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THE MODERN ISSUE AS TO THE PERSON
OF JESUS CHRIST.

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The supreme question of the age in the sphere of religion relates to the person of Jesus Christ. There are many points of view and numerous shades of opinion within the limits of these points of view. But fundamentally it is comparatively easy to state the issue. Indeed, the issue itself is not new, but only the old issue in a new form. What is proposed here is a brief discussion, not of the issue itself so much, as the various methods of attempting a solution. I have in view the modern doubter. We who accept the Scriptures, of course, do not need the argument save to confirm our faith. The argument holds, however, under any view of the Scriptures.

What then is the issue as to the person of Jesus Christ? It may be stated in various forms, all of which amount to the same thing. Was Jesus simply a teacher of religion, or was He also the object of religion? Was He a messenger from God merely, or was He, in and of Himself, a revelation of God also? Did Jesus desire that man imitate His faith in God simply, or did He also seek to produce faith in Himself as the Revealer of God? Did He come to educate the race back to God merely, or to redeem it first of all and conduct the educational process on the basis of the redemptive work? Does salvation come to man by reproducing in himself the sinless consciousness of Jesus simply, or by looking first of all to His cross and atonement as the objective source and ground of redemption? Was Jesus a historic being whose career ended when the tomb closed upon His body at Jerusalem two thousand years ago, or is He to-day a living, active, energetic, conscious, personal force in individual lives and in human history? And finally, was He divine in the sense that He was morally perfect merely, or in the further sense that He was by nature more

than man? Or to sum up these questions all in one: was Jesus simply the "prince of saints" as Martineau has called Him or the divine Savior and Redeemer of mankind, the Son of God in the supreme and unique sense of the word, which sets Him apart from and lifts Him above other men? This is really the fundamental question, and we do not arrive at any adequate view of Christ's person until we have faced this question and have taken sides unequivocally with one view or the other. For there is no possible middle ground as between the alternatives stated in the preceding series of questions.

Now this paper is not an attempt to thresh over the old arguments as to the divinity or deity of Jesus Christ. These are well known and may be found in many places. I have given my own views at some length in another place.¹ As already intimated, I propose here to consider the modern issue as to the person of Christ with reference to the various methods employed in considering the issue, with the view to indicating the direction in which the solution is to be really sought. In the pursuit of this object we shall have to consider first the question of the historic records; second, the question of scientific explanation; third, the question of philosophic postulation; and fourth, that in which these three culminate, the question as to rationalism and life.

CRITICAL CONCLUSION.

First, we consider the question of the historic records. Here, as elsewhere, we must condense greatly and omit many things, merely giving general results. The very latest significant phase of scientific criticism in dealing with the historic records as to Jesus Christ may be briefly outlined as follows: Omitting John's Gospel from consideration, not because I believe it untrustworthy, but because critical opinion is so divided regarding it, we may assert that the actual history of the earthly life and the authentic personal teachings of Jesus are contained

¹See "Why is Christianity True?" By E. Y. Mullins, Part II. American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, Pa.

almost if not quite exclusively in the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. For our present purposes we may limit that history to those Gospels. Of these three Mark is regarded by the preponderance of critical opinion as the oldest. In recent years, however, a view has been developed which regards Matthew and Luke as based in part not only upon Mark but also upon another prior document or source known to criticism as the document or source Q. This source Q contained, according to the current critical opinion, the elements in Matthew and Luke which are common to both Gospels, a very considerable portion, as comparison will show. Critical analysis, then, has yielded us two chief sources of our knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus, the Gospel of Mark and the document Q on which Matthew and Luke rest. Other views have been propounded indeed, but no others have attained such critical responsibility and standing as requires me to deal with them here.

