ALEXANDER BALMAIN BRUCE: A REVIEW OF HIS CONTRIBUTION TO NEW TESTAMENT STUDY AND TO THEOLOGY.

A Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Submitted by

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ABBREVIATIONS.

I. BOOKS BY BRUCE.

Apol. = "Apologetics; or, Christianity Defensively Stated."

C.E.R. = "The Chief End of Revelation."


E.H. = "The Epistle to the Hebrews: the First Apology for Christianity."


G.G. = "The Galilean Gospel."

H.C. = "The Humiliation of Christ, in its Physical, Ethical, and Official Aspects."

K.G. = "The Kingdom of God; or, Christ's Teaching according to the Synoptical Gospels."

L.W.D. = "The Life of William Denny, Ship-builder, Dumbarton."

M.E.G. = "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels."


P.C.C. = "St Paul's Conception of Christianity."

P.O.W. = "The Providential Order of the World."


T.T. = "The Training of the Twelve; or, Passages out of the Gospels exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus under Discipline for the Apostleship."

W.O.F. = "With Open Face; or, Jesus Mirrored in Matthew, Mark, and Luke."

Note: Except in the case of four Books, references are to the First Editions. In the case of H.C., K.G., L.W.D., and T.T. references are (unless otherwise stated) to the Second Editions. For dates of publication, etc., vide Bibliography, pp.450ff.
II. COMMENTARIES, DICTIONARIES, JOURNALS, PERIODICALS.


G.H. = "The Glasgow Herald." (Glasgow: George Outram and Co., Ltd.).
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Note: (i) The usual abbreviations are employed for the Books of the New Testament.
(ii) Unless otherwise stated, Biblical quotations are made from the Revised Version (R.V.).
A. HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

I. RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN SCOTLAND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

1. Liberal Influences and Orthodox Reaction.

A proper appreciation of Bruce's contribution to New Testament Study and to Theology requires some knowledge of the development of religious thought in Scotland in the nineteenth century. The story of this development consists largely of the account of the struggle between a new liberal and progressive spirit and the conservative forces of Calvinistic orthodoxy. The new spirit made a promising appearance between 1820 and 1830, from 1830 till about 1865 was well-nigh smothered by orthodox reaction and ecclesiastical strife, and then gradually came to its own in the remaining part of the century.

The period covered by the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth witnessed such powerful movements as the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the Romantic Revival, and the Evangelical Revival, and in Scotland included the more immediate preparation of those forces of which the Disruption was an outstanding expression. The time was big with influences that made for enlarged charity and wholesome intellectual breadth. Democratic ideas, in particular, had been stimulated by the happenings in France, and there was abroad an independent spirit and a new consciousness of personal rights and responsibilities. It was of those progressive times that Wordsworth wrote in his "French Revolution":

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven."

There was, however, particularly in religious circles, a strong conservative reaction to the drift of events. Many people in Scotland were shocked by the horrors reported from France and by the infidelity that prevailed amongst the revolutionaries. French
free-thinking seemed the logical outcome of the ideas upon which the latitudinarian Moderates had been nourished. This party began to lose hold and there was a reaction towards orthodoxy, a tendency which may be said to have reached its height in 1831 with the deposition for heresy of John McLeod Campbell, of Rhu. That year saw also the birth of Alexander Balmain Bruce.

It was largely from the devout and saintly McLeod Campbell and from the quiet, contemplative, deeply religious layman, Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, that in the pre-Disruption period the liberal influences in Scottish religious thought proceeded. Pfleiderer considers that their contribution was as significant as any made to dogmatic theology in Great Britain in the nineteenth century.\(^1\)

\(^{1}\) The inward or experiential aspects on which Schleiermacher in Germany and Coleridge in England had laid stress were quite independently reached by Erskine. To him religion was a thing of the heart, and the truth of the gospel was proved by its suitability to man's nature and needs. He delighted to dwell on God as the loving Father of all men, and spoke for those who rebelled against what have been termed the "dismal Calvinistic decrees." His first book was entitled, "Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion" (1820). The title itself is suggestive of the revolution through which the mind both of Erskine and of his age was passing. "The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel" appeared in 1828, and "The Brazen Serpent" in 1831. Erskine's standpoint has been well put by Storr:

"Erskine was entirely possessed by the consciousness of God. He was not interested in theological controversy or system-making, or in the historical evidences for Christianity; but he was

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profundly interested in investigating the deep roots of the religious life, and in demonstrating the need for a living and growing faith. And because God was thus living and active, it followed that theology must be progressive. God, Erskine insisted, was continually educating mankind. The traditional forms which doctrine had taken were not final. The Christian consciousness was a growing thing, and would from time to time shape new doctrinal expressions for itself."(1)

Erskine was the friend and inspirer of MoLeod Campbell. Having in 1825 become minister of the parish of Rhu, Campbell was troubled at the lack of real religion in his parishioners, and attributed it to the fact that they were not personally assured of God's love in Christ. He therefore made the basis of his teaching the doctrine of assurance by faith, meaning by that the assurance of the objective fact of the Divine love. From this he was led on to preach the doctrine of universal atonement; for how, he asked, could any particular individual be assured of the Divine love in his own case, unless Christ died for all? Campbell thus endeavoured to make the Atonement more spiritual and more real to men. In his view Christ had made a confession of our sins which was "a perfect Amen in humanity" to the Divine judgment on our sins.(2) Both Erskine and Campbell put ethical inwardness before the forensic externality of orthodox theology.(3)

The existence of such men proved that the seed-time of a new spirit had begun; but powerful forces prevented the appearance of any immediate harvest. Strongest of these was the reaction towards strict orthodoxy already noted, and closely related to this was an ardent evangelistic activity on approved orthodox lines.(4) There was

(2)For an account of Campbell's early ministry and of the Rhu heresy, Cf. J.Tulloch, "Movements of Religious Thought in Britain during the Nineteenth Century," (London,1885), Lecture IV.
also the uproar of the all-absorbing Ten Years' Conflict which
drowned for a space the sounds of the new intellectual movement.
The treatment extended by the Church to some of the liberal-minded
theologians of the time affords conclusive evidence of the dominant
tendency. The narrow Calvinism of the Scottish Church could not
tolerate the teaching of such men. In the Assembly of 1831, by 119
votes to 9, Campbell was formally deposed for heresy. Two years
later the mystic, Edward Irving, who in 1822 had removed to London,
was deposed by the Church of his baptism and ordination. In 1841
another heretical minister, Thomas Wright, was expelled. In the
Disruption period a stiff creetal orthodoxy reigned supreme, and the
Moderates of the time were just as rigid in enforcing the doctrines
of the Confession as their Evangelical opponents.\(^1\)

In the sphere of theology the liberal spirit was temporarily
checked. In the politico-ecclesiastical realm, however, it found
abundant expression in the movement which culminated in the
Disruption of 1843. Epoch-making though that event was, we see it
to-day as but an outstanding incident in the search after liberty,
the crucial episode in the long and often bitter struggle with the
State carried on from Reformation times. As Dr G.D. Henderson has
put it:

"The Disruption was due to increase of interest in spiritual
independence both for the Christian individual and for the
Christian community at a time when the State and vested rights
were not yet prepared for such advance.\(^2\)"

It was by the coincidence of the Evangelical Revival and the demo-
cratic uprising of the time that the struggle for spiritual independ-
ence was brought back to abounding life and vigour. But while the
quarrel of the Church was with the State and the resulting Disruption

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\(^2\) "The Kirk Through the Centuries," (Edinburgh, 1937), p. 27.
was from the State, this great event has also to be seen as the outcome of an acute tension within the Church itself. As Dr P.D. Thomson has said:

"The Disruption is the crowning instance in Scotland of a tension within the Church as a whole, which has always been present and probably always will be, and which had found many previous expressions in Scottish Church history as in that of the Church at large." (1)

In all times when men are stirred with the excitement of new ideas, discussions quickly become controversies, and controversies easily grow acrimonious. In the end the Church broke in two. Nearly a third of her ministers and people "went out" to form the Free Church of Scotland, and in a few years the new Church had created an organization as complete as the Church of Scotland -- with churches, schools, colleges, missions, and a great body of enthusiastic people. The tragedy of it all was not so much the split in an ancient Church as the bitter strife which for fifty years poisoned the religious life of Scotland.

In the period immediately following the Disruption exhaustion on the part of the Church of Scotland, and preoccupation with the details of her growing organization on the part of the Free Church, practically paralysed the progress of religious thought, already arrested by the conservative reaction and the Ten Years' Conflict. Both Churches continued to be lapped in dogmatic slumber and seemed to be more concerned about preserving ancient landmarks than encouraging progressive movement. In 1846 the Free Assembly deposed a Glasgow minister, William Scott, for anti-Calvinistic opinions savouring of the Morisonians, a group which in 1841 had been expelled from the Secession for holding views resembling those of McLeod Campbell. Heresy prosecutions were comparatively simple in those

days. No distinction was drawn between the substance and the incidentals of the Faith, and departure from the teaching of the Westminster standards on any point was fatal. The leading divines of the day -- Chalmers, Cunningham, Candlish, Fairbairn -- stood for high Calvinistic orthodoxy and treated the principal problems of religion after a manner which to us seems strange and uninspiring. Even philosophy had to be orthodox, as was shown in the exclusion of Ferrier, in 1856, from the Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in Edinburgh University, largely by the influence of Dr John Cairns of the United Presbyterian Church. This Church had come into being in 1847 by the union of the Relief and Secession bodies and was somewhat less aggressively conservative than the Free Church.


From our account of the temporary triumph of extreme conservatism in religious thought we turn to trace the movement of a new progressive spirit, which steadily grew in power during the last thirty-five years of the century. Its inspiration was derived mainly from two sources -- the Idealistic philosophy of Germany and the advances of contemporary science.

(a) Idealism provided a welcome alternative to materialism, which reduced mind to an epiphenomenon and made a spiritual view of the universe impossible. (1) Such representative British intellectuals as Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle and Ruskin were deeply influenced. Of these Carlyle, "a Scottish Calvinist transformed into an Idealist," as he has been called, (2) spoke with an authority greater and more immediate than any other. The period 1840-1860 saw him in the zenith of his

influence as a religious teacher. He was the first to make German thought, in all its depth and richness, a living thing to this country. He brought to his countrymen a new enforcement of the prime requirement of self-renunciation (the "Entsagen" of Goethe), giving them a new sense of the sacredness of duty and the dignity of human life. But he insisted on these things because he believed intensely in the reality of the unseen, spiritual world. It was his conviction that there are moral judgments of God continually at work, that righteousness is the soul of the world, and that true blessedness lies in the loyalty of the human will to the eternal moral order. 

His message to his time has been thus summed up by Storr:

"Carlyle stands as a witness to the reality of the spiritual in an age which, under the pressure of a materialistic mode of thought, was in danger of forgetting it. He stands too as the determined foe of shams and make-believes, of assents to creeds which are merely formal or customary. .... Perhaps his chief influence upon theology was to make men realise that the symbols and formulas of religion which satisfied one age could not necessarily be expected to satisfy the next." (i)

Such teaching was widely different from the stiff dogmatism which prevailed particularly in the Free Church, and we shall observe how it exerted great influence for good on young Bruce in his time of intellectual and spiritual unsettlement.

(2) In line with the teaching of Carlyle, but more specifically philosophic, was the famous Hegelian movement, led in Oxford by T.H. Green and in Scotland by the brothers Caird. John Caird we shall notice in due course in connection with the Broad Church movement. Edward was called to the Glasgow Chair of Moral Philosophy in 1866. He spoke of the Christian religion as containing within itself the elements of a universal synthesis. As it has been put:

"He at once preserved the truth of the old and universalised it. Christianity was presented not as something exceptional in the

history of man, but as the culmination of a long process of development, and as owing its form to the influence of Greek modes of thought."(1)

Caird and his influence have been thus characterized by Dr P. Carnegie Simpson:

"Caird was not a great constructive philosopher, but he was a great expositor, and, above all, he taught men to think, though indeed he took many inquiring minds out into new and deep seas -- not, in all cases, piloting them to port."(2)

The Hegelian movement stirred currents of thought in Scotland which sapped both the philosophy of "common sense" and the theology of Calvinism. It is not surprising that it was regarded by many at the time as highly dangerous and that it did for a while unsettle some who were in training for the Church. On the other hand, several of the Church's leading thinkers of a later day were first stirred in Caird's classroom to earnest thought on great theological problems.(3)

The philosophical interest was a particularly strong one in the student life of the Free Church, and many men with honours in Philosophy turned to her Colleges.(4) The Hegelian philosophy itself, however, though it served as a useful suspension bridge in an age of transition, was not destined to retain its vogue for long.

