

theologian to speak with authority on the French Modernists, says that Dr. Inge has, in fact, misunderstood M. Loisy when he accuses him of separating faith and science. M. Loisy, he insists, "so far from proclaiming a complete separation between faith and science, is insisting upon their consentient witness. They are indeed for him different modes of apprehension, each valid in its own sphere. But for one who believes in a Divine activity in the facts of history, and in a supreme expression of that activity in the life of Jesus of Nazareth culminating in the manifestation of His risen life as Lord and Christ, their witness must agree."* That is well said, and recalls the fond hopes of our English Modernists that they had unified the life of Christ and the life of history in the light of immanence. Yet Dr. Inge was right in saying that Loisy had separated two kinds of truth. If faith says that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead and history that He did not, the dualism can be overcome only by weakening one of the truths, and the Modernists pushing on into pragmatism kept the faith and its implied will and denied the validity of history.

No doubt it was irritating to Dr. Inge to have his name coupled with Loisy's, and it accounts for his touch of temper whenever at one time he referred to Loisy. I remember, at the Religious Thought Society, Baron von Hügel gently rebuking him for the way he spoke of one of his, the Baron's, friends. Dr. Inge accepted the rebuke, and has since refrained his impatience.

The truth is that Dr. Inge is in no sense of the word a Modernist except in the matter of Biblical criticism; and even here he is only half-modernist. He takes refuge in Plotinus, and since Platonism enters so deeply into the New Testament, he is able to keep the religious value of those books which the anti-platonist Modernists have cast aside. With them he rejects the Messianism of the synoptic gospels: unlike them he keeps the Logos Christianity of the Fourth Gospel.

Dr. Inge, then, is primarily a neoplatonist. Plotinus, criticized and straightened here and there, gives him a system, at once mystical, idealist, realist, intellectual, and most reasonable. With its aid he can gather up the fragments of the three Messianic gospels, and with a little readjustment he can accept the substance of the Logos Fourth Gospel. He can even admit "that the Johannine Christ may well be a truer historical picture than is often supposed. The deep congruity between this portrait and

* *Id.*, p. 81.

those of the synoptists has long ago been settled by the Christian consciousness."* But he will not accept the catholic faith that Jesus Christ is the Saviour-God. The Saviour-God cycle of ideas, which included the notion of His death and resurrection, is Greek, and was inevitably hoisted on to the gospel when it was believed that the body of Jesus rose again from the tomb. For Dr. Inge Jesus was a Prophet and Teacher who told His countrymen "that their millennium was not coming at all . . . that He had been commissioned to bring them . . . a spiritual and moral emancipation which would make life happy and blessed for them. . . . This 'unpatriotic pessimism' was too much for His countrymen; so . . . they crucified Him." †

Dr. Inge retains the dogma of the Resurrection as that of the Incarnation so long as they are not defined. "For my part," he says, "I think that questions as to the *manner* of the Incarnation and of the Resurrection may safely be left alone by those who are convinced that the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us." ‡

Let us gather what such great words as church, authority, revelation, sacraments, experience, ethics, mean for Dr. Inge.

The Church was not "founded" by Christ. The famous passage, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church," was an ecclesiastical interpolation. Jesus was concerned with the inner Kingdom of God, and not with the Church. Still, a body of men and women grew around Him which may not unfitly be called the Church. "The true 'Church' as the depository of inspiration in matters of belief and practice is the whole body of men and women who have any enlightenment in such matters. This Church has no accredited organ and claims no finality for its utterances. It does homage to the past . . . to preserve the knowledge and experience already gained. . . . Ideally, this Church is the Divine Spirit immanent in humanity." §

The true Church reaches far into the past before the time of our Lord, and with it Authority, which is "the principle of continuity, the memory of the race." ||

* *Truth and Falsehood in Religion*, pp. 132-133. (John Murray.)

† *The Church and the Age*, pp. 22-23. (Longmans.)

‡ *Truth and Falsehood in Religion*, p. 115.

§ *Faith and its Psychology*, pp. 105-106. (Duckworth & Co.)

|| *Id.*, p. 71.