Now, in these original sources which criticism gives us, we find every essential characteristic of Jesus which lies before us in the synoptic Gospels as they stand. For example, in Q Jesus repeatedly assumes an authoritativeness and finality as a teacher which sets Him apart from all other teachers. Men are persecuted for His sake. Human destiny is determined by conformity to His words. He comes to send not peace but a sword (Matt. 10: 37 and Luke 14: 26). Taking up the cross and following Him daily is the sum of Christian duty. In Q is found the remarkable passage in Matt. 11: 25-27 and in Luke 10: 21, 22, in which Jesus asserts that He Himself is the sole organ of the revelation of God and that all the sources of divine knowledge are placed at His disposal: "All things have been delivered to me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." Dr. Martineau thinks he can discern clearly that these words are not genuine words of Jesus because they are inconsistent with His humility as the prince of saints. Professor Harnack endeavors to eliminate the passage also, or rather its Christo-

logical implications, by means of a change in tense in the verb translated "know." Harnack's chief objection to the passage is not scientific or critical, but rather that it is Johannine in character; that is to say, it assigns too lofty a place to Jesus. The document Q also contains apocalyptic elements in which Jesus predicts His future return and the setting up of the kingdom (Matt. 19: 28 and Luke 22: 30).

Some of the most notable of the miracles of Jesus are recorded in Q, such as the healing of the centurion's servant at a distance. We have not space to outline Mark's record, nor is it necessary. The lofty place assigned to Jesus in Mark is familiar to all readers of the New Testament. We sum up here by saying that in the document Q and in Mark are found all the elements of teaching as to the person of Jesus which have given so much offense to rationalistic criticism in the synoptic Gospels as a whole, His messianic claims, His position as object of human faith and not merely as religious teacher, His lordship and authority, His function and office as Revealer of God, His apocalyptic outlook upon the future, His transcendental and divine character as Redeemer and Savior of the world.

In view of these facts, there are three possible conclusions: First, we may conclude that as the records are trustworthy in general, so also the messianic and christological passages are trustworthy and accept the higher view of the person of Christ. Second, if one refuses to accept the Christology of these records, he may assume that the records as a whole are untrustworthy, and that any real knowledge of who and what Jesus was is impossible. Thus they will be rejected altogether. Few have the hardihood to do this, although there are some who adopt the view. Yet this is the sole alternative theory which is consistent from the point of view of criticism itself. For be it understood that the christological passages are as well established on critical grounds as others in these Gospels which are accepted without hesitation. But there is a third possible view, viz., that the christological teachings were inserted by the disciples after the death of Jesus as a result of speculative and

theological tendencies. This is the view of a vast throng of critics whose views differ at certain points and who represent all degrees and shades of opinion, but who agree in the fundamental point named that the Christology of these records was invented by disciples. In other respects the records are held to be authentic and reliable in greater or less degree. Wellhausen, Harnack, Holtzmann, Bousset, and many others represent this view.

Our conclusion may be very briefly stated. It is that the situation thus meagerly outlined clearly shows that criticism of the destructive kind virtually thus surrenders its case. Its utmost efforts, by its own showing, leaves Jesus just as He was in the records before criticism began its effort to eliminate Him. When the historic records have been chipped away and the lowest residuum has been found, it is seen to contain all the elements of the larger whole. What then? Well, criticism refuses to believe, nevertheless, and asserts that the Christology has no place in the synoptic records. But how can it so contend? It so contends on philosophic grounds. Its world-view refuses to concede the possibility of a universe in which an incarnation could have taken place. But observe here most carefully that its conclusion is not based upon critical but upon philosophic grounds. Criticism fails and a philosophic postulate is brought into requisition. Of this, more a little further on. I observe simply in leaving this point that criticism itself is on the side of the historic faith of Christendom by its own showing, while many critics forsake criticism and take refuge in philosophy. The Gospels are made over in conformity to a philosophic world-view which assumes beforehand the impossibility of such facts as the Gospels allege. Exit criticism; enter philosophy. So much for the issue as to the person of Christ from the point of view of the historic records and the method of historical criticism.

SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION.

We consider next the issue in the light of scientific expla-

nation. There are certain characteristics of science which need to be noted before we attempt to indicate its relation to the modern issue as to the person of Jesus Christ. First of all, natural science employs the principle of causation as its criterion of explanation and of truth. A thing is explained when its cause is assigned. The principle of causation thus employed is derived from physical nature. By causation science means the connection between events in the physical sphere when one event arises as the result of another event or force. Again, science finds causes on the same plane with the events to be explained. It passes from the known to the unknown. There is no real explanation in the scientific sense save in terms of previous experience or knowledge. We build a bridge over the chasm which separates us from the unknown, but always the bridge is constructed of material gathered on our own side of the chasm. The bridge is never thrown over to us from the other side of the chasm. Or, to put the same truth in another form, science explains horizontally, not vertically. If A causes B, then in order to explain B we must find A among the things which lie in the continuous chain of interconnected events, not in some agency above the chain of events.