(b) Liberal tendencies in religious thought received further stimulus from the wonderful advances of science in the nineteenth century. A new era in world outlook may be said to have begun with the publication in 1859 of Darwin's "Origin of Species," in which he propounded his theory of evolution by "natural selection." The idea of development was, indeed, far from new to German thought, having a

large place in the philosophy of Hegel, who died in 1831. The British public had been made acquainted with the idea of evolution as applied to the history of the earth and its living forms by Robert Chambers, whose "Vestiges of Creation" appeared in 1844. Of this book Fleming says:

"The value of the book lies in its crude anticipation of Darwin by an independent Scottish thinker; it was extensively read, but neither the Church nor the world was yet prepared to doubt the cosmogony of Genesis or to accept the hypothesis of development as against special creation." (1)

In the 1855 Burnett Lectures on Theism, Thompson argued for the compatibility of a progressive theory of creation with theism, but he considered that much remained to be done before a theory of development could be applied to living beings. (2) Darwin's book was thus epoch-making, the idea of evolution ere long proving the most revolutionary in the whole range of thought. Not only organic life, but social life, history, and religion all came to be explained in terms of the new theory.

The new age of science not unnaturally produced various intellectual reactions. (i) There was a hard, utilitarian type of mind which, interested only in the immediate practical results of science, denied the worth of anything spiritual. (ii) Many of the workers in natural science, contemporary with and influenced by Darwin, championed an aggressive materialism or a crude naturalism, which were strongly hostile to a spiritual interpretation of the universe. Professor Tyndall, speaking at a meeting of the British Association at Belfast in 1874, grandiosely summed up the materialist conception of the universe when he prophesied that science would one day be able to envisage and to explain all that has happened and does not happen.

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happen in the world in terms of

"the ultimate purely natural and inevitable march of evolution from
the atoms of the prordial nebula to the proceedings of the
British Association for the Advancement of Science." (1)

(iii) A prominent type of thought characteristic of the time was
Agnosticism. While it did not deny the existence of God, it accepted
no affirmations, declaring that the human mind had no knowledge of
God and that no knowledge of Him was possible. Thus Christian
apologists, among whom Bruce had a foremost place, found it necessary
to address themselves to minds which, however willing to believe,
found it difficult to accept without question the cardinal truths of
the Christian Faith.

(iv) The Church's earliest reaction to the new ideas was, naturally
enough, a hostile one. It was a widespread conviction that the
theory of evolution undermined the postulates of Christianity. But
gradually, as Christian thinkers with increasing energy studied the
relations between science and religion, the new knowledge was dis­
sociated from the crude naturalism that had at first accompanied it.
The first reassuring statement on the subject by any conspicuous
Scottish theologian appears to have been the inaugural address,
entitled "Evolution and Theology," which Rainy delivered in 1874 as
Principal of New College. His biographer, Carnegie Simpson, remarks:

"That theology can maintain a theistic doctrine of the origin of
the universe and a spiritual doctrine of man along with a readi­ness to let science prove what it can about evolution goes
almost without saying in intelligent religious circles to-day;
it was well worth saying from the chief academic seat of the Free
Church in 1874." (2)

The next year, 1875, heard the first effective counterblast, from a
strictly scientific standpoint, to the aggressive materialism of

(1)Quoted by C.E.M. Joad in "Guide to Modern Thought," (London, 1933),
P. 40.
Tyndall and other mid-Victorians. It took the form of a book entitled "The Unseen Universe," written by two Scotsmen, Tait and Balfour Stewart, both Professors of Natural Philosophy. Four editions were published within a year.\(^{(1)}\)

From this time onward the relation of science and theology constituted one of the most pressing problems confronting Christian thinkers. On the religious side there was constant effort, not only to maintain a religious view of the world in opposition to naturalism, but to work out reconciliations between progressive science and essential religion; and signs of a coming concordat appeared increasingly. As far back as Disruption times it had been a favourite task of theologians and believing scientists to reconcile the seeming differences, especially in the realm of geology. Hugh Miller had made this his special province. In 1845 the Free Church established a Chair of Natural Science in New College, the occupants of which were active in the same line.\(^{(2)}\) In the Darwinian period one of the most notable figures was Henry Drummond, who in 1883 was appointed to the Chair of Natural Science in the Glasgow Free Church College. His "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," published in 1885, had an immediate and amazing success, passing through thirty editions in fourteen years.\(^{(3)}\) It was an attempt to show how the so-called laws of Nature, supposed to be hostile to religion, were really principles that operated also in religious life and experience. A later and weightier work by Drummond, "The Ascent of Man" (1894), was an earnest plea for a Christian doctrine of human evolution. By now the idea of development had become invested with

new power and was whole-heartedly accepted by many Christian teachers, including Bruce. Evolution was seen to be, not a mechanical process in which God has no place, but a great progressive movement directed by, and embodying, Divine purpose. The last decade of the century witnessed the extended application of the progressive principle to the truths and doctrines of the whole Christian system. Moreover, by the end of the century there was coming into view something like a demarcation of the respective spheres of science and theology. Fewer scientists held that the progress of scientific knowledge would ultimately extirpate religion, and practically all theologians acknowledged the right of science to do its own work in its own way.

3. The New Spirit in the Churches.

Our task now is to indicate how the new spirit, so prominent in philosophy and science, manifested itself within the Churches in a gradual broadening of theological outlook. This development was furthered by the circumstance that the Churches had increasingly to turn their attention to a widely diffused temper which not only cared nothing for sectarian distinctions, but even regarded religion itself with indifference or hostility. Thus the Churches were forced to lay less emphasis on the questions which had divided them, and to give larger place to the central truths which were held in practically the same form by them all. But the reorientation effected by the liberalizing influences of the time took place slowly. From 1843 to about 1865 was a period of hidden preparation for the processes that the future was to bring to birth. Thereafter the Church of Scotland gradually became the recognized home of liberty. In the Free Church progress lagged, for the rigid orthodoxy inherited from the Disruption, though slowly decreasing in potency, continued to hold sway. The Church of Scotland may be said to have constituted the Left and the
Free Church the Right, while the U.P. Church occupied a Centre position. From the middle of the 'eighties, however, there was a marked change. While the Church of Scotland experienced a decline of theological interest, there appeared in the other Churches a goodly number of eminent theologians, practically all of them men of modern outlook.

We shall now look at this broadening theological outlook (a) in the Church of Scotland; (b) in the Free Church; and (c) in connection with the attitude of all three churches to the Confession of Faith.

(a) The Church of Scotland. (1) The forward movement in the Church of Scotland received its impetus not only from the general influence of the spirit of the age, but from the fact that several of the Church's prominent leaders were men of liberal outlook. These constituted a Broad Church group which kept alive the teaching and spirit of McLeod Campbell. Campbell's deposition in 1831 had by no means brought his work to a summary close. In a hall in Glasgow he had continued to preach to a company of devoted followers, and in 1856 there appeared his notable book, "The Nature of the Atonement," almost ignored at the time, but destined to have considerable influence on subsequent thought. (2) The presence of a changed temper was evinced by the action of the University of Glasgow in conferring her D.D. degree on one who lay under the Church's ban. (3)

Outstanding figures in the Broad Church movement were Norman Macleod (1812-72), John Tulloch (1823-86), and John Caird (1820-98). (1) The first overt indication within the Church of an altered

religious temper was Macleod's famous speech on the Sabbath question in 1865, when Sunday trains were introduced in Scotland. He took a prominent position against Sabbatarianism, strongly insisting upon the distinction between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday. His attitude revealed a breadth of outlook which created a breach between him and the Evangelicals. (ii) The spirit of inquiry was encouraged by Tulloch, Principal of St Mary’s College, St Andrews. Speaking in America in 1874 on theological conditions in Scotland, he referred to "the rise of a new spirit of thought unconnected with the old standards," described it as "a rapidly growing movement," and traced its causes to

"wider historical and critical study of the New Testament and early Christian records, to literary, intellectual, and personal intercourse with England, and to increased acquaintance with German theology."(2)

Tulloch had a broadminded catholicity of outlook, combining a deep reverence for the past with living faith in progress. He was in touch with English and continental trends of thought, and did useful work in historical theology and religious biography. His most influential book was "Movements of Religious Thought in Britain during the Nineteenth Century" (1885). (iii) Philosophic rather than historic Broad Churchism was the distinctive note of John Caird, who, after a brilliant career in the pulpit, was appointed in 1862 to the Glasgow Chair of Divinity, and in 1873 to the Principalship of the University. Dr G.D. Henderson says of him:

"He was almost indifferent to the causes of disagreement between the main denominations, and was less concerned about dogma than about practical Christianity."(3)

In his teaching he departed largely from the old dogmatic method and

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(2) Quoted by Fleming, Ibid., p. 221.
appealed to reason as the final arbiter of truth. He sought to construe both religion in general and Christianity in the light of the Hegelian philosophy, his efforts finding fullest literary expression in his "Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion" (1880), and his posthumously published Gifford Lectures on the "Fundamental Ideas of Christianity" (1899).

A theological left wing in the pulpit of the Church of Scotland is represented by a composite volume, "Scotch Sermons" (1880). This book, which revealed a Hegelian tendency to reduce Christianity to a system of philosophical ideas or to a product of the religious consciousness, purported to give specimens of a type of teaching increasingly prevalent in the Church. The leaders, however, felt it necessary to take action and McFarlan of Lenzie, one of the contributors, was brought before the Assembly of 1881. While the result was only an admonition, sure proof of the existence of a more tolerant spirit within the Church, the volume, as Fleming says,

"had a good deal to do with an orthodox reaction which followed, and which made the Church less willing for a while to venture on the path of credal relaxation."

The Broad Church movement as a whole has been well summed up by Dr A. J. Campbell thus:

"In the hands of weaker men the Broad Church doctrines sometimes became mere criticisms and negations; but the captains of the movement, standing always for positive ideas, declared a gospel that was universal, spoke of the Fatherhood of God more than of His sovereignty, and led the way back from the traditionalists and their cast-iron dogmas to the study of the Person, Life and Teaching of Christ. By the end of the century the old rigidity had disappeared so completely from Scottish life that few could have believed that it ever existed."

With the Broad Church movement Bruce had considerable sympathy, and we shall observe that much of his work was in line with its aims.

(2) Side by side with the Broad Church movement, and closely

connected with it, was the movement for order and beauty in the services of the Church of which the pioneer was Dr Robert Lee of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh (1804-68). His aims have been thus summarized by Dr G.D. Henderson:

"He advocated the use of organs and the improvement of Church music, urged that ministers should carefully compose prayers and read them in church rather than trust to whatever might come to them at the moment, that worshippers should kneel in prayer, and that "responses" by the congregation should be encouraged so as to hold attention and give an active share in the devotions. ... He deplored the slovenliness which he found common in Scottish Church worship."(1)

The work which Lee commenced was carried on by the Church Service Society, which had for its object the preparation of suitable forms of prayer for the services of the Church. Lee's own models, however, were not greatly followed, the Society preferring to draw from more catholic sources(2). At first the movement was hotly denounced, but in the end it influenced deeply the public worship of all the Scottish Churches. Along with the liturgical improvement went a very necessary improvement in music. Organs were gradually introduced in all the Churches, the U.P. Synod granting permission in 1872 and the Free Church Assembly in 1883.(3) The use of hymns had been begun by the Relief Church, and a U.P. Hymn Book appeared in 1851.(4) The Church of Scotland followed in 1861 with a small selection, but a better and more catholic book, "The Scottish Hymnal", was issued in 1870. The Free Church published its Hymn Book in 1882, Bruce, one of the protagonists in the movement for the improvement of church praise, being joint editor.(5)

(3) Towards the end of the century two features characterized the movement of thought in the national Church. (1) As has been noted,

(1)"The Church of Scotland: a Short History," p.159.  
(4)Cf.ibid.,p.127.  
there was a decay of theological interest. The prominent and authoritative theologians, of whom Bruce was one, were nearly all outside the State Church. Writing in 1899, a prominent Church of Scotland minister complains:

"While almost half a dozen magazines for theological ends have existed practically under Free Church influence, the church that calls itself the Church of Scotland, and should be "decus et tutamen patriae," has not had theological interest or enterprise enough to start one."

(ii) The other noteworthy development in the Church of Scotland was the emergence of a High Church movement, signalized by the formation in 1892 of the Scottish Church Society, consisting largely of men who belonged to the advance wing of the Church Service Society. The new Society's standpoint and aims have been well stated by Wenley:

"This association stands for the organic ideal of the Church as against Protestant individualism and congregationalism; for increasing elaboration of the ordinary services as against Puritan plainness; for the church as a place of worship as against its use as a hall for the delivery of lectures under the name of sermons; for the regular observance of the Christian year as against flouting of "Papist" feast days; for ecclesiastical architecture as against Presbyterian ugliness; for effectual sacraments as against mere commemorative symbolism; for the teaching of the Fathers as against that of some brethren."(2)

Though a small group, the Scottish Church Society leavened the Church out of all proportion to its membership. But its influences were unfavourable for theological development, and not a few liberal churchmen of the time saw in it signs of doctrinal reaction. In the face of scientific and critical assaults on the Faith, it frequently manifested a timidity that merely entrenched itself in ecclesiastical dogmas. With this High Church movement Bruce had no sympathy. The simplicity of the Galilean Gospel was for him smothered by what he regarded as unnecessary elaboration of church services and unmeaning

sacramentarianisms.\(^{(1)}\)

(b) The Free Church. Here we are concerned with two matters: the Higher Criticism of the Bible, and the related question of Biblical Inerrancy.