Revelation is the unveiling of what is written in man's purest spirit, or, in the words of Emerson, quoted and approved of by Dr. Inge, "the announcements of the soul, its manifestations of its own nature."*

The sacraments, whether ordained by Christ or not, are symbolic acts. "A sacrament . . . has no ulterior object except to give expression to, and in so doing to effectuate, a relation which is too purely spiritual to find utterance in the customary activities of life."†

Experience, not of one individual, but of the whole human race, is the rock foundation on which the vast superstructure rests.

"Rational ethics" are the moral dictates of experience. And since it is a truth of experience that man may know the Absolute, God, and God is good as well as beautiful and true, morality rests finally on an ultimate good which preserves it from relativity and subjectivism.

So far all the extracts are from the Dean's books published before the war. The Great War seems to have thrown the beginning of the century into the remote past. To the majority of people it was a trial by fire of their faith. Only those with a robust faith faithfully won emerged unshaken. Among these was Dr. Inge. He knew his mind from the beginning, and had no need to belch his smoke in the face of the public like Wells and some younger writers. Neither has he wasted his intellectual energies passing from phase to phase like others whose knowledge is too slender to be a guide. The years, if they have not brought, have confirmed the philosophic mind, which has radiated out in many directions until Dr. Inge could speak with authority on the intricate problems of Civilization and State, on White and Yellow Races, and, most unclerical of subjects, Eugenics.

His two post-war books are his *Outspoken Essays*, first and second series. The first has gatherings from his pre-war period like *Bishop Gore and the Church of England*, *Roman Catholic Modernism*, and *Cardinal Newman*. The Gore essay, while critical, is an attempt to do justice to a man from whom the Dean deeply differs. As we all know, the Bishop needs no defence, since no one is so competent to defend him as himself.

* *Id.*, p. 26.

† *Christian Mysticism*, p. 255.

The essay on Cardinal Newman pays a dignified tribute which anyone might well be proud to receive.

The second series of *Outspoken Essays* contains the Dean's own *Confessio Fidei* and *The Victorian Age*, which shows a slight stiffening of his mind and odd remnants of Victorian prejudice. Of the essays generally we may remark that they show increased intellectual vigour and concentrated power. In the earlier days he allowed himself to write of the "roaring trade" of Lourdes, to call the faith-healer a "medicine man" (was Christ a medicine man?), and to jibe at things that touched his prejudices in language not always dignified. Now, with the exception of the word *Outspoken* to catch the ears of the people whom he usually disdains, he has reached a high level of literature. It is noticeable that, whereas many have to struggle from the *via dolorosa* of journalism into literature, the Dean, who holds the literary plane by eugenic right, looks wistfully at journalism, and even condescends to walk on its dusty highway.

The Outspoken Essays betray the immense range of Dr. Inge's learning, not ostentatiously, but by the power of his sentences, which are packed full. The sometimes cheap satire has become ironic strength, the heavy humour grim and often deadly.

Confessio Fidei is a marvellously condensed statement in 59 pages of what might easily have gone to 1,000. He reiterates his Christian Platonic faith, adding details here and there which leave the implications of earlier statements no longer in doubt.

"The Incarnation and the Cross are the central doctrines of Christianity. . . . The Cross is not so much an atonement for the past as the opening of a gate into the future."*

Since Dr. Inge will have none of the supernatural, he looks for light on some of the miracles in the gospels to the new psychology and its pronouncements on the power of mind over matter.†

On the question of Biblical criticism, while admitting that "the Johannine writings may be called an inspired interpretation of the person and significance of Christ,"‡ he places them subsequent to St. Paul, not only in date of composition, which is orthodox, but also in idea, which is heterodox, and so makes the problem of the Fourth Gospel to some of us more difficult than ever.

* *Outspoken Essays*, pp. 46-47.

† *Id.*, p. 50.

‡ *Id.*, p. 40.

To conclude, here are a few aphorisms :—

“The controversy between realism and idealism is solved in the Divine knowledge.”