Another characteristic of science is that it accepts nothing which is not made so clear by experiment that it cannot be doubted. This is the exact language of Professor Huxley, who in his *Methods and Results* expounds the principle as he derived it from Des Cartes. Scientific explanation and demonstration then is essentially axiomatic in character. It is not scientifically proved until the thing is so clear that it cannot be doubted. Rationally, in other words, it is coercive and irresistible.

Another characteristic of science is that it confines its views to facts and phenomena. Physical science observes and formulates the laws of the redistribution of matter and motion. Science refuses to speculate as to ultimate reality chiefly because such speculation renders the scientist more or less unfit for his task of exact observation and accurate formulation and

classification of phenomena. In the social sciences and in religion science observes and confines its views to facts and phenomena, as in the physical realm. Here also it declines to speculate.

What bearing, then, has these facts upon the supreme question as to the person of Jesus Christ? Has science the criteria or the authority for settling the controversy among the theologians? Can science declare that Jesus was God as well as man, or can it declare that He was merely man, that, as Bousset and others contend so vehemently, He nowhere transcends the human? For this is the fundamental question as to Jesus. Now it is perfectly obvious that science cannot answer the question as to Jesus in any final or authoritative manner. This is true simply and solely because the question lies beyond the function of science. Science can observe the Christian phenomena. She can study the history of Christianity and render her account of all that Christ has wrought or is alleged to have wrought through the ages. Science may deal critically with the New Testament records, as we have seen, and with what results we have already seen. One set of theologians or religious men say as they observe these phenomena, there was nothing in Jesus transcending the human. Another set assert with equal vigor, in view of the same facts, there is convincing evidence of an incarnation, that Jesus was more than human. A third group, the followers of Ritschl, asseverate with equal vigor that the evidence is not convincing either way, that while Jesus has for men the value of God and does for them what men need from God, yet we cannot assert what Jesus was in His essential and ultimate nature. Can science arbitrate? She cannot. First, because the essential nature of Christ belongs not to the realm of phenomena. It lies beyond phenomena, while science confines her view to phenomena and will not speculate. She stubbornly declines to speculate. Secondly, because the fact of an incarnation can never be made so clear by means of scientific demonstration that it cannot be doubted. Axioms arise when the concepts involved and the facts under observation are, within the limits

of the axiom itself, completely understood. An incarnation cannot, therefore, become axiomatic or be made so clear by scientific demonstration that it cannot be doubted. Thirdly, science cannot arbitrate in the theological controversy about the person of Jesus because here explanation, if incarnation be a fact, must be vertical, not horizontal. Here, if the higher claim as to Jesus is true, explanation cannot be in terms of causes and forces pre-existing on the natural plane. Here the bridge is thrown over the chasm to us from the other side, not from our side across to the other side. Here explanation, if incarnation be a fact, must be in terms of the previously unknown. Thus in all three respects scientific adjudication in the controversy about Jesus is impossible. As to the function of science as limited to phenomena, as to the requirement of axiomatic demonstration, and as to explanation in terms of causation on the same plane with the event. Observe here that science can no more disprove than prove. It has no more ability to set aside than it has to establish the Christian claim. Incarnation and divine essences lie outside and beyond the sphere to which science wisely limits herself.

At this point I hear an objection: "Is not the whole disturbance in religion and theology in our day due to scientific claims? Is not the whole attack on evangelical Christianity in the name and by the authority of science? And is it not critically scientific research which is at the bottom of all the disquietude and anxious foreboding of men lest the foundations be destroyed?" The claims of some scientific men, yes; the claims of mature science, no. Critically scientific assumptions, yes; critically scientific results, no. Attacks in the name of science, yes; attacks by the authority of science, no. These things indeed are the occasion of the disturbance. But men always forsake scientific for philosophic grounds when they assert or deny as to the incarnation of Christ. For, as we have seen, science never crosses the frontier into the realm of that which transcends the manifestations in the sphere of the known.