(1) The influences behind the Broad Church movement in the Church of Scotland brought to the colleges of the Free Church "German" liberalism in the form of the Higher Criticism of the Scriptures. The movement towards Germany began in 1834 when Welsh, later to be the last Moderator of the pre-Disruption Church, visited some of its seats of learning.\(^{(2)}\) In the early 'forties several young Seceders, among them John Cairns and John Ker, studied at German universities, setting a fashion which was only interrupted by the First World War.\(^{(3)}\) Wider interest in German theology was awakened in Scotland through translations in the "Biblical Cabinet" and, later, in T. & T. Clark's "Foreign Theological Library." The early volumes, however, were of a very conservative type and were hardly representative of the living movement of German thought and scholarship. Nevertheless, the names of more venturesome scholars and thinkers were made known, and in due course Clark's series introduced Dorner, Ewald, and others of the moderate critical school. Ebrard's "The Gospel History: a Compendium of Critical Investigations," revised and edited by Bruce, appeared in 1863. These translations did much to encourage Scottish students to go to Germany in order to learn the language and acquire at first-hand some knowledge of German theology. Dr John Dickie states:

"By the middle of the 'sixties or a little later a working knowledge of German had come to be regarded as practically essential

\(^{(1)}\)For Bruce's views on the Church and the Sacraments, vide infra, pp. 10.
for a theological Professor of the Free Church of Scotland."(1)

The early Professors of the Free Church were "safe" men, who adhered strictly to confessional lines. Something of the atmosphere of the Colleges in their time will be revealed later, when we come to review Bruce's intellectual development. Here we are concerned with the beginnings of a broader and more scientific treatment of Scripture and with the consequent theological problem as to how to reconcile an adequately Christian doctrine of Biblical authority with the assured results of the new Biblical Criticism. The work as a whole entailed both an exegetical and a constructive or dogmatic element, and the former naturally preceded the latter. As Dr John Dickie has put it:

"The Scriptures had to be understood in detail, in the proper historical setting of the various books, before there could be a constructive presentation of the Doctrine of Biblical Authority."(2)

It is one of the glories of the old Free Church that in this field the pioneer detailed work, for the whole English-speaking world, was largely done by her scholars. In the field of Old Testament study the earliest workers were A.B. Davidson and his brilliant pupil, Robertson Smith. In 1861, when he was Hebrew tutor at New College, Davidson produced a "Commentary on Job" (chapters 1-13), which revealed the opening mind of a great Biblical scholar and indicated a new departure in the study of Scripture.(3) In the following year he was elected to the Hebrew Chair in the College, and in 1870 Robertson Smith, at the unusually early age of twenty-four, was chosen for the corresponding Chair in the Aberdeen College. While both appointments were fraught with great consequences for Biblical scholarship and theological progress, it was round the person of Smith that the battle

(1)"Fifty Years of British Theology: a Personal Retrospect," (Edinburgh, 1937), p.87.
for freedom of critical inquiry was destined to be waged.

It was a strange coincidence that revolutionary conceptions of the Bible should be set forth by a Professor of the Church which prided itself on being the most strictly orthodox body in Christendom. Throughout the membership of the Free Church not only were the traditional views held of the structure, authorship and authenticity of the various Scriptures, but the Bible as a whole was regarded as the verbally inspired, and therefore absolutely authoritative, oracle of God. Now, with apparent suddenness, the Church was forced to consider in a new light these hitherto unexamined beliefs. Dr G.F. Barbour, in an interesting comparison, has pointed out that the conflict, which was at its fiercest between 1876 and 1881, was not less acute, and was even wider in its repercussions, than the Ten Years' Conflict which ended in the Disruption:

"The subject at issue was again that of Christian liberty; but, whereas the earlier conflict had turned on the liberty of the Church to carry on her spiritual work unhindered by encroachments on the part of the State, this new controversy was rather concerned with liberty of thought and inquiry within the Church. 

.... Yet in one respect both conflicts were alike. As the range of the dispute widened and its implications became clear, the whole mind of the Scottish people was stirred to activity and interest. ... In a real sense, the Robertson Smith case completed or made an approach to completing -- the liberating work begun at the Reformation."(1)

For over five years after his appointment in 1870 Smith worked away quietly at his scholarly pursuits. While his thorough acquaintance with the latest theories and conclusions of continental scholarship was known to experts, his personal attitude to the new principles of historical criticism had been already indicated in his inaugural address (1870):

"The higher criticism does not mean negative criticism. It means the fair and honest looking at the Bible as a historical record, and the effort everywhere to reach the real meaning and historical

setting, not of individual passages of the Scripture, but of the
Scripture records as a whole. ... This process can be dangerous
to faith only when it is begun without faith -- when we forget
that the Bible history is no profane history, but the story of
God's saving self-manifestation."(1)

Such general statements did not unduly alarm the orthodox. It was
when Smith began to publish the results to which he had been led that
the tempest of controversy arose. This occurred with the appearance,
in December 1875, of the article "Bible" in the ninth Edition of the
"Encyclopaedia Britannica." Smith's main positions have been thus
summarized by Fleming:

"That the Bible is "a stratification and not an organism."
That the current traditions as to the Mosaic authorship of the
entire Pentateuch and other historical books are unreliable,
there being not one continuously consistent account but a
fusion of several distinct narratives which partly cover the
same ground and were combined into unity by later editing.
That the writings of the earlier prophets in the eighth century
B.C. preceded in date the codification of the Law, and greatly
influenced the method and value of the history.
That Deuteronomy is a prophetic legislative programme, the aim of
the author not being to propound another law but to expand and
develop Mosaic principles under the name of the Lawgiver, in
relation to new needs.
That the Psalms and other poetical books are to be regarded as
mostly anonymous, only two or three of the Psalms being
Davidic.
That the Prophets were preachers to their times rather than
predictors of future events.
That the Synoptic Gospels were "non-apostolic digests of spoken
and written apostolic tradition."(2)

It was unfortunate that Smith's first prominent attempt to set
forth the new view of the Bible should have been made in a volume in
which he could show his mind as a scholar, but not his full positive
faith as a Christian minister. It meant that an unduly negative
impression was given to those for whom the whole structure of faith
rested on the foundations which he appeared to have destroyed. His
published views seemed to the orthodox to deprive the Old Testament

(1)Quoted in "The Life of William Robertson Smith," by J.S.Black
of all right to be regarded as Divinely inspired, and in consequence he was brought to trial in the courts of the Free Church. Some five years of intense agitation passed before the complicated case was finally disposed of in 1881, when it was decided that it was "no longer safe and advantageous for the Church" that Smith should teach its students.(1)

But though the struggle ended in the defeat of Smith, the dismissed Professor had won a notable victory for freedom. He had vindicated once for all the rights of historical research as applied to the Old Testament. The controversy revealed that the new learning had already gained a firm foothold within the Free Church, and among Smith's supporters were some whose names were yet to add lustre to its Colleges. Three Glasgow professors -- Bruce, Candlish, and Lindsay -- were foremost in defence of the accused, while the students and younger ministers were enthusiastically on his side. It was from the older men, who regarded the new teachings as daring and irreverent speculations, and who could not adjust themselves to the idea of a progressive Divine Revelation, that the opposition chiefly came.

(2) The question of Biblical Inerrancy had not been made a main charge in the Smith case, but it had already come before the attention of the Church in 1876, when Marcus Dods, one of Smith's supporters, preached, and afterwards had published, a sermon on "Revelation and Inspiration," in which he "did not hesitate to say not only that there might be but that there were errors in the Bible."(2) Incurring the censure of his Presbytery, Dods, while not retracting his opinions,

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succeeded after some fight in purchasing a rather inglorious peace by agreeing to withdraw the sermon from publication as "uncalled-for and inopportune."(1) Though discarding verbal inspiration, Dods was essentially an evangelical apologist, and by his stress on the real fundamentals he confirmed many in the Faith. The Free Church gave proof of its confidence in him by appointing him in 1889 to the New College Chair of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis. In his inaugural lecture, however, as well as in other addresses, he made his critical standpoint clear, and similar views were expressed about the same time by Bruce.(2) The result was that, in the Assembly of 1890, both men had to bear the brunt of a sharp attack in which they were even accused of tampering with the central doctrines of Revelation. The great majority, however, were convinced that there was no ground for any process of heresy, and both men were allowed to go on teaching without further hindrance.(3) Campbell’s comment on the course of events is apposite:

"The colleges of the Free Church became famous homes of learning. The Free Church, which formerly had prided itself upon its unbending conservatism of thought, learned to glory in the liberalism of its colleges — a liberalism all the more remarkable because in the Church of Scotland the contemporary tendency was working away from the Broad Church movement towards a more emphatic assertion of Catholic faith and practice."(4)

But though the transition to the new viewpoint was easier and less apparent in the other Scottish Churches than in the Free Church, which experienced the full force of the critical battle, it became more distinct with the passing years. Reviewing the development as a whole, Fleming says:

"The surprising thing is how so short a time was needed for the readjustment of religious thought on so vital a matter. In 1875

the ideas of a static Revelation and a verbally infallible Bible held the field almost without question. Before the end of the century the gradual unfolding of Divine Truth and the supreme value of its substance apart from the literal accuracy of the human record had become familiar conceptions, expounded by the authorised teachers of the Church, and well advanced towards acceptance by the educated rank and file."(1)

(c) The Reconstruction of Belief and the Confession of Faith.

Smith evidently did not appreciate how far-reaching was the reconstruction of traditional belief which the critical method involved. It was only within the sphere of Biblical literature and history that he applied it: in theology he remained a convinced evangelical, and even a Calvinist. As Dr C.G.M'Crie has put it:

"To the doctrine of the Reformed Confessions in general and of the symbol of his own Church in particular Professor Robertson Smith loyally and uniformly adhered. He contended that what he had written and spoken regarding the origin, composition, meaning and transmission of the books of the Bible did not traverse anything in the Confession of Faith bearing upon the inspiration, infallible truth, and divine authority of Holy Scripture."(2)

It may seem unfortunate that the new view of the Old Testament should have been buttressed at all by an appeal to the Confession. Dr G.F. Barbour, however, has pointed out an important consideration which may well modify this impression:

"If the theological as well as the critical question had been formally debated in the 'seventies, the traditional views must have triumphed all along the line. The fact that Robertson Smith was not at this time interested in the restatement of dogma but only in the reinterpretation of the Bible, meant that the new outlook on Scripture had time to prepare the way for the reconstruction of belief."(3)

It was inevitable, however, that sooner or later the spirit behind the Broad Church and the Biblical critical movements should raise theological questions, in particular that of the relation of the Churches to the Westminster Confession. With increasing insistence

men asked whether the Confession was a permanent statement of Christian doctrine and duty, binding on the conscience in every particular, or a document open to revision from time to time. If the Churches were to keep in touch with the living thought of the period, it was clearly necessary that the matter should be dealt with. But there were real difficulties in the way. For the Church of Scotland there was the circumstance that the Confession had been incorporated in the Revolution Settlement of 1690 as one of the marks of identity of the national Church, and that stringent conditions had been imposed by law in 1711.\(^{(1)}\) Any alteration in the Church's relation to its Confession required the consent of Parliament. The situation was further complicated by the Disestablishment agitation.\(^{(2)}\) The Free Church and the U.P. Church, not being subject to any hampering State enactment, had more liberty. For them, however, there was the limiting circumstance that, since the Confession formed part of their constitutions, its place in their articles affected their position in the eyes of the law.\(^{(3)}\) A difficulty of another kind, and one which affected all the Churches, was the general fluidity of contemporary theological opinion. At least three tendencies were manifest. (i) Strongest with some was a desire for unfettered freedom of inquiry and liberty of individual judgment, at least with regard to secondary matters. (ii) An increasing number, mindful of the Calvinistic origins of the Confession and of the Scottish Churches, were anxious to preserve continuity with the doctrinal "testimony" of the Reformed Churches. (iii) Others were intent primarily on declaring the Church's allegiance to the Catholic Faith. The position as a whole has been well put by Campbell:

\(^{(3)}\)Cf. ibid., p.290.
"The problem was to express the faith of the Church in such a fashion as to find room for the liberty, which the Broad Churchmen had won, within a Church which remained true to its Reformation traditions and to the Catholic faith."