“True philosophy is theocentric.”*

“Imagination is the objectifying contemplation of the Platonist.”†

“Secularism, in promising us a delusive millennium upon earth, has robbed mankind of the hope of immortality.”‡

“True faith is belief in the reality of absolute values.”§

Dr. Inge's mysticism and neoplatonism give him a position that would be impregnable if he were a professor only and not a priest of the Church. Mysticism has shown itself to be independent of creeds and countries. It may take a special colour from a special country during the stages of the neophyte's flight to the One. But the union once achieved, accidents of colour and form, illusions of time and space, divisions of country and sphere vanish, and mysticism, which gives no credence to time, remains the most perdurable thing in time. If Dr. Inge were a true mystic only he would be safe in his ark. But he is a Platonist too. Plato, like Aristotle, has been attacked so often, and has prevailed so constantly, that we may suppose that his philosophy represents a permanent human state, and that it would have got formulated sooner or later even had Plato never lived. Anyone who realizes the strength of Plato must scorn the Modernist attack. The Dean is safely ensconced, he is assured the foundations are secure, and therefore when the Modernists, and Supernaturalists and Irrationists and Anglo-Catholics furiously rage together and imagine a vain thing, the Dean laughs them to scorn, and has them in derision.

Since, however, the Dean is a priest of the Church he must either measure the faith or be measured by it. He prefers to do the measuring, and those who hold the faith are left to apply their test.

We maintain that the faith is Christ, and that Christ is the whole Christ—living, dying, rising, ascending, speaking by the Holy Spirit. Further we believe, as His disciples came to believe, that Christ is God. We find ourselves utterly unable to believe that the coming of God into this world was a natural act ; but since God did not bind His Will in subservience

* *Id.*, p. 20. † *Id.*, p. 21. ‡ *Id.*, p. 33. § *Id.*, p. 35.

to the world that He made, we find it easy to believe that the Birth of God was a supernatural act ; we do not stumble to find that His lowly life was attended by signs of His origin ; we expect His Resurrection and Ascension to follow in a higher-logical sequence ; and afterwards when the Scriptures testify to different aspects of His incarnate glory, and are marvellously one in their convergent testimony, it seems to us the most natural thing in the world.

Since Christianity is a faith in God's coming into the world, it is essentially supernaturalistic. To deny the supernatural is to sever the plant from the root. Cut the supernatural element out of the story of Christ, and it becomes the most terribly pathetic story of an illusional dreamer the world has ever heard.

What shall we say, then, of Dr. Inge's great and persistent denial of the supernatural ? We think that he has yielded to the time-spirit—the spirit of the age, and just when he had withstood its most subtle shafts in the name of Plotinus, he throws Christ to it in the name of a uniform nature.

There is much to be said in excuse. Again and again theologians have made a crude dualism between nature and supernatural. Nature has been called bad names as if it had a different origin from supernatural. The best modern thought has vindicated nature, and discovered in it a Divine process.

It is often those who have seen the footprints of God in nature most clearly, who are loudest in their refusal of supernatural. But when we accept the divinity of nature and perceive in her God's continuous mediate work, we still need a word to express His immediate acts which we think of as personal rather than legal. St. Paul, St. Thomas Aquinas, our eighteenth-century Bishop Butler were able to build their supernatural on the natural because they traced the natural back to God. Granting that Bishop Butler may have left the edges of the natural too sharp, that we may with profit soften the transition from the natural to the supernatural, that the two are ultimately one, yet since we are creatures of time we must not behave as if we had left time behind, but accept the fruitful dualism until it is transcended in God.

The controversy might be discussed as a fight about words until we apply it to the Gospels when the issues suddenly become immense.

Dr. Inge affirms his faith in the Incarnation and Resurrection,

but thinks the *manner* of these stupendous acts may safely be left alone* In reality he does not leave the *manner* alone since he has rejected the supernatural, and there are but two alternatives. If the Birth of Jesus was not supernatural it was natural, and He was born like the rest of us. For a natural explanation of the Resurrection one must say either that Jesus had only swooned on the Cross and recovered in the cool sepulchre or that His body, as Loisy suggests, was thrown into a ditch and returned to dust.

Dr. Inge thinks that some of the miracles were triumphs of mind over matter and therefore natural. He can hardly suppose that the raisings from the dead, Christ walking on the water, the feeding of the five thousand, the turning of water into wine, the stilling of the storm, were examples of mind controlling matter. They were either supernatural or they did not happen.