This last point will become perfectly clear when we recall

that science has nothing to say as to ultimate causes. Real and ultimate causes lie in the super-phenomenal sphere. Really scientific explanation, that is to say, causation, is always in terms of antecedent and consequent. This is really all that science needs. When science asserts the ultimate nature of reality it thereby becomes philosophy. When science makes any assertion for or against the incarnation of Christ, it becomes thereby philosophy and ceases to be science. Causes in their real essence and fundamental character never come within the range of scientific observation.

Our conclusion, then, is the same as when we discussed the application of criticism to the historic records. We found then that criticism did not at all eliminate the objectionable Christology from the Gospels, so here we find that science, as such, never even comes into close quarters with the ultimate problem of Jesus. Both criticism and science must needs forsake their own calling for that of philosophy in order to express an opinion on the problem. The world-view which asserts that an incarnation cannot be, and that which asserts that it can be, are world-views which represent two philosophic standpoints rather than scientific.

PHILOSOPHIC POSTULATION.

We come in the third place, then, to consider the problem as to the person of Jesus from the point of view of philosophic postulation. Speaking broadly, there are but two general philosophic points of view which are of importance in the current issues. Both of these turn upon the principle of continuity or causation. The philosophic issue is this: Is the totality of existence to be explained on the principle of physical causation or on the principle of personality? Perhaps it will be simpler to say rationality rather than personality at this point, though rationality is simply one aspect of personality. The philosophic issue then is this: Shall we assert that ultimately and finally all being, all existence of every kind whatsoever, is to be explained as a part of the continuous physical universe? Is all being

ultimately and finally intelligible as a part of the causal series? Or shall we rather assert that rationality is the key to all mysteries, and that causality in nature is simply another form of rationality? Materialism and some forms of pantheism assert that causality is fundamental and that rationality is subordinate. Idealism and theism and personalism assert that rationality is fundamental, and that causality cannot be understood save as a form of rationality. There is another way of taking existence which leaves causality and rationality intact without attempting to merge one in the other, which is no doubt for practical purposes the wiser, truer way. But in any event the reasoner will be likely to assert the superiority or primacy of the one principle or the other.

Now philosophy can only explain the whole by the part. It can only select some one fact, or principle, or law, and make of it a "type-phenomenon" or intellectual yardstick or standard, and by it estimate all the rest of existence. No one can compass all of existence in mind or heart; we can only know a part and infer the rest. One man takes the world or universe as mind because he knows mind in himself. Another takes it as matter, because matter so abounds in the space around him. Another takes it as will, another as energy, and so on to the end of the chapter. Thus arise the various world-views. Now science cannot help philosophy to choose between the various possible type-phenomena. For science merely supplies the data for philosophy to work with and explain. It follows, therefore, that men may exercise the utmost freedom in their choices of type-phenomena and in their formation of world-views. If any one of us could intellectually grasp the whole of existence, we might then prohibit others from forming incorrect world-views. But none of us can grasp more than a part. We must accord intellectual respectability, therefore, to the views which oppose our own. Three things are true of all general philosophic world-views. First, they are all due to taste. Primarily, philosophic theories are like paintings. They express simply the taste and ideals of the painter. A man's preferences chiefly determine his philosophic theory, not

his reason. Again, all world-views arise from the plane of being on which the man stands, which may lie anywhere between inorganic matter on the one side and human personality on the other. It is possible to select a type-phenomenon anywhere between these two extremes. The third characteristic of the various world-views is that each of them is able to demolish all the others. The difference lies in the assumptions of the various theories. Materialism is unanswerable so long as you admit its assumptions. It is powerless against you the moment you adopt other assumptions. All theories, therefore, are both irresistible and impotent; formidable as an intellectual construction, but powerless against other intellectual constructions. I am not asserting that all world-views are equally tenable or convincing, but only that all may claim intellectual respectability and standing; that while each is able to demolish all the others, none is able to prevent the demolished view from coming back armed *cap-a-pie* to engage once more in mortal combat. So long as tastes differ and preferences differ, world-views will differ.