In a period of theological unrest and transition, it was impossible for the Churches to draw up a new Confession that would be generally acceptable. The needed relief was achieved by dealing, not with the Confession itself, but with the documents describing the Church's relation to the Confession; as Fleming puts it:

"by allowing a wider interpretation of the old Creed rather than by entering on the premature preparation of a new one." (2)

(1) The U.P. Church had the distinction of being the first of the three to engage in the work of reconstruction. Several heresy cases, notably that of Fergus Fergusson, a leader in the movement for credal reform, produced a consciousness that, while general adherence to the Confession must be required, there must also be room for liberty of thought within this limit. Accordingly, under the guidance of Principal John Cairns, the Synod of 1379 adopted a Declaratory Act which, in Fleming's words,

"deserves study as the first formulation of the points on which liberal Scottish Presbyterianism was prepared to modify the traditional Calvinism." (3)

This Act did two things in particular. (i) It allowed liberty of opinion on questions "not entering into the substance of the faith," giving as a specimen "the interpretation of the "six days" in the Mosaic account of the creation." (4) (ii) It made declarations toning down certain of the sterner doctrines of Calvinism, such as a limited Atonement, absolute Predestination, total Depravity, and the non-salvability of the Heathen. (5)

(5) Cf. Ibid., pp. 231ff.
(2) In 1892 the Free Church passed a Declaratory Act, covering much the same ground. Apart from the fact that opinion on doctrinal matters had undergone considerable modification since 1843, two strong motives were behind the Act. (i) The Robertson Smith controversy and subsequent developments had revealed at least the ambiguity of the Confession on important modern issues; and, in the words of the preamble of the Act, the Church recognized the expediency of removing "difficulties and scruples which have been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive licence or are admitted to office." (2)

(ii) It was realized that union negotiations with the U.P. Church could not be hopefully resumed without a common understanding as to doctrinal freedom. (2)

(3) The Church of Scotland, as we have seen, found the political difficulty barring the way. In the case of Elders a measure of liberty was secured by an Assembly Act of 1889, which authorized a modified formula, expressing general approbation of the Confession rather than consent to every part. (3) Full constitutional relief for ministers was not obtained until 1905, and it was 1910 before the General Assembly approved of a new formula, in which ministers bound themselves to "the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession." (4) But freedom of opinion on minor points had for long enough been both claimed and exercised by Christian teachers, and such freedom had proved a stimulus to fruitful thinking.

II. THE LIFE OF BRUCE IN OUTLINE.

1. His Early Life (1831-1875), with Special Reference to his Reactions to his Environment and the Development of his Thought.

(a) Boyhood and Youth. To appreciate Bruce's contribution to New Testament Study and to Theology we require some knowledge, not only of the general movement of religious thought in Scotland in the nineteenth century, but of the more personal influences and experiences which worked toward determining his career. He was born at Aberargie, in the parish of Abernethy, Perthshire, on 30th January, 1831. Of his boyhood we know but little. Dr W.M. Macgregor has quoted approvingly what an old Scotswoman said of him: "He was a wild laddie, but he wasna deevilish." The rudiments of his education he received at Auchterarder parish school, under a teacher of some repute in his day. His father, David Bruce, who was an Elder in the Church of Scotland, reared his family in a typical Scottish rural home; and to this home, where the claims of religion were given first place, Alexander undoubtedly owed much of that spirit of earnest personal piety which was later one of his notable characteristics. Those were stirring and anxious times in the ecclesiastical life of Scotland, and some of the most bitter controversies and troubles of the period sprang up in Perthshire. All through his childhood young Bruce must have heard the din of the Ten Years' Conflict, and during the long winter nights keen discussions took place in the home concerning religion and the difficulties of the Church. The father held a post connected with the land. In 1843, however, owing to his adhesion to the Free Church, he was compelled to resign it and along with his family

removed to Edinburgh. Alexander was thus a lad of twelve when the Disruption took place, and the turmoil produced by that great event had not yet abated when, two years later, he began his academic career by entering the University of Edinburgh.

The ministry of the Free Church was the ultimate aim of the young student. Three influences in particular helped to set his face towards that goal. (1) He was deeply and decisively influenced by his godly father, of whose wisdom, breadth of mind, and tender humanity he loved to speak. (2) He had the example of his elder brother, David, who became a minister in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand and was in later life Moderator of its General Assembly. (3) The searching discussions of those days and the heroic charm of Dr Chalmers did much to fashion the youth's ideals of the Church and the Christian ministry. (3) Chalmers lived till 1847. Candlish, Cunningham, and Guthrie were the leading divines of the city. The enthusiasm evoked by the Disruption and by the noble struggle preceding it was still fresh. Evangelical fervour was at its height. The Free Church was bursting with new life and seemed to be sweeping everything before it. In this atmosphere the lad's soul was quickened to a deep devotion.

Though he did not trouble to take the M.A. degree, Bruce was a distinguished student in various departments. Dr George Reith, in whose church in Glasgow he was later to serve as an Elder, has stated:

"One of his early triumphs, which in later years he delighted to recall, was the defeat of his class-fellow, James Clerk Maxwell, in mathematics -- the branch of science in which the latter subsequently achieved brilliant distinction." (4)

Having completed the curriculum in Arts, he entered the New College

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(2) Cf. Obituary in G.H., 8th August, 1899.
in 1849, to spend six years there as a student of Divinity.

But now we have to record the effect on young Bruce of other influences. In the atmosphere of wider life and thought which he breathed as a student in Edinburgh, his strong mind began to stir and question, and not a few of the convictions of the sincere but inexperienced piety nurtured in his home were subjected to a severe strain. In a Magazine article on "The Modern Neglect of the Bible," written near the end of his life, he has made reference to an illuminating incident of this early period. Speaking of the old fashion of reading the Bible straight through from beginning to end, under the impression that, being the inspired Word of God, it must all be profitable, if not equally profitable, reading, he continues:

"This way of using the Scriptures was systematically and conscientiously followed in Scotland in my boyhood. ... Speaking from personal recollection, I cannot say that I found much profit in it, except, of course, the benefit to character through the discipline of strict adherence to a plan. When I was no longer a schoolboy, and had begun to think for myself, I sometimes felt keenly the drawbacks of the method. I remember a scene at family worship. My father, a man of God if ever there was one, was reading in course the Aholah-Aholibah chapter in Ezekiel. The tone of his voice showed that it was costing him acute pain, but he was doing his duty. I could not stand it, and said abruptly, "Father, pass on to the next chapter." He said, "Alexander, it is the word of God." I replied, "I don't care; it is not fit to be read." He turned over the leaf, not sorry, I think, to be relieved by my impulsive interruption."(1)

Alexander had, indeed, begun to think for himself; but it was thinking which involved much painful toil. During the whole of his career in New College he wrestled strenuously with religious problems and intellectual difficulties which had arisen within him. For a time it appeared as if he had lost his bearings; so much so that, in despair of finding light, he almost accepted the post of teacher in the Calcutta Mission Institute that had been offered to him.(2) His reverence for his father, according to his own testimony, was the

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sheetanchor which helped him to ride out the storm:

"In my student days, when all accepted beliefs were in a state of solution, I was tided over a dark time of doubt and preserved from precipitate action by reverence for my father, whom I could not bear to grieve by avowal of unbelief, and abandonment of my purpose to study for the ministry."(1)

At the General Assembly of 1890, when his book "The Kingdom of God" was impeached as containing heresy, Bruce, in one of the most impressive and pathetic of his utterances, gave a brief sketch of the intellectual difficulties which assailed him at this period of his life. One or two autobiographical allusions in the speech may appropriately be reproduced here as showing, not only the nature of his difficulties, but also how early his thoughts were turned in the direction which they pursued unwaveringly to the end:

"My youth was cast in a time of ecclesiastical controversy. I went to College in 1845, less than fifteen years old. It is not good for youth to know too soon the evil that is in the world, even though it be necessary evil. I made my escape from the strife of the Churches to the teaching of Jesus, where I saw in its brightness and unearthly beauty the Christian ideal."(2)

The last sentence gives in a nutshell the particular theological point of view which was Bruce's throughout the rest of his life. In this same speech he made special allusion to Strauss's "Leben Jesu" as the book which had shaken the fabric of his faith to its foundations:

"The book was a parting gift from a college comrade, Carsairs Douglas, brother of Principal Douglas, on his leaving this country as a missionary to China. The work produced a great impression on me. For one thing, it made me very conscious of my ignorance, and so led me to make a careful and prolonged study of the Gospels, that I might know the certainty of those things wherein I had been instructed."(3) (4)

(2) P.D.G.A.F.C.S., May, 1890, p. 176
(3) Ibid.
(4) Principal G.C.M. Douglas, of the Glasgow Free Church College, in the closing Lecture of Session 1899-1900, entitled "The Three Professors Lately Taken from Us -- Candlish, Drummond, and Bruce," curiously, and surely wrongly, states that the book which his brother gave Bruce was Renan's "Life of Jesus." He speaks of the sale of tens of thousands of copies of this work by the great French scholar and sceptic of his day, and adds: "forty or fifty years ago, it was
Further light on Bruce's reaction to the ecclesiastical and intellectual environment of his early life in Edinburgh is provided in the account of an interview with him in 1893 contributed by the Rev. Arthur Jenkinson to the pages of "The Thinker." In the course of this interview Bruce acknowledged that in his student days he was deeply influenced by the life and movements of those stirring times:

"I recognised the splendid abilities of our leading men, and honoured them for their sacrifices and services. It was a period of great evangelical fervour and enthusiasm. I took special interest in the great debates in the Assembly, more than I have taken since. Many of the laymen then were exceedingly able men. ... They go in now more for preaching and evangelistic work. In those days they were occupied with building up the Church, and some of them showed great gifts for administration and debate."(1)

It might have been thought that the fervour of those times would have so fallen upon every noble and enthusiastic mind as to blind it to criticism. But other influences were at work, and already Bruce felt that a new departure in Christian belief and practice was required.

His words, as given by Jenkinson, are quite revealing:

"A great intellectual movement had already begun, and many of us were feeling its presence. .... We were dissatisfied. We felt we wanted something deeper, broader, sweeter than what we saw around us. With some the feeling came to nothing; others of us found, at last, what we wanted. .... At that time I was reading Thomas Carlyle, and, like thousands of other young men, I looked up to him with passionate admiration and reverence. You who read him to-day do not know what he was to those who read him more than forty years ago."(2)

In the light of these words we are not surprised to learn that, on the imagined to be the last enemy, and the most dangerous, which must be destroyed or else it would destroy faith in Christ." (Cf. "Two Lectures: Delivered in the Free Church College, Glasgow, at the close of Sessions 1898-1899 and 1899-1900,"(Glasgow, 1900), p.23). Doubtless Renan's book would have its own influence on Bruce; but the Assembly speech of 1890 makes it certain that it was Strauss's volume which brought him acute mental distress and revolutionized his thinking.

occasion of Carlyle's death in 1881, Bruce told his students in
Glasgow, with emotion, that he was his first prophet.\(^{(1)}\) Jenkinson's
own comment at this point is not without interest:

"I could not help thinking, whilst Professor Bruce was speaking,
how much his face and head reminded me of the portraits of Thomas
Carlyle. He has the same large, massive forehead and shaggy
eyebrows, and thought-worn features. And, if the outward man,
still more did the speech suggest Carlyle; so simple, homely,
honest, unaffected."\(^{(2)}\)

Thus it was that, in his time of "Sturm und Drang," failing to get
from his College professors the help and light he sought, and thrown
on his own resources, Bruce found his teachers elsewhere. Two names,
besides that of Carlyle, were lovingly recalled in after years, --
that of Frederick W. Robertson, of Brighton, who had made faith
rational, and that of Oswald Dykes, afterwards Principal of West-
minster College, Cambridge, who, during the brief period of his
colleagueship with Candlish at Free St George's, Edinburgh, had
preached persuasively the spiritual ideal.\(^{(3)}\)

\(\textbf{(b) The Intellectual Atmosphere of New College.}\) Before we
proceed further with our account of Bruce's inner development, we must
inquire how it was that, in his intellectual and spiritual difficulties,
he received so little help from the men who filled the Chairs at New
College and had, almost single-handed and inch by inch, to cut his way
out of the thicket. This theological college derives its name from
the fact that, when it was founded after the Disruption, it was
intended that it should provide an education in both Arts and Theology.
It was to be the New, as against the Old, College of the city. In
1853, however, theological tests for the Chairs in the University of
Edinburgh were abolished, and in consequence the Arts department in

\(\begin{align*}
\text{(1)} & \text{Cf. Clow, Op. cit., p.8.} & \text{(2)} & \text{Op. cit., p.28.} \\
\end{align*}\)
New College was rendered no longer necessary or desirable. Of the three Arts Chairs, that of Natural Science became attached to the Theological curriculum, while the occupants of the two others were appointed to corresponding Chairs in the University. One of these professors, Campbell Fraser, who from 1846 to 1857 occupied the New College Chair of Logic, regarded Bruce as one of his most promising pupils.