Dr. Inge, then, is an anti-supernaturalist. He approves of Carlyle's supernatural-natural. His Christ is part of the natural. He quotes the modern rejection of the supernatural in support of his position.

The modern mind began to get restive under supernaturalism rather more than a hundred years ago. Goethe, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, and a large company in Germany and France, affirmed the whole natural process to be Divine, and in the change of philosophy involved found themselves at the feet of Spinoza. We think that they were right. The alternative for those who rejected historical Christianity was Spinoza or Comte, Pantheism or Positivism. Positivism suited best the uncompromising determinism of the time. Supernaturalists shaken in their faith frequently forsook their position for a determinism that Inge and most thinkers to-day declare to be untrue. Dr. Inge is equally opposed to the anti-intellectualism of yesterday, which allowed the supernaturalists once more to lift up their hands.

Dr. Inge's aristocratic, philosophic, individualistic mind certainly drives him into an exclusive position. The supernaturalists, the determinists, the pantheists and the anti-intellectualists are all wrong. The majority may be useful when they strengthen his contention for a natural Christianity; at other times they and all democrats and socialists are merely victims

* *Truth and Falsehood in Religion*, p. 115.

to the spirit of the age to be anathematized by the select little group grounded in the philosophy of Plotinus.

Allied with Dr. Inge's anti-supernaturalism is his exaltation of reason to the foremost place. When he affirms that the higher reason, together with all the faculties and feelings of man, perceive the truth we agree with him. The Logos includes the reason. The modern notion that reason can only make diagrams of the perceptions received through intuition is also, we think, untrue. But we do not think the reason is the highest faculty. William Blake declared that there were four mighty ones in every man. The reason he called Urizen, the imaginative intuitional Los. In perfect man Los is supreme, Urizen a servant of Los. Dr. Inge has reversed the order. He is Urizen pounding away with his intellect, and only in the intervals of his sledgehammer strokes, when his right hand is a bit weary, does Sol shine on his snows and reveal the beauty of his crystals.

Dr. Inge's higher rationalism works hand in hand with his anti-supernaturalism on the Scriptures and the dogmas of the Church. He believes in the Incarnation, the Cross, the Resurrection. These stupendous acts of God are called by the Church mysteries. The acts of God cannot be fully explained, eternity cannot be equated with time, and, therefore, the supreme events in the life of Christ remain mysterious. If the reason deals with them, it must first modify them. This is what Dr. Inge has persistently done. The Incarnation, which means that God became man, becomes the cosmic principle of life and reason—the Logos, which ever strives to become incarnate in man, becoming incarnate in Jesus, so that He may be called *the Incarnate Word*. The Atonement, which means that God took on Himself the responsibility of the sins of His creatures and died for them on the Cross, thus opening the gate of life, becomes not an expiation of man's sins, but the cutting of a new path. The Resurrection which means that God, by His great power, raised again the body of Christ, becomes Christ's survival of bodily death. The message of the Messiah to His ancient people and the offer to them of the Kingdom becomes a bit of obsolete messianism. The coming again of Christ becomes the foolish illusion of His first disciples. The Church, of which Christ is the Foundation, becomes a Pauline institution of which Christ knew nothing. And Jesus Himself? What think ye of Christ? Jesus the prophet and teacher, God incarnate, becomes a successful incarnation of the Word, so that

the difference between us and Jesus Christ is not ultimately the difference between the creature and the Creator, but a difference between our partial and His complete attainment to God's thought about man. Jesus Christ may no longer be the lawful object of our worship ; He is an elder brother who has trodden the path of immortality that we may follow after.

That for all its solid worth is a poor substitute for historic Christianity. Is the whole blame to fall on Dr. Inge ? We think not. Much of his criticism, much of the higher criticism, has not yet been answered. Apologists have recourse to old and worn-out arguments. Everyone to-day is crying out for a restatement. We are weary of the demand. What is needed is not a restatement, but a new apologetic. Here let me say, in conclusion, that Dr. Inge, under the tutorship of Plotinus, has built, if not a temple, a considerable edifice, on the foundation of human experience. We know how rich and full the store of experience is, reaching as it does into the far past. Yet it is the experience of men and women who have all come short of the glory of God, and it must have remained incomplete unless God had shown us His face in a Perfect Man. We may build on the whole Christ and find our foundation complete and sure ; otherwise we shall just pitifully fail in the crucial probation of life.