It is of course open to the materialist to refuse to believe in the incarnation. His assumptions are against the belief. But mark this point clearly: It is not his proofs, but his assumptions. Matter is selected by him as the type-phenomenon, the ultimate fact, and all else must conform to it. Proofs urged are simply such other considerations as may be marshaled which seem to support his main fact. Of course theism is incomparably the strongest of world-views, and theism is wholly compatible with the incarnation and with the christological elements in the Gospel. But theistic arguments are not coercive to reason, so that when presented to the materialist he is not compelled to accept them, so long as he prefers the materialistic or other world-views. Philosophy, therefore, does not attain finality as to the person of Jesus any more than science and criticism.

There is, however, one net gain from all three which we must note before passing to our last point. The gain is that the Christian evangelical view is intellectually as respectable as

any other view. Critically it is as respectable as any view because the records yield the view after criticism has done its worst. This of course in itself does not prove the records to be true. It only proves that criticism has not been able to eliminate from the Gospels the Jesus of faith. By common consent the Jesus of faith is found everywhere else in the New Testament. Critically, then, the evangelical view is as respectable as the opposing view of the person of Jesus. Again, this view is scientifically as respectable as any opposing view, for the reason, as already shown, that science is without jurisdiction in deciding the ultimate question as to the person of Christ. Scientific criticism has concluded that all the New Testament literature yields the Jesus of faith. He is present in all the phenomena. This is as far as science proceeds. Physical science of course never touches the problem of the person of Jesus at all. It may draw inferences as to the possibility of miracles, but such inference belongs to the philosophical realm and not to the realm of exact science. What Jesus is in His essence science declares to be outside of her domain. Science, then, does not prove the Christian claim in any coercive manner, though her testimony is in its favor as far as it goes. And assuredly science has no word to utter against the Christian claim. Once more, the Christian view is philosophically as respectable as any other, because in philosophy world-views are personal preferences, not intellectual necessities. Each world-view, as pure philosophy, is both invincible and impotent; a granite mountain from the point of view of its own assumptions, a rope of sand from the point of view of the assumptions of the opposing theory. And no power in the heaven above nor the earth below will prevent men from selecting such assumptions as may seem to them best. Critically, scientifically, and philosophically, then, the Christian view is as respectable as any other. It is a great gain to attain this much. It clears the atmosphere for the real test and the real answer to the question involved in the modern issue as to the person of Christ. Let no one infer that nothing beyond this conclusion can be urged for the Christian views. As a

matter of logic a vast deal in addition may be said in its favor. It is by far the strongest of all views when regarded critically, scientifically or philosophically, in so far as criticism, science and philosophy are related directly or indirectly to the problem. We have simply sought to show the utmost which can be said against the Christian view, and to point out that all the objections to it may be urged against other views.

POINT OF VIEW OF LIFE.

We come to our last point, which is the consideration of the modern issue as to the person of Christ, not from the point of view of criticism, or of science, or of philosophy, but from the point of view of life. But as we shall see, all three—science, criticism and philosophy—will return, but under new conditions. Philosophy is just now turning against itself in a most remarkable way, which will lead to the regeneration of philosophy.

We remark first, then, that it is possible to reach a definite conclusion as to the person of Jesus despite the indeterminate outcome of our previous considerations. We arrive at that conclusion primarily by following the method of Jesus, and secondly we validate our procedure for those who decline His authority by reference to a scientific and philosophic principle which has been developed in recent years.

Jesus said: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself." (John 7: 17.)

Now the principle here taught by Jesus has been expressed in modern philosophy by the term voluntarism, which means of course the principle deduced from the action of the will. The will and not merely the intellect enters into all our forms of knowing. The contest is between rationalism or logic on the one hand, and voluntarism or life on the other. Logic cannot solve the mystery of being. Some of the defects of logic are the following: For one thing, logic never exhausts reality. You form your concept of the rose, for example, and

describe its form, color, odor, and so on, but when you have exhausted your powers you have not exhausted the color, odor or shape of the rose. Some details remain. So of all objects. Again, logic is based on concepts which are always abstractions. When you look at a rose or handle it, you have more complete knowledge of it than you can ever have in a concept of it after you leave it. Now the difference between rationalism and voluntarism or life, is the difference between our concepts of our absent rose and our seeing, handling and smelling a real rose. The concept is the mental image of a very imperfect impression of the object scaled off, while the actual contact with it gives us all the rich content in its variety and fullness.