During the period (1849-55) in which Bruce was a student in New College, the Theology Chairs were filled as follows: William Cunningham was Principal and Professor of Church History; James Buchanan and James Bannerman occupied the two Divinity Chairs; John Duncan, affectionately known as "Rabbi" Duncan, was Professor of Hebrew; and Alexander Black taught Biblical Exegesis. But neither through the repute of these teachers, nor through their methods of instruction, did the College of this period offer much inducement to students for the ministry. The professors had been appointed, not so much because of any academic distinction, as because of their social and ecclesiastical connections and their personal influence with the leaders of the Church. Through the circumstances of the time most of them were better disciplined in ecclesiastical affairs than in speculation. Moreover, the Free Church had come into existence very largely as a revolt against what was considered the latitudinarianism of the "auld Kirk", and had started on its splendid career as the rigid and determined upholder of the faith of the Covenanters. The old orthodoxy had thus kindled into new fervour, and the professors were honoured and were notable for their moral and spiritual passion rather than for their competence as teachers of

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divinity. Referring to the College staff at this period, Clow has written:

"No one of them had any definite scholarly fitness for the work of the chair. Some of them were not efficient in any sense of the word. It is on record that, in one class, students who answered the roll-call used to slip out, and were never missed. George Keith declared that he "got through a valuable course of reading during my class attendance" in another case. Had such appointments continued to be made, the name of the Church would never have been mentioned in the same breath as scholarship." (1)

Further revealing evidence for this state of matters is provided by Strahan in his biography of A.B. Davidson, who entered New College three years after Bruce and was for three sessions his contemporary. Strahan points out that Davidson had scarcely settled down to work before he began to feel a strange, unaccountable uneasiness, and that when he got into touch with the men around him, he found that the same feeling had taken possession of many of the best students in all the different years. (2) The situation is illumined in extracts from three letters. James Duguid, who entered College some years after Davidson, wrote:

"In Davidson's days as well as in my days the students were ahead of the professors, who were all old men. Cunningham was by far the most open-minded and influential of them all. When Davidson was himself a student, there were several of the best men who seceded from the Free Church." (3)

What exactly was going on inside the walls of the College, and what the College lacked in those days, is indicated in a couple of extracts from correspondence between two of Davidson's outstanding contemporaries, Alexander Nicholson and John Veitch, both of whom evidently failed to find what they expected and were consequently lost to the ministry of the Free Church. Nicholson exclaims:

(3) Ibid., p. 57.
"To think that because a man, fronted at once with the whole array of theological dogmas, takes upon him to examine and question them, he is therefore to be marked as an unwholesome, entangled sceptic, is everything that is servile and degrading."

To which Veitch replies:

"In point of fact, in performing this process you are merely discharging your duty. To seek to extinguish the spirit of enquiry is as hopeless as to essay to turn the sun from its course. Besides, where would be the Protestantism they profess, if such a thing were carried out? Truly this is a liberty from which I would fain be free and a Protestantism against which I protest." (1)

No doubt the students as a whole fully recognized the moral earnestness of their teachers, were in general religious sympathy with them, and had for them a sincere personal respect. But the evidence we have given proves that not a few of them found most irksome the uncompromising dogmatism which held sway. The vigour and rigour were, it is true, somewhat softened by the tender grace of "Rabbi" Duncan, who himself "had in his youth walked through dry places seeking rest;" (2) but this influence was of a fitful kind, and apt to be neutralized by countervailing idiosyncrasies. Strahan's reference is, again, interesting and apposite:

"The Rabbi did more for Davidson than for any other student, not as a teacher of Hebrew, for though he could "talk his way to the Wall of China," he was unfit to be an instructor in Hebrew or any other language; nor by his lectures on Old Testament theology, into which there entered scarcely a ray of historical or literary criticism; but by that spiritual genius which makes the Colloquia Peripatetica a living book to this day." (3)

In the New College of those days, then, there was little to lift a troubled soul up from the depths; and the evidence we have adduced goes to show that Bruce was by no means the only student to know dissatisfaction and to be visited by intellectual and spiritual perplexities. A leaven was working in the minds of the more thoughtful men; the bases of the faith were being opened out to fresh inquiry; though

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(2) Cf. Obituary of Bruce in G.H.  
the Darwinian period had not yet begun, enlarging scientific knowledge was raising new problems of absorbing interest; and, in and through it all, the mystery of man's spiritual life was being contemplated with increasing wonder. We cannot be surprised that in these circumstances there was in theological study an incipient demand for freedom in criticism and interpretation, and for a more adequate and defensible statement of Christian doctrine. Men were beginning to feel that it should be possible to question a dogma without being, in consequence, open to the charge of scepticism or unbelief.

(c) Bruce as Probationer and Minister. In spite of the real help which he got from Carlyle, F.W. Robertson, and Oswald Dykes, it is clear that Bruce's intellectual and spiritual difficulties had by no means all been overcome by the time he left New College. Jenkinson, in the course of the conversation with him to which we have already referred, asked this pertinent question: "I see, Dr Bruce, that you received licence in 1855; but you were not ordained until 1859. What about those four years?" Bruce's reply was in these terms:

"They were years of darkness and spiritual trouble. I was groping my way to the light, and at last I found it in the Jesus of the Gospels." (1)

From Bruce himself we have further evidence of the "darkness and spiritual trouble" of his years as a Divinity student and a probationer. In 1861, two years after his ordination, when writing to a ministerial friend, the Rev. R. MacEllar, he made frank confession of the perplexed state of his mind at this period:

"I was in your case for years, diseased at once in body and mind, each acting on and intensifying the other. ... When I was in your case I could not have imagined what perfect peace, and rest of mind and heart, I was to attain to, and have attained to now by the mercy of God. ... I have doubted the whole supernatural system of truth, the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection of Christ, and of men in general, the future world, the inspiration...

of Scripture, and been indescribably miserable. Now I have
attained to the full assurance of understanding, to the acknow­
ledgment of the mystery of God, and the Father, and of Christ;
and so will you."(1)

The last sentence of this quotation proves that by 1861 Bruce had
passed through his night of doubt and sorrow and had won his way to
the joy of faith in the great Christian verities. It was a hard but
invaluable discipline. Step by step, and in the sweat of his brow,
he had climbed up into the light, making full proof of each foothold,
so that his beliefs became honestly and completely his own.

We are, however, slightly anticipating the course of events.
Licence to preach was received in 1855; but four years of a wandering
life -- the "years of darkness and spiritual trouble," spent chiefly
as assistant at Ancrum and at Lochwinnoch(2) -- elapsed before the man
to whom the Church was later to pay such attention found a congrega-
tion that desired his services. At length, in 1859, he was
ordained to the ministry of the Free Church on being called to
Cardross, a small and quiet country parish in Dumbartonshire. His
predecessor there had been deposed by the General Assembly, after the
notorious "Cardross case" had bothered the Free Church for several
years;(3) and it was to the difficult task of pacifying and reorganizing
a distracted and embittered congregation that the young minister was
summoned. The measure of his success in healing the divisions may be
inferred from the fact that within a short period "Bruce of Cardross"
was familiarly spoken of as one of the Church's coming men.\(^4\)

By the beautiful shores of the Clyde, in the relative leisure of
his rural charge, Bruce lived a happy and studious life. In after
years he often looked back with pleasure to this peaceful time of

\(^1\)"Memorials of a Ministry on the Clyde, etc. With a Biographical
Notice by Rev. A.B. Bruce," (Glasgow, 1876), pp.xiii ff.
\(^3\)Cf. Obituary of Bruce in G.H.
\(^4\)Cf. ibid.
preparation for the work he was destined to do, and to the friendships
he had had with many simple but congenial and receptive spirits. (1) He
was in the habit of impressing upon his students that years of
ministry in a country parish among the common people present a young
man with the occasion and the temptation of his life. (2) In at least
three respects he made it his occasion.

(i) Besides being a faithful pastor, he put his very best into the
work of preparation for the pulpit, and learned the art of expressing
the most profound religious principles so clearly and so simply that
none could well fail of grasping his meaning. His preaching was
mainly about Christ, and he proclaimed his good news to his people
with an ardent delight. Jenkinson has written:

"His congregation was small, but was deeply attached to him. I
have met with people who attended his ministry in those far-away
days, who look upon them as the ideal period of their lives. He
is said to have never given much care to the cultivation of the
charms and graces of the popular preacher. But he possessed
powers of a higher order. His ministry was stimulating and
helpful; it was the ministry of one who sought to "see Jesus"
for himself." (3)

In Bruce's biography of William Denny, the Dumbarton ship-builder,
there is a passage which throws a clear light upon the inner spirit
and scope of his ministry:

"From the Gospels were drawn most of my texts in those days, and
all my inspiration. My sermons, I am sure, contained many
crudities, yet I venture to believe that they were wholesome in
their main tendency. The Christianity of Christ differs from
ecclesiastical Christianity in many ways, but above all in spirit;
and the "Galilean Gospel" is more worthy of acceptance than any
gospel which is stated in terms of a rigid theological system;
and it is the test and standard of what is genuinely evangelic." (4)

(ii) Bruce made firm and secure the foundation of his faith in the
historical Jesus Christ as the article of a standing or falling Christ-
ianity. Having just emerged from his "years of darkness and spiritual

(2) Cf. Obituary of Bruce in "Scotsman", 9th August, 1899.
(4) L.W.D., p. 43.
trouble," he felt within him an instinctive urge to strengthen the bases of faith both for himself and for others. Again we have an illuminating commentary on his experience in his Life of Denny. Speaking of Denny as a man who honestly went to Christ's school and learnt from Him the ethical ideal of life, he says:

"There was a certain fitness in his coming my way for a season, as I had passed through an experience similar to his. The Church's presentation of Christianity, whether in creed or in life, had failed to lay hold of me; and I had been obliged to dive into the deep sea of doubt in quest of the pearl of faith. And during those Cardross years I was as a man who had found a thing of inestimable price -- genuine Christianity, the Christianity of Christ -- found it by searching in the Gospels."(1)

Denny was by no means the only thoughtful young men, troubled by doubts, who was helped in this way. In an article on "Apologetics in the Pulpit," written in 1892, Bruce makes the following revealing statement:

"In most congregations there are young men, earnest, thoughtful, noble-spirited, who are in a transition stage between the faith of childhood, which rests on authority, and the faith of manhood, which knows how to justify itself at the bar of reason. Their number may be small in proportion to the whole congregation, but that is no reason why they should be neglected. .... A minister is indeed tempted to neglect the few who err in the paths of religious doubt from fear that the believing flock will grumble. .... The ninety-nine will complain when the pastor goes after the one, even for the space of ten minutes. Exspecto orede. "Why," once asked me a respectable old gentleman, comfortably wealthy and orthodox -- "why do you speak so much about doubts? I have no doubts." "Be thankful," I replied; "all are not so fortunate. Do you see those young men in the back seats? You don't know them? They are strangers, who come here from other parishes because I have something to say to them that will help them in their doubts."(4)

Thus at Cardross Bruce's mind settled to what was to be his characteristic theological and religious bent, in particular to his lifelong valuation of the Synoptic Gospels as the chief source of essential Christianity, and to his noble conception of the Christian apologist as one whose vocation it was --

"neither to confound infidels nor to gratify the passions of coarse dogmatists, but to help men of an ingenuous spirit, troubled with doubts bred of philosophy or science, while morally in sympathy with believers." (1)

(iii) In the realm of scholarship Bruce not only mastered the Synoptic Gospels but laid the foundations of his profound acquaintance with the New Testament as a whole and with the work of the leading Germans in theology and Biblical criticism. The first publication to bear his name appeared in 1863 in the form of a revised and edited edition of Ebrard's "The Gospel History: a Compendium of Critical Investigations," which was issued as Vol. XIX in Clark's "Foreign Theological Library," Third Series. Bruce's people were not sufferers from his studies. His acquaintance with the work of the Biblical critics did, indeed, result in one limitation, which characterized his preaching and which he has frankly acknowledged:

"When I was a minister there were certain books of the Bible which I never touched in my preaching. I knew too much of what was going on in critical circles to be able to treat them in the old style, and too little to have the courage to attempt exposition of them along new lines; and so I let them alone." (2)

The Cardross people, however, had abundant compensation; for to them was delivered, in the form of lectures, the substance of what is, properly speaking, Bruce's first book, published in 1871 under the felicitous title of "The Training of the Twelve," and containing the first-fruits of his fresh and illuminating study of the Gospels.

The Preface to the First Edition of this book is highly interesting from a biographical point of view; and, as it was not reprinted in the many later editions, we feel constrained to quote a large part of it:

"The subject of this book has occupied my thoughts more or less since the commencement of my ministry, twelve years ago. Turn-

ing up a manuscript volume of jottings for the pulpit in my possession, I find its title-page is as follows: "Brief notes of sermons on Christ's intercourse with the twelve disciples, preached in Cardross, begun September 1861." These notes were the rude beginnings of this work; yet not the rudest, for in the previous year I had made the same passages from the Gospels the subjects of lessons in a catechumens' class. I was led to transfer these lessons from the class to the pulpit in the following way. During an autumnal holiday, spent in the country-quarters of dear friends, to whom I have many reasons to be grateful, I was in such a disordered condition of body, that all thought and feeling were dead, and I dreaded the prospect of returning to pastoral duty, being sensible of mental vacuity. At length my perplexities shaped themselves into a prayer that I might be led into green pastures, as the old ones were all nibbled bare. Shortly after my thoughts reverted to the lessons given to the catechumens' class, and I at once resolved to make these the subject of a course of lectures.