Dr. Inge's love of Plotinus has saved him from the determinism which cramped so many great spirits in the nineteenth century ; it has saved him from the pragmatism, subjective idealism, and anti-intellectualism of our own time. He holds a place that was temporarily held by Augustine before he became a Christian. Let him, like Augustine and a goodly company long ago, take the final step to the whole Christ, and he will find that all those precious things that he holds most dear will not be lost, but safely garnered in Him who is not only the Way, but also the Truth and the Life.

For, and it must be said, he reads Christ in the light of Neoplatonism, instead of Neoplatonism and all other things in the light of Christ. He has the genius of philosophy, but somehow has missed the genius of Christ's Christianity. There is in the undiluted Gospel story a divine simplicity, an artless beauty, a terrible splendour, a springing joy, the secret of which is whispered not to the wise and learned, but to those who, leaving all things, even their thoughts, abandon themselves to the foolish Lamb of God and follow Him whithersoever He goeth.

DISCUSSION.

Lieut.-Col. MACKINLAY said : " I desire to add my thanks to those already given to Mr. Gardner, particularly for the service he has done in pointing out the fallacy of those who deny the supernatural in the Bible, yielding to the spirit of this age ; but has not our author himself yielded to the same spirit, though on a much smaller scale, by his use of such long words as *perdurable*, *subjective-idealist*, *neoplatonist*, etc., making it somewhat difficult for the ordinary man readily to comprehend his meaning—a difficulty augmented by the mysticism of many of the leading modern popular theological teachers.

On the other hand, the phraseology of the paper before us is valuable, because it is written from the standpoint of the day, and we welcome the fact that a leading evangelical theologian can meet the modernist on his own ground, so that it cannot be said with truth that those who accept the inspiration of Scripture, and the full Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ are only to be found among the ignorant and uneducated.

The paper before us is evidently the result of considerable thought, and its careful study in its printed form will well repay the reader. I understand that the author is writing a book on the same subject ; may it have a wide circulation."

After acknowledging the interest and general usefulness of the paper, Mr. C. F. HOGG, speaking of the Chairman's reference to the Roman Catholic attitude to the Scriptures, remarked that while he, (the speaker) had no sympathy whatever with that community, yet it was only fair to say that some Jesuit Fathers had been engaged for several years past in translating the Scriptures out of the original tongues into English. Considerable portions have already been published. This is probably the first time in history that the Vulgate has been set aside by Rome.

In the paper there are references to the Birth of the Lord Jesus as "supernatural" (pp. 268, 269). Scripture, however, speaks not of a supernatural Birth but of a supernatural Conception. The Divine intervention, that is to say, was at Nazareth, not at Bethlehem ; it is recorded in Luke i, 31-35, not in Luke ii, 6, 7. The words of the writer represent rather the Romanist doctrine than the New Testament statements.

Mr. Gardner's words at the head of p. 262 may well be taken as his summary of Modernist teaching, but those at the foot of p. 267 are a declaration of his own belief. Why then does he speak of "Christ . . . coming in the power of the Holy Spirit"? The language of the Lord and of His Apostles concerning His return is as concrete as is that concerning His Resurrection and Ascension. The Spirit was to come, and He came; the Lord was to come—why not keep these as distinct as did the Lord Himself? Why not expect the one to be as literally fulfilled as the other has been?

It is part of the Modernist position, indeed, that there is no historical foundation for the story of the Fall recorded in Genesis, but is not the fallen condition of the men and women to whom He spoke the presupposition of the teaching of the Lord? And if He said that "this generation shall not pass away, till all things be accomplished" the quite usual reference of the word to moral characteristics, *vide* Ps. xiv, 5; lxxviii, 8; lxx; and Phil. ii, 15, gives a good meaning here also.

The criterion of the Christian position is twofold. What is the right attitude to the Bible? To Christ?

Is the Bible a record of the experiences of certain religious persons seeking after God? Or is it the record of God's revelation of Himself to men? Is it the reaching out of superior men after God, or is it the Hand of God outstretched to His rebellious creature? As I understand it, the former is the rationalistic, the latter the Christian line of approach to the Scriptures.