Now philosophic theories for the most part are based on abstract concepts, not on concrete realities. They deal with the outside of things, not the inside. Criticism deals with the outside of things, simply the records; science deals with the outside of things, simply phenomena; philosophy deals largely with the outside of things, simply a single principle abstracted from the whole of being, which ignores much more than it accounts for in most cases. Now this is the method of rationalism or logic. Reason is assumed by it to be our sole reliable mode of dealing with reality, as if reasoning with concepts about the rose were our only means of arriving at the truth of it, as if smelling the rose were not as good philosophy as logic chopping about it. Epistemology, or theory of knowledge, has had to do with the reason hitherto. Now we are coming to see that the will is as important as the reason in our processes of knowing, and epistemology is undergoing a change.

Now let us apply this epistemology or conception of knowledge to the modern issue as to the person of Jesus, and let us briefly contrast the rationalistic with the voluntaristic way of approaching Him. In the Gospel records Jesus is Lord. He is Savior, as well as Revealer of the Father and Teacher. How shall the will approach Him as Lord? By submission. How shall the will take Him as Savior? By faith. How shall our whole life approach Him? By complete self-surrender. Is

it not clear, then, that here are factors of knowledge which are absent from criticism, science and philosophy? Criticism deals rationally with an object, certain documents. Science deals rationally with certain objects called phenomena. Philosophy deals rationally with certain subjects, the data supplied by science in all of its forms. All may arrive at accurate conclusions in regard to their respective objects. Criticism may succeed in being really judicial. Science may discover the real coexistence and sequences of nature. Philosophy may correctly reason about the data thus supplied. Yet none of these, nor all combined, give us that form of knowledge which we have described, which arises when we approach Christ with the will and submit to Him.

What happens, then, when we approach Jesus thus? Let our own experience answer. He does not remain dumb, as the documents so often remain dumb to criticism. He does not refuse to respond, as the phenomena and facts of existence so often refuse when science and philosophy interrogate them. His answer comes to us out of the void. From the heights come down to us new tides of power. New energy flows into our wills. A new sense of power possesses us. A lyric mood of praise and joy seizes us in place of our despair. New ideals of ethical attainment at once become supremely desirable and at the same time possible. In a word, we are redeemed, saved from our sins. The witness of apostles and martyrs and of the long line of Christian heroes through the ages acquires new meaning for us. Moral and spiritual transformation ensues in our characters. We become sharers in the Kingdom of God, and its consummation and completion become the supreme goal of our endeavor. This is the one form of test which Jesus proposed regarding Himself. He never invited men to deal with His claims in a merely rationalistic manner. His bond of connection with men is the will. We never approach near enough to Him in any other way to know who or what He is. When we approach Him thus we find Him to be divine, because his action in us is divine action. His power over us is divine power. We know He is Son of God

and Savior of the world, because all the results in us and through us agree with the claims He makes for Himself in the records. This experience of Christ in us is not merely faith as opposed to knowledge. It is knowledge of the most real and vital kind, which, compared with the knowledge derived from abstract logic is as sunlight unto moonlight. Now voluntarism is the philosophic and scientific term for the doctrine which validates from the point of view of modern culture this Christian conclusion.

Let me pause for a moment to emphasize the significance of the point we are considering. A few years ago the objector might have felt warranted in complaining that our position is merely the old claim that religious experience convinces where reason does not, but that religious experience has no standing in science or philosophy. The objection, however, does not hold to-day. For we now have a school of philosophy, militant and confident, which urges upon us the principle of knowledge we have set forth, a school which denies to abstract reason the ability to solve the ultimate mysteries, and which asserts that the will is an essential factor in all knowing. The advocates of this philosophy are not all Christians, but some of them are Christians of pronounced type, and the general view that obedience is superior to speculation as a means of knowing God's will is Christian to the core. This means that the ultimate philosophy must be religious in the Christian sense, and that the harmony of thought and faith will come about through the unity of our total nature, intellect and will and affectations, seeking together to know the meaning of the universe.