The studies on which I entered in pursuance of this resolution, proved to be green pastures to myself at least. After the course was finished, the subject still lingered in my mind, and I felt constrained by an absorbing interest to extend the jottings I had made; not without an idea that the theme was one capable of being made interesting and instructive to a wider public. Years passed, and I continued to cherish the day-dream, with an increasing sense of the importance of a subject which had been generally overlooked, but also with a deepening sense of the imperfections of my endeavour. Yet, while dreaming, I was not idle; for much of what now appears has been written several times. The wine has been frequently emptied from vessel to vessel, losing in the process the pungency which, when new, made it somewhat unpalatable, and gaining, I trust, some measure of purity and mellowness.

Perhaps it might have been well had I delayed still longer before publishing these essays. But it was the voice of the stern prophet Death that brought me to decision. In the close of last year the Preacher came, and cried in commanding tone, whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. In one brief fortnight I followed to the grave three beloved relatives: my aged godly father, my son, and my brother's wife. When all the mournful duties of that sad season were over, I felt impelled to proceed at once with the publication of this work, and forthwith set myself to prepare it for the press; thankful to find escape from sorrow in hard work, and obtaining the requisite leisure in consequence of the fever which carried off my child making me for a time as a leper, separated from the congregation of the Lord."

This Preface is dated: "Broughty Ferry, April, 1871." It was in 1868, three years before the appearance of the book and after a nine years' pastorate at Cardross, that Bruce had been called to the East Free Church in the Dundee suburb, and here he had his home for the next seven years. By his pulpit and personal gifts he steadily
consolidated his growing congregation. At the same time he pursued his studies as assiduously as ever. After the publication of "The Training of the Twelve" he was recognized as one of the most scholarly among the rising generation of ministers and as a man of independent mind, with a fresh insight into the Gospel narrative and a power of lucid and intensely interesting exposition. The book was largely responsible for his appointment, in 1874, as Cunningham Lecturer for the following year. The subject chosen by him was the Incarnation, and the lectures were published in 1876 under the title, "The Humiliation of Christ." They put his scholarly attainments beyond question, giving him an assured place among the foremost religious thinkers and Biblical interpreters of his Church.

"The Training of the Twelve" and the Cunningham Lectures may be said to have determined Bruce's future. The Free Church had the wisdom to recognize his great gifts and, in 1875, elected him to the vacant Chair of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis in her Glasgow College. A striking prophecy was uttered in the Assembly by the minister who proposed him for the professorship:

"Why should we Scotsmen who pride ourselves on our independence, with a literature and a theology of our own, be ever repairing to Germany for our Biblical scholarship. Appoint Mr Bruce and a new day will dawn." (2)

The prophecy came true. Many who heard it lived to see the Germans themselves, who hitherto had hardly condescended to refer to British theological writings, bracket the name of the Scottish professor with those of their own leading scholars. (3) In the year following his appointment to the professorship Bruce's gifts received further recognition when he had the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity

conferred upon him by the University of Glasgow.\(^1\) In view of his subsequent eminence and fame as a theologian, it is somewhat surprising that this was the only academic degree he ever possessed.

3. Bruce's Life as Professor (1875-1899), as expressed (a) in the Work of his Chair; (b) in relation to his Church; and (c) in his Writings.

   (a) Bruce's Life as Professor, as expressed in the Work of his Chair. In the Glasgow Free Church College Bruce found his Divinely ordered vocation. His Chair was that of "Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis." The explanation of this somewhat strange collocation of subjects would appear to be provided by the circumstance that, when the Chair was founded (1856), the main attack on Christianity was the Tübingen attack on the historicity of the New Testament writings.\(^2\) Most of the University Chairs of Biblical Criticism, always primarily New Testament Chairs, were also established to refute Baur.\(^3\) By Bruce's time, however, the task of the apologist was the more comprehensive and onerous one of defending Christian truth as a whole against attacks from such various quarters as science, philosophy, and criticism. Though the Professor's two subjects were only distantly related to each other, he showed from the first an extraordinary aptitude and capacity in both departments of his work. By intellectual constitution and personal experience, as well as by his quick sympathy and insight, he was pre-eminently fitted to be a Christian apologist, vindicating the Divine origin of Christianity before the inquirer and the doubter. Equally remarkable, however, were the force and enthusiasm with which he seized, arrayed and

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\(^{(1)}\)Clow (E.T., Vol. XI., p. 8) and others have stated that it was from Edinburgh University, of which he was an alumnus, that Bruce received this degree; but it is clear from the University Calendars that it was not by his "Alma Mater" but by the western University, with which he had no previous connection, that the Doctorate was bestowed.


\(^{(3)}\)Cf. ibid. The St Andrew's Chair was founded in 1537.
illustrated the truths of Christianity as they appear in the various New Testament writings. In his time, indeed, there was no more accomplished teacher of New Testament theology among the English-speaking peoples.

The supreme and critical test of any professor is whether he influences his students. Among the distinguished occupants of the Glasgow Chairs none exercised greater authority than Bruce, and none was more appreciated and admired than he was to the very last. "The note of his work in the Chair," Clow testifies, "was thoroughness." (1) Not only did he pay scrupulous attention to the work sent in by students; he was himself a laborious and incessant scholar, conversant with the entire range of the literature of his subjects and possessing a mastery of German scholarship though never himself in Germany. (2) He had, moreover, every qualification for dealing with young minds. Full of ardent enthusiasm, always on the watch for fresh light, and welcoming it from whatever quarter it might come, sympathetic towards doubt, because personally experienced in its conflicts, ever genial and accessible, with a transparency and honesty of character, an abhorrence of all make-believe, and a disinterested regard for truth, he was the very man to inspire ingenuous souls with the love of the noble ideals to which his own life was consecrated.

Of the many fine tributes to Bruce's memory three of the most notable are from the pens of former students -- Dr W. Mackintosh Mackay, (3) Dr J. E. McFadyen, (4) and Dr W. M. Clow. (5) From each of these appreciations we propose to quote a passage shedding an illuminating light on the Professor's life. Mackintosh Mackay writes:

"To the Church at large Dr Bruce was probably chiefly known as a destructive critic. The announcement of one of his books was like the appearance of a stormy petrel. Church leaders looked out for squalls. But to his own students — to myself at least, and to the vast majority of the men of my time — his influence was, in the best sense, constructive — a building up of "the things that cannot be shaken."

I well remember the first lecture I heard from him, in his Apologetic Class, on my entrance to the Glasgow Free Church College, fifteen or sixteen years ago. Professor Edward Caird was then at the zenith of his influence, attracting all who had a mind at all by the splendour of his interpretation of the Greek Philosophy. Under the influence of his matchless charm, the impulse to the ministry had considerably died away. One had something of the feeling which impelled Schiller in his "Gods of Greece," and Goethe in his "Bride of Corinth." The Man of Nazareth looked pale and wan beside these splendid ideals of "culture" and "self-realization." Professor Caird, indeed, had told us that this self-realization was only to be reached by self-sacrifice; but the "end" was self-realization, and we were accustomed to amend the first answer in the Shorter Catechism to the statement that "Man's chief end was to develop himself to the fullest of all his powers!"

Had the Christian apologist met us that day, as, with somewhat listless, hesitating steps, we entered on the course of the ministry, with a hard dogmatic attack on all systems but the Christian, we would probably have been only repelled. Professor Bruce was too wise to do anything of the sort. He did not attack anything. He did not even defend Christianity against attack. He simply brought us to Christ. His subject that morning was "Christ's Apology for Loving Sinners." He spoke of how the cultured and the respectable despised this Teacher, and how Christ had ever to defend Himself from the attacks of culture and Pharisaism. It was just what some of us needed. He closed with a picture of the Man of Nazareth so beautiful, that we felt as if all the "Gods of Greece," ancient or modern, were poor by comparison. One's feeling was that of a man who had gone through the outer corridor of some great art gallery, passing there the Greek statuary, with its gods and goddesses, and suddenly come on a splendid masterpiece of the Saviour on the Cross. Beautiful as the first was, in its outline of perfect form, it paled before the splendour of the Cross. The first, at its best, was man rising up to God; the second was God coming down to man. And that first impression of Bruce was never after effaced."(1)

McFadyen's tribute includes these sentences:

"There was probably no busier man in his generation than Dr Bruce. Every morning he was at his desk by half-past seven, and his whole life was crowded with activities. .... But nothing took precedence over his class work; he never allowed outside engagements to interfere with the responsibilities of the two departments committed to him; and as all his own work was so earnest and thorough, he could not tolerate anything slipshod on the part of his students. .... To students the stimulus and freshness of

Professor Bruce's teaching largely lay in the continual advance of his mind, which constantly impelled him to write fresh sets of lectures. As soon as one course was ready for publication, another course was under way for delivery to his class. His popularity with the students was unbounded; there was always a crowd of men eager to sit beside him and listen to his often astonishingly frank criticisms of preachers, books, and movements, when it came his turn to preside -- in Glasgow the professors take week about -- over the daily college dinner."

Clow's appreciation, to which we have already made frequent reference, concludes with this passage:

"May I crave room to say one brief word about his personal piety? Anyone who has lived with him knows its depth and tenderness. .... To live with Dr Bruce was to live under the power of the mind of Christ. Let me cite two things in proof. Anyone who sat near his desk might have seen a line of single letters written boldly on a slip of paper before him. What were they? They were the first letters of a sentence of prayer. O s.o.T.l.a.T.t. ("O send out Thy light and Thy truth") was a favourite line. His custom was to rise early, and as he began his work he wrote out some such appeal to God, and as the hours passed he lifted his eyes and murmured his prayer for help. A man, he once said, was not Christ's, who did not pray without ceasing. When I saw him on his dying bed, and death had left on him only the beautiful, he spoke of the Kingdom of God. It has been said that he was somewhat hopeless of the outlook. Nothing could be further from the truth. For as he spoke of his old students, calling a long roll of names dear to him, his face lightened as he heard of their fidelity, and zeal, and joy in the service, and he said, "I have no doubt changes are coming which you younger men must unflinchingly face, new problems are being stated, which may trouble your spirits, but He has not left Himself without witness, -- Jesus shall reign." His benediction with uplifted hand was that of one ready to depart."(2)

Bruce's life work, we may explain, was brought to a close by grave illness. He had been ailing for some time, and in March, 1899, underwent a serious operation for an internal malady. The immediate results seemed favourable, and hopes were entertained that he might be spared for a measure at least of his former work. But it was not to be. The relief obtained proved only temporary, and one by one hopes for even partial restoration had to be relinquished.(3) A glimpse of his mind in his last days has been given by his own

minister, Dr George Reith:

"It was his impression and his hope, until not very far from the end, that there was still work for him to do here; but when he realized that the call to a higher service had come, he was ready to obey." (1)

He died on 7th August, 1899, and his remains were laid to rest at Monifieth, not far from Broughty Ferry.

(b) Bruce's life as Professor as expressed in relation to his Church. Bruce was appointed to his Chair at a critical time in the history of the Free Church. The Disruption leaders had passed away, and questions which their powerful hands had repressed, and with which they were, indeed, incapable of dealing, were calling for settlement. The historical criticism of the Bible, involving new adjustment of ideas on many points, was affecting men's minds, especially those who had access to German theological literature. The conviction was growing that old formulas and canons of interpretation had outlived their day, and that it was no longer possible for the Church to maintain a conservative attitude and ignore the results of recent Biblical scholarship. Men were needed who knew the ground and could conduct the Church through the threatening assaults of merely destructive criticism to positive results.

Issues of a far-reaching kind were presently precipitated by the Robertson Smith controversy; and foremost among the men who stood forward to exhort the Church to abstain from panic and possess her soul in patience, men whose knowledge of the subject entitled them to speak, was Bruce. In the Assemblies of 1877 and 1881 he made notable contributions to the debates on the Smith case. We find Smith writing to his brother with reference to the former occasion:

"Candlish and Bruce are members of Assembly expressly, as I under-

In his speech Bruce pleaded earnestly for caution and delay. He thought the result of further consideration might be to show that Smith was not so far wrong as was being at the moment supposed, the simple truth being that his views had come rather unexpectedly upon a community ill-prepared to receive them and to understand clearly their bearings. Time would probably show that views then considered dangerous were really harmless and capable of being treated as open questions. The numerous pamphlets which had appeared were of no value and entitled to no weight, though by their misrepresentations they had sent up to the Assembly a large number of prepossessed judges. Bruce did not conceal that there was great perplexity in his own mind in respect of many of Smith's statements — a perplexity evidently shared by the College Committee. This, however, was not matter of reproach, but was emphatically a reason for acting cautiously.