Is Christ the Teacher and Exemplar of men merely, or is He Saviour as well? This involves the further question whether man needs only to have suitable guidance and stimulus afforded him upon his long and difficult upward path, or whether, being a sinner, he needs, before all things, a Deliverer? Here again the rationalistic answer, at its best, is the former, whereas the Christian owns JESUS as Saviour and Lord, saying to Him with conviction and with joy "My Lord and my God."

It is all to the good that Mr. Gardner should draw attention to the pressing need of a new apologetic. The diligence of Higher Critical scholarship must be acknowledged, whereas the saner (in my judgement) school is supplying few investigators, and few expositors. Indeed, it may be surmised that the decay of expository preaching

has left a soil favourable to the dissemination of ideas antagonistic to the authority of Scripture. Denunciation is but a confession of weakness ; ignorance in assertive mood does not provide what St. Paul calls " the defence and confirmation of the Gospel."

Lieut.-Colonel F. MOLONY said : With reference to the paragraph at top of page 262, giving Dean Inge's opinion that Jesus said He would return in His own generation.

We should surely bear in mind that He also said " But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

We have every reason to believe that this last was really said by Jesus Christ. It apparently detracted from His divinity, and therefore would never have been invented by His disciples.

Surely all the statements made by Christ Himself and His followers about the time of the Second Coming, must be considered in conjunction with the Master's Own statement that He did not know the time.

We cannot reasonably hold that " He was deceived in a matter of supreme importance, and is, therefore, to be discredited like all fanatics," when He Himself stated His lack of knowledge ; a thing, by the way, which no fanatic would have done.

The point is important because many modernists and sceptics make this a test case.

Pastor W. PERCIVAL-PRESCOTT said : In the last four lines of page 261, and the first eight of page 262, the Rev. C. Gardner presents Dr. Inge's difficulty.

Now, I think the lecturer should have made it quite clear that Dr. Inge need not have come to any such conclusions, for in none of the Gospels does Jesus say that He would return to set up His Kingdom " in His own generation."

The word " generation " and the phrase " this generation," are used by Christ several times in the Gospels, but nearly always in connection with the character of the generation in which He lived. It was a " wicked generation," a " faithless and perverse generation," an " adulterous generation." It was a " generation of vipers " upon which would come " all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharius, son of Barachias. . . . Verily I say unto you, *all these things* shall come upon *this generation* " (Matt. xxiii, 34-36).

Attention is directed to the two expressions in this passage, "*these things*" and "*this generation.*" "*These things*" has reference to the punishment for all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, and there can be no dispute that "*this generation*" has reference to the generation living when Christ uttered these words. When upon the mount of Olives, Jesus gave His disciples something additional, regarding the Temple, saying: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. xxiv, 2), and this elicited from them, *two* supremely important questions: "Tell us when shall *these things* be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and the end of the world?"

Jesus proceeded to answer *the first question*, giving the indications, one by one, of the approaching destruction of the city and Temple, and finally He gave them the sign by which they were to know when to leave the city to escape its destruction. When they should see Jerusalem compassed with armies (Luke xxi, 20) they were to flee to the mountains. They looked for this sign, and by heeding it when it first appeared the Christians made good their escape from the doomed city. Afterwards, the Roman armies entirely surrounded the city and took it, putting the inhabitants to the sword and destroying the Temple.

Having now answered the first question of the disciples concerning the time when "*these things*" would come upon "*this generation,*" Christ begins to answer the *second question*, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and the end of the world?" The Master replied, "There shall be signs."

This is a straightforward answer without modification or evasion. The signs were to be given to reveal the time when "all who love His appearing" might look with assurance for their Saviour.

* * * * *

To summarize, it is as though Jesus said to His disciples: *First* Jerusalem and the Temple shall be destroyed. *Then* will come great persecution upon Christians—"these are the beginning of sorrows." "But the end is not yet." The oppression will go on for a long period of time, but for the elects' sake it will be divinely shortened. *Afterwards*, there shall be signs in the heavens, and *succeeding these* there shall come signs upon the earth. *Finally*, there shall appear the sign of the coming of the Son of Man.