Men have been a long time catching up with the teaching of the New Testament. Philosophers for hundreds of years have been pursuing the shadowy form of truth running on ahead and outstripping them. They have now overtaken the form and looked into its face, and lo, it is the face of the Son of God. He taught the practical voluntarism of modern philosophy two thousand years ago. The way to discover the secret of the universe is to conceive it, not as matter or force

or energy, but as a person. The way to understand that person is to consider Jesus Christ, look at His face and form. The way to test the reality of this personal explanation of being is to act toward it in a voluntaristic and personal way. Thus and thus only does the long-drawn controversy find solution. If Jesus should ever fail to respond to the sincere appeal to Him; if men are ever disappointed in Him who approach Him in His own appointed way, then they would be warranted in rejecting Him.

It is clear, then, that we have in this Christian experience, which arises in us when we submit to Christ, something entirely unique and impregnable in the form of knowledge. The principle which modern psychology and philosophy have so clearly defined may, and will indeed, transform both science and philosophy, and render them less abstract and more concrete. Thus they will gradually recognize, as the late Professor James and others already recognize, the power of the appeal which Christian experience makes to human reason when that reason is thus transformed and elevated by the newer, deeper conception involved. Not that this principle sets aside logic, but only that it deepens it and completes it. Criticism, science and philosophy will still use the reason. Logic will still have to do its work, but men will see that in all spheres, scientific and philosophic as well as religious, the truth comes through action more than through abstract thought; that experience is deeper and far more luminous than reason, that plunging into the stream of being and sounding its depths is a far more satisfactory way of discovering the contents of the stream than sitting on the bank and drawing inferences from what little of it we can grasp in that detached way. As we thus take the universe as personal and approach it as personal, through Jesus Christ, it does not remain dumb and inarticulate as it does when taken merely as matter, force and motion. It responds in a personal way, the veil is drawn aside and the hidden mystery suddenly stands revealed before our eyes in all its splendor, and we know where previously we had only guessed. We have, then, a spiritual demonstration

based on the exercise of the will, which is as convincing as the conclusions of rationalism, which are based merely on the exercise of the reason. The demonstration is not like those derived from experiment in physical science, but in its initiation and gradual assimilation through religious experience it satisfies Huxley's criterion—it is so clear that it cannot be doubted. It is unlike philosophy in that it is not speculation about the ultimate reality, but contact with that reality, involving not the reason merely, but the will and the emotions, our whole nature in all its higher ranges.

Voluntarism is nothing but a new name, scientifically and psychologically wrought out with great care, for a very old and very profound word, viz., faith; and for another very glowing and splendid word, hope, and for yet another puissant and illuminating word, love. Voluntarism is simply faith that works by love and purifies the heart, and it is not a human achievement but the gift of God regenerating the human will. When Christ becomes the object of that faith, it is the most exalting of all human forms of experience. Voluntarism, then, is simply devotion, self-surrender, a will completely obedient to God's will. The secrets of the universe appear, the truth as to God and His Son appears, doubt disappears, power comes, and peace comes. Our sense of helplessness overwhelms us as we ply our task, and then supervenes the matchless and unspeakable gift of grace. In his poem, "Saul", Browning voices our experience. David had played and sung to Saul in order to drive out the evil spirit, but none of the varied themes of his singing had been sufficient to deliver Saul from the brooding spirit of evil. David's heart overflows with love and desire to redeem Saul, and in his helplessness the vision of God and of His Christ comes:

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive:
 In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
 All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my
 prayer,

As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.

* * * * *

“What stops my despair?

This;—’tis not what man does which exalts him, but what man would do!

See the King—I would help him, but cannot, the wishes fall through.

Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich, to fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—Knowing which

I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now! Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!

So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up, nor down,
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!

As thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being beloved!
He who did most shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.

’Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek

In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by forever: A Hand like this hand

Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!”