The generation that saw these last signs upon the earth would not pass away till Christ returned to set up His Kingdom of Glory.

Lieut.-Colonel HOPE BIDDULPH said: With reference to the use of the word generation on page 262, and remarks made thereon in this discussion, the expression "generation" does not, I think, necessarily mean a period of 30 or 40 years.

Many commentators recognise a wider significance to the word, such as a particular class, or in this case even the Jewish race. This would appear to be borne out by many texts of Scripture, *e.g.* :—

"There is a generation that curseth their father"; "there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes," &c. (Prov. xxx, 11, 12, 13, 14).

"This is the generation of them that seek Him" (Ps. xxiv, 6).

"I should offend against the generation of thy children" (Ps. 73-15).

"Whoever shall be ashamed of Me in this adulterous . . . generation" (Mark viii, 38).

"Ye are a chosen generation" (1 Pet. ii, 9).

"It shall be counted to the Lord for a generation" (Ps. xxii, 30).

All the above, and others besides, seem to indicate a *class* of men.

Dr. SCHOFIELD, who was unable through illness to take the chair, as arranged, has sent the following critique of Mr. Gardner's paper: "The title of this paper hardly foreshadows such a detailed criticism of Dean Inge as practically fills it; and I judge the subject would gain in interest if more occupied with principles which are immortal rather than with a personality who is ephemeral.

"I think that Dr. Inge is somewhat in advance of his dogmatic standpoint which is here subjected to such a masterly analysis, and this, I think, because he touches in his mysticism a higher point than is reached by his intellectualism. Reason is not wisdom. To be intellectual is not necessarily to be wise. In reason is no love, there is much in wisdom: and love is the most divine form of the Infinite. It is wisdom, not intellect, that is the lamp of love. To quote Maeterlinck here,* 'If you love, you must needs become wise. Be wise and you surely shall love. . . . and those in whom

* *Wisdom and Destiny*, p. 78. (George Allen.)

love never dies must needs continue to love as their soul grows nobler and nobler.' It is along this line, I think, that mysticism may lead the soul into the presence of God, and the above quotation is of interest as showing how far a man, apart from the Christian faith, may reach in seeking God. Now that Christianity has come any passer-by can pick the fruit.

"The writer of this paper, while saying much of the Dean's condensation and concentration, has, I think, himself actually exceeded Dr. Inge. The valuable truths it contains would have gained much in lucidity had they been expanded to double their length.

"There can be no doubt of the value of the paper in so fully carrying out the first Concept of the Victoria Institute, 'To investigate in a reverent spirit important questions of Philosophy and Science, especially those bearing upon Holy Scripture. It is a powerful monograph on a unique figure in the Anglican Church."

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

Mr. Hogg objects to my calling the Birth of our Lord supernatural. I call it supernatural because He was born of a virgin. The other objection has arisen because I did not express my meaning quite clearly. I meant that the ascended Lord *speaks* by the Holy Ghost; I was not explaining away His second coming.

Col. Molony has not quite understood what I wrote at the top of page 262. It is not Dr. Inge's opinion that Jesus said He would return in His own generation; he thinks, rather, that that was the expectation of the first disciples. I think I can best answer Col. Molony, Pastor Percival-Prescott, and Col. Hope Biddulph together. There is no need to explain away the word "generation." Our Lord had a very real ministry to His ancient people; for which reason St. Paul called Him the Minister of the Circumcision. We may sum up His ministry to His own by saying that He offered to them the Gospel of the Kingdom on the condition that they repented and believed in Him. His promise was specific. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you will receive Me the Kingdom will come in this present generation." Instead, they rejected and crucified Him. The offer was not immediately withdrawn. The "ministry of the Circumcision" was entrusted to St. Peter, and he

preached that if Israel would repent and believe, the Lord would immediately return from Heaven. Again Israel rejected the message. Having refused the acceptable year of the Lord, they were cut off from the olive-tree, and believing Gentiles were grafted in. After the apostacy of Israel the full revelation concerning Christ and the Church was given to St. Paul. The Lord had the prescience of His rejection from the beginning of His ministry. St. John says: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"; and he proceeds to record the ministry of the rejected Messiah, which the Lord fulfilled side by side with His ministry to Israel.