Bruce's speech in the Assembly of 1881 was part of the last stand in the defence of the accused. To the motion that Smith's tenure of his Chair should cease he moved, in a simple direct negative, that the House decline to take the action proposed, on the ground that his colleague's summary removal would be an act neither consistent "with the Scriptural principles of Church discipline," nor likely to contribute to the settlement of the vital questions at issue regarding the truth of Scripture. Of this amendment Carnegie Simpson says:

"It was little more than a form to provide the right to dissent — proposing nothing positive, but merely decling to accept Dr Adam's motion." (4)

Doubtless that is true. Bruce's argument, moreover, was much the same as that which at each successive stage of the case was pressed

upon the Church. It was conducted, however, not only with great
lucidity, but with great earnestness, and without any note of
theological bitterness; and it concluded with these words of
impressive intensity:

"I cannot sit down without expressing my sorrow and shame at what
is about to be done. I never expected to see the day when such
a spectacle could be witnessed in our Church. Had I foreseen it,
I do not know that I should have been very much inclined to be
either a minister or a professor in this Church. But, notwith­
standing all that has happened and is about to happen, I do not
regret, nor do I think any of us regrets, that he is a Free
Churchman. We are proud of our Church's past history and
achievements, and we will not despair of her yet having a future
of which we can be proud -- a future in which she shall appear
orthodox yet not illiberal, evangelical yet not Pharisaical,
believing yet not afraid of inquiry. And even now we love our
Mother Church, and will serve her faithfully and loyally as long
as she will allow us. We will cling to her through good report
and through bad, and we will use our influence to induce all
others to do so -- our members, our office-bearers, our students.
We humbly think she is doing a great wrong, but we count surely
on a reaction and a noble repentance, in which she will cancel
the ostracism which she is about to exercise against her ablest
servant and her devoted son."(1)

In the pages of "The Catholic Presbyterian" Bruce contributed to a
"Symposium on the Robertson Smith Case." There he has pointed out
that three questions might be asked respecting Smith's views. First,
are they true? Second, are they confessionally legitimate? Third,
are they tolerable in the Church, and especially as held by one
occupying the position of a Professor? Bruce's answers are as
follows: (1) The truth of the opinions promulgated is not the point on
which the whole judicial procedure turns. It is unjustifiable to
regard truth and soundness on the one hand, falsity and heresy on the
other, as equivalent terms:

"Opinions may be false, yet not unsound in the judicial sense,
because within confessionallimits. Within these limits error
is privileged."(3)
(ii) The views are confessionally legitimate:

"I for one thoroughly agree with those who think that the Confession is not an instrument which can enable a Church to suppress the critical views of Mr Smith in a fair, straightforward way, without special pleading and forced construction." (1)

(iii) The views are tolerable:

"The case is this: certain views are promulgated by a professor which ex hypothesi are confessionally legitimate, and which on that very account many regard as entitled to toleration, whether we like them or not. .... I think the theory of our constitution is, that whatever evils cannot be dealt with by ordinary judicial procedure are to be borne with, are tolerable, minor evils, to be dealt with, if at all, only by moral appliances, not authoritatively, but persuasively." (2)

These quotations indicate clearly Bruce's mind on some of the important issues involved in the Smith case.

The Liberal party in the Church was defeated for the moment; but there emerged from the controversy a personal ascendancy of Bruce over the rising ministry. In his contributions to theological literature he contended strongly for the legitimacy of critical inquiry, regarding its probable ultimate effect as beneficial to the Church. But he fixed attention chiefly, if not exclusively, on the fundamentals of Christianity, leaving open questions on which the Churches differed. The result, however, was much misunderstanding, and grave doubts began to be expressed by a certain section in the Church as to the soundness of his teaching. To appreciate the situation we must bear in mind these points -- that many had passed through the controversy over the methods of historical criticism without learning that faith in Christ is something better than faith in a book; that some thought of the gospel as a set of cast-iron doctrines, or identified it with a certain narrow experience; that not a few looked askance at some of the theological company which Bruce kept; and that others, while patient in spirit, were without understanding of his real aims and were fearful of the boldness with which he wrote. It has to be

(1)op.cit.,p.48. (2)Ibid.,p.49.
admitted that Bruce made what the ecclesiastical mind calls "unguarded statements," some of which seemed reckless or even indicative of a lack of faith in the Divinity and the Atonement of Christ. He had, as we have seen, a Carlylean strain in his rugged nature, and he showed at times a "brusquerie" in dealing with even the most sacred themes. While this was not really irreverence, it was easily taken to be that, and it jarred even on those who did not misunderstand it.

It was, above all, the views which Bruce advanced, or at least suggested, in his work "The Kingdom of God" (1889) that roused the orthodox section of the Free Church. On the doctrine of Inspiration he was held to be unsound in that he attributed to the Evangelists a literary and selective treatment in their narratives of the life of our Lord. (1) On the doctrine of Election he was held to be unsound in that he combated the idea that Jesus regarded "men, all or any of them, as predestined to damnation." (2) Worse than all in the eyes of some were his bold criticisms of the Church of which the following may be taken as an example:

"I am even disposed to think that a great and steadily increasing portion of the moral worth of society lies outside the Church, separated from it not by godlessness, but rather by exceptionally intense moral earnestness. Many, in fact, have left the Church in order to be Christians." (3)

The offence caused by the boldness and freedom with which Bruce handled the Gospel records and criticized the Church was heightened by his attempt in 1890 to establish a weekly religious paper, called "The Modern Church," the raison d'etre of which was largely to give voice to opinions free from the general ecclesiastical conventions of the day. (4) The paper did not live through very many numbers. Bruce,

naturally, was disappointed over such a reception of such an effort, and it is said he remarked that he had not known the elect were so few.\(^{(1)}\)

The new crisis contained elements of the greatest seriousness. The forebodings of those who had said that, if Smith’s views on the Old Testament were tolerated, his successors would apply an equally revolutionary method to the New Testament, seemed about to be justified. Charges of heresy were made not only against Bruce, but against Dr Marcus Dods, who in 1889 had been appointed Professor of New Testament Exegesis in New College. By the time that the Assembly of 1890 approached, the "Highland host" was in full cry and the alarm of unsound teaching in the Colleges was spread throughout the Church.\(^{(2)}\)

The matter had been brought before the College Committee, which was exercised over "The Kingdom of God" for a whole winter.\(^{(3)}\) The Committee reported to the Assembly that they did not "find ground of process against Dr Bruce as holding or teaching doctrine opposed to the Standards of the Church."\(^{(4)}\) The report, however, occasioned a debate that was prolonged and at times heated.\(^{(5)}\) The discussion turned mainly upon the question whether Bruce’s theories as to the manner in which the first three Gospels were written, and especially as to the way in which the evangelist Luke had reported the sayings of Christ, were compatible with the Church’s doctrine of Inspiration. In the end the Assembly by a large majority carried a resolution which, while finding no ground for any process of heresy, administered a gentle admonition in the following terms:

"(1) With respect to the inspiration of the Gospels and the reliable character of their reports as to the life and ministry

\(^{(3)}\)Cf. Obituary of Bruce in G.H.  
\(^{(4)}\)Cf. P.D.G.A.P.C.S.,(1890),Reports VA,p.5.  
\(^{(5)}\)Cf. P.D.G.A.F.C.S.,(1890), pp.146-180."
of our blessed Lord, the Assembly find that, by want of due care in his modes of statement, and by his manner of handling debated questions as to the motives and methods of the Evangelists, Dr Bruce has given some ground for the misunderstandings and for the painful impressions which have existed. (2) With respect to Dr Bruce's doctrinal positions and his statements about the system of the Christian faith, the Assembly find ground for reminding Dr Bruce that, in endeavouring to state afresh the bearing of our Lord's teaching, and in setting forth aspirations after fresh light upon the matter of the teaching received among us, he was bound to express himself not only with essential loyalty to the Church's faith, professed by him along with all his brethren, but also so as to make that continued loyalty evident to the world. With reference to both departments of this finding, the Assembly call Dr Bruce's special attention to the responsibility attaching to his position."(4)

The resolution was carried by 392 votes to 237 -- a majority of 155. (2) Many who voted in Bruce's favour were influenced by the written "Statement"(3) communicated by him to the College Committee and by the remarkable speech which he delivered in the Assembly. In both of these the suspected apologist and exegete expressed his belief in the inspiration of the Evangelists. In the "Statement" he reproduced some sentences from his book "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels," published four years earlier. One of these runs thus:

"These Gospels throughout, alike in miracle-histories and in discourses, bear the unmistakable stamp of apostolic inspiration, if not of apostolic authorship."(4)

He went on to contend, however, that inspiration does not postulate or imply inerrancy, but that it is compatible with varying degrees of exactness in the reporting of the "Logia" of our Lord, and that it does not interdict the view that the Evangelists may in some cases have modified the form of the words for good and worthy reasons, such as a regard to the spiritual needs of their first readers.(5)

It was, however, Bruce's Assembly apologia(6) which, by its eloquence

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(1) P.D.G.A.F.C.S., 1890, p.146. (2) Cf. ibid., p.179.
and dignity, did most to silence his accusers. Speaking towards the end of the day, he addressed the House in terms of humility and veneration, while carefully preserving the independence of his position. He admitted that certain passages of his book might have been worded in a manner less likely to give rise to misunderstanding, but he reminded his hearers that it was a work in a comparatively new department of theology -- especially in British theology -- what was called New Testament Theology. On the question of inspiration he stated clearly and emphatically that he had no doubts. It was his conviction that the Evangelists had an inspiration like that of the apostles, proceeding from the same source -- the Divine Spirit; and he asked the Assembly to note:

"that in the Introduction (p.9) I apply to the Evangelists the epithets "inspired writers," and that in representing them as exercising "their discretion in the use of their sources so as to make the material serviceable to the edification of those for whose special benefit they wrote," I speak of them as "acting not in a spirit of licence, but with the freedom of men who believed that it was more important that their readers should get a true impression of Christ than that they should know the ipsissima verba of His sayings" (p.7)." (1)

Speaking of the great literary activity within the Free Church on the subject of theology, Bruce uttered these significant sentiments:

"I trace the activity in question to the immense moral force which produced the Disruption. Our Free Church authors -- I am not merely thinking of Dods and Bruce, but of a dozen more -- are the sons of the men of the Disruption. They inherit their moral and religious earnestness, only it shows itself in a different way; in the former generation grappling with ecclesiastical questions, in the latter dealing with religious and theological problems laid to their hands in their new circumstances. I ask you to look on the present troubles in this light. We are the children of the men of '43 -- their legitimate children. We share their faith, though not all their opinions or their modes of expressing them. If, in subordinate matters, and in dealing with new questions, we differ from you, don't look on us askance and with suspicion, putting the worst construction on our views, but with the tolerance, hopefulness, and love with which wise parents deal with sons loyal and dutiful, though not deeming it a part of filial piety to be abject slaves to all their fathers' ways of

thinking. There are differences amongst us, undoubtedly, but not radical or justifying alarm; justifying, possibly demanding, keen discussion, but presenting no ground for alienation because all within the limits of faith." (1)

It was in that broad, tolerant, and charitable spirit, which he himself invariably showed to others, that Bruce desired to be treated. After stating, in almost prophetic words, that he looked upon all that was said and done that day as provisional, he ended with this impressive and appealing sentence:

"I trust that the painful feeling on all sides will soon pass away, and that I shall be able in the evening of my days to look back on the unpleasant incidents of the present year partly as the needful discipline of my infirmities, but partly also as the honourable "marks of the Lord Jesus."" (2)

The acquittal of the accused, with only a mild exhortation, was a personal triumph. The Assembly not only, by distinct majorities, refused to initiate any process against either him or Dods, but did not even appoint a committee to inquire further into the matter. Unfortunately, this decision by no means ended the unhappy unrest within the Church. If Bruce or Dods needed exhortation, not less did many of their accusers who spread the wildest misrepresentations of their views and did their utmost to stir up, in places peculiarly open to exaggerated and erroneous impressions, distrust of the Church's accredited teachers. As Carnegie Simpson has pointed out, however, the essential thing about the episode and its outcome was this:

"A process against either Dr Dods or Dr Bruce was refused, and thus the Church affirmed the permissibility of a view which did not claim for the Bible that verbal inerrancy which had hitherto been almost universally bound up with the doctrine of Inspiration." (3)

A certain amount of the suspicion with which Bruce was regarded by many was due to his unconcealed dislike for the policy of the Church's leaders, notably in the matter of Disestablishment. It was not that he disbelieved in Disestablishment. As early as 1873 we

find him in the Assembly moving this addendum to a motion on the subject:

"That the reconstruction of our Scottish ecclesiastical polity, by the formation of a truly National Church, for which there are peculiar facilities in Scotland, is rendered impossible by the maintenance of the existing Establishment." (1)

On this Carnegie Simpson, writing in 1908, makes the significant comment:

"It is interesting to find this -- which to most people to-day is the palpable fact of the Scottish ecclesiastical situation -- formulated so clearly thirty-five years ago by a man such as Bruce, who was anything but a sectarianly-minded Free Churchman, and was indeed a favourite with the Establishment." (2)

Bruce, however, came to hold the view that the question of Disestablishment would solve itself in due time, and that the prudent and dignified course for the Free Church was to leave it alone. As Clow puts it:

"He was convinced that Disestablishment was a righteous issue, but he was even more strongly convinced that the methods of its advocacy gave the Free Church a needless unpopularity, and injured greater causes." (3)

Bruce's attitude led to the surmise that he was out of sympathy with his Church. The truth is rather that Providence had not bestowed on him the qualifications for an ecclesiastical leader. Dr W.M. Macgregor, one of his admiring students, says in this connection:

"By nature he was naïve and outspoken, with nothing of diplomatic vagueness, but rather with the homely bluntness of upland farmers, who speak their mind if they speak at all, and are not afraid. This inevitably procured for him disfavour in many quarters. Dr Rainy, for example, had no liking for such a trouble of Israel, and he had no love for Rainy or the cautious ecclesiastical mind." (4)

Bruce's ill-starred attempt to establish "The Modern Church" contributed to the sense of estrangement between himself and the Church's

(4) "Persons and Ideals," (Edinburgh, 1939), p. 3.
leaders which existed for a time and to which must be attributed the fact that he was never raised to the Moderator's Chair.\(^{(1)}\)

In all essentials, however, Bruce was all his life a loyal son of the Free Church, and he was never forgetful of his Church's claims upon his services. It was typical of him that, though far from being a rich man, he gave £100 of his salary as Gifford Lecturer to the great Church Extension movement which had been started in Glasgow.\(^{(2)}\)

To the committee on the "Readjustment of Agencies" he gave of his time, hoping that both ministers and congregations might be released from the embittering competition and needless waste which were so common in over-churched Scotland.\(^{(3)}\) He became convener of the "Strangers' Committee," and the institution of such committees in large towns was due to his recognition of the great loss sustained by the Church through the lapsing of many of its members coming to the towns from the rural districts and to his desire to reduce this evil to the narrowest possible limits.\(^{(4)}\) The Free Church was further in Bruce's debt in respect of the conspicuous services which he rendered as convener of its "Praise Committee." An enthusiastic lover of music and himself a musician of no mean order, he warmly supported the movement for the use of instrumental music as an aid to worship and he went about the country giving lectures on the subject without fee or reward.\(^{(5)}\) He lost no opportunity of encouraging the musical tastes of his students, and it was largely at his instigation that special facilities were afforded them for self-improvement in that respect.\(^{(6)}\)

It was most fitting that the compilation of the "Free Church Hymn Book"

\(^{(1)}\) Cf. Obituary of Bruce in G.H.
\(^{(4)}\) Cf. P.D.G.A.F.C.S., 1900, Appendix X, p.3.
\(^{(6)}\) Cf. Obituary of Bruce in "Scoteman."
(1882), of which he was joint editor, should have been largely his work, and that he was a prominent member of the joint committee -- representing various Presbyterian Churches -- which produced the "Church Hymnary" (1898). By the first of these Bruce may be said to have inaugurated that movement of reform in the conduct of congregations be so greatly needed; while by the second was always near his heart, the unity of the Presbyterian communions. (1) As expressed in his writings. It was from the press in rapid succession, in which he himself most fully. By means of other than that addressed from his Chair, his reputation among all the Churches as one of contemporary apologists and of his writings. His influence was primarily with many in the pews who, for one reason or another, those books. In America his reputation in his own country. His book "The Miss," published in 1886, consists of a series invited to give in Union Theological Seminary, New York. (2) In the summer of 1895 he returned to America to give a course of lectures on Apologetics at the University of Chicago, his subjects being "The Historical Foundations of Christianity," "Four Types of Thought in the New Testament," "Evolution," and "Agnosticism." (3) In a brief reference to these lectures the editor of the Chicago ---

(1882), of which he was joint editor, should have been largely his work, and that he was a prominent member of the joint committee -- representing various Presbyterian Churches -- which produced the "Church Hymnary" (1898). By the first of these Bruce may be said to have inaugurated that movement of reform in the conduct of congregational praise which he felt to be so greatly needed; while by the second he attained an object that was always near his heart, the taking of a step towards the unity of the Presbyterian communions. (1)

(c) Bruce's life as Professor as expressed in his Writings. It was in his books, which issued from the press in rapid succession, that Bruce revealed and expressed himself most fully. By means of them he reached a circle far wider than that addressed from his Chair and earned for himself a high reputation among all the Churches as one of the ablest and most illuminating of contemporary apologists and teachers of the Christian Faith. His influence was primarily with ministers, but through them he reached many in the pews who, for one reason or another, did not read his books. In America his reputation stood at least as high as in his own country. His book "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels," published in 1886, consists of a series of lectures which he was invited to give in Union Theological Seminary, New York. (2) In the summer of 1895 he returned to America to give a course of lectures on Apologetics at the University of Chicago, his subjects being "The Historical Foundations of Christianity," "Four Types of Thought in the New Testament," "Evolution," and "Agnosticism." (3)

In a brief reference to these lectures the editor of the Chicago

"Biblical World" paid Bruce the following striking tribute:

"It has been a great privilege to listen from day to day to the magnificent utterances from the mouth of a man of such experience. Without any question this course of lectures has marked a crisis in the thinking of many of those who have been in attendance. The influence of the lectures can never be estimated. It has been a rare privilege which has thus been enjoyed, and the coming of Professor Bruce to America must be regarded as a most significant event, occurring as it does just at this time in the religious history of the American Churches."(1)

Mackintosh Mackay records how, at the time of Bruce's death in 1899, he happened to be travelling in the United States. Going into one of New York's leading book shops, he asked the name of the British theologian whose books sold best there. For answer the bookseller took him to a case, one long shelf of which was filled with Bruce's works, from the very earliest to the very latest, and said: "That is the author from the old land who is most in request here."(2) A book, however, is mainly for its day. Fifty years after his death Bruce shares the fortune of other notable men in that a great part of his work is not now read. Nevertheless, the influence that has been exerted by his volumes is incalculable. Since the day of their publication they have infected innumerable other minds; and these, in turn, have propagated his thought in ever widening circles. Thus Bruce's influence, as Dr W.M. Macgregor has put it, "has travelled beyond the possibility of tracing it."(3)

In this preliminary survey of Bruce's writings we shall confine ourselves to a brief account of their origin and setting, leaving to our main thesis the discussion of their content and significance.


These studies on the Gospels, originally delivered in substance from

the Cardross pulpit, at once gave their author front rank as a Biblical scholar. With their emphasis on the historical Christ they represent a point of view which Bruce maintained to the end.


Before publication, these Lectures were delivered, in 1875, in New College, on the foundation of the Cunningham Lectureship. The book, in which, as Clow says, Bruce "came nearest to a dogmatic utterance," (1) takes the form of a review of some historic interpretations of the Person, Experience, and Work of Christ. In the Second Edition there was added a new chapter, entitled "Modern Humanistic Theories of Christ's Person," the bulk of which had already appeared, in 1879, in the "British and Foreign Evangelical Review," under the title "Current Naturalistic Opinions concerning the Person of Christ." (2)


Before publication portions of this apologetic work had been delivered as lectures at the Presbyterian College, London.


Before publication in book form these valuable studies appeared in the periodical, "The Homiletic Quarterly," and its successor, "The Homiletic Magazine."


This little book appeared as a volume in "The Household Library of Exposition," which was issued originally by MacNiven and Wallace, Edinburgh, and later by Hodder and Stoughton, London. Bruce says in the Preface:

"This book is not a miscellaneous collection of sermons, gleaned from a ministry of sixteen years, and strung together by a catching title. ... The greater part of the contents has been written expressly for this publication."

The volume is one of the most charming of Bruce's writings. It was a favourite with the author and has been a favourite with all his readers.

(6) "Ferdinand Christian Baur and his Theory of the Origin of Christianity and of the New Testament Writings." 1885. This apologetic essay, of some fifty-eight pages, appeared as No. 38 in the series of "Present Day Tracts" issued by the "Religious Tract Society." It both expounds and refutes Baur's theory.

(7) "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels." 1886. Before publication the contents were given as a course of lectures on the Ely Foundation in Union Theological Seminary, New York. The book is, in a sense, a companion volume to "The Parabolic Teaching of Christ," but the mode of treatment adopted, in accordance with the terms of the Lectureship, is apologetic rather than exegetical. As Bruce says: "This method suits the nature of the topic." (1)

(8) "The Life of William Denny, Ship-Builder, Dumbarton." 1888. Second (revised) Edition, 1889. With this large biography, running to some 479 pages, we are not really concerned in our study. The book has its value, however, in that it contains not a few incidental expressions of Bruce's views on religious and theological subjects.

(9) "The Kingdom of God; or, Christ's Teaching according to the Synoptical Gospels." 1889. Second (enlarged) Edition, 1890. Third Edition (with additional Preface), 1890. The first ten of the fifteen chapters had previously appeared in "The Monthly Interpreter" but were carefully revised for republication. In the Second Edition the last chapter, entitled "The Christianity of Christ," was recast in order to embody the larger portion of an

(1) Preface, p.5.
address on "Christ in Modern Thought" delivered at the opening of the Glasgow College in November, 1889.\(^{(1)}\) The book was intended by its author to be "a first instalment of a projected work on the leading types of doctrine in the New Testament concerning the Good that came to the world through Jesus Christ."\(^{(2)}\) The studies of the Pauline theology and "Hebrews" appeared in due course, but the volume on the Fourth Gospel was never written.

\(^{(10)}\) "Apologetics; or, Christianity Defensively Stated." 1892. This book was published as Vol.III in T. & T. Clark's "International Theological Library." In his Preface Bruce says:

"It is an apologetic presentation of the Christian faith with reference to whatever in our intellectual environment makes faith difficult at the present time."

The book consists of an Introduction followed by three main divisions:

1. Theories of the Universe, Christian and Anti-Christian;
2. The Historical Preparation for Christianity; and
3. The Christian Origins. Before publication the substance of this third division was given as a course of Lectures at a Summer School of Theology in Mansfield College, Oxford, in 1892.\(^{(3)}\) We consider "Apologetics" the best single volume for getting at Bruce's thought in its maturity and completeness.

\(^{(11)}\) "St Paul's Conception of Christianity." 1894.

Before publication in book form the contents of this volume appeared in the pages of "The Expositor." It is a study of the major Pauline Epistles from the point of view of Biblical Theology and is the second volume of the series on the leading types of doctrine in the New Testament.

(12) "With Open Face: or, Jesus Mirrored in Matthew, Mark, and Luke." 1898.

Of the thirteen chapters, the first nine had appeared shortly before in "The Expositor." They consist of popular sketches of the spirit and teaching of Christ, as exhibited in selected scenes from the Synoptic Gospels. In his Preface Bruce says of these sketches that they are "the overflow from severer studies on the first three Gospels." The last chapter, entitled "The Christian Primer," is in Bruce's words:

"an attempt to realise an idea which has been in my mind for years: to set forth, for the instruction of children, in the form of a historical Catechism, the main facts concerning Jesus."(1)


This large volume, Bruce's share in which covers some 651 pages, is the crown of his work as an interpreter of the Gospels. Writing in 1899 Denney said of it:

"In spite of what is not to be found in it, it is for the man who reads with a religious interest the most illuminating and inspiring of guides."(2)

(14) "The Providential Order of the World." 1897.


These volumes contain the First and the Second Series of the Gifford Lectures delivered before the University of Glasgow in 1897 and 1898 respectively. Publication of the second volume was delayed for a year by the state of Bruce's health, taking place some two months before his death in August, 1899. The theme of both volumes, which are written in an apologetic interest, is the Providential Order. In the later book, consisting of a historical survey, the title was altered to "The Moral Order," as this was considered more appropriate.

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for inclusion of an impersonal system like that of Buddha. Bruce regarded it as the crowning honour of his career when the University of the City in which he had spent the most fruitful and distinguished years of his life placed its academic seal on his labours by entrusting to him the Gifford Lectureship. Abstruse as was his subject, and lacking as he was in the oratorical gifts of Principal Caird, his predecessor, the lectures — delivered in the Bute Hall on successive Sunday afternoons during two seasons — none the less attracted large audiences of students and the cultured laity, and made a deep impression on all who heard them.


The greater part of the contents of this book appeared in "The Expositor" in 1888, 1889, and 1890. But all was carefully revised, some portions were re-written, and an entirely new chapter — on the theological import of the Epistle — was added at the end. The volume is the third of the series on the leading types of doctrine in the New Testament, and was the last of Bruce's works to be published in his lifetime.

Besides writing the books we have enumerated, Bruce contributed an amazing number of articles and reviews to periodical journals both in Britain and in America. He also contributed to several composite volumes, notably the article on "The Epistle to the Hebrews" to Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, and the article "Jesus" to the Encyclopaedia Biblica. From 1893 he assisted Canon T.K. Cheyne in editing Williams and Norgate's "Theological Translation Library." (5)

A full list of his minor writings, so far as we have been able to trace them, is given in our Bibliography. We cannot but be struck by the almost phenomenal rapidity with which he wrote, and advancing age seems to have increased rather than impeded his energy. It is told of him that, on one occasion when he was celebrating his birthday — probably his fortieth, and at Broughty Ferry — the thought of the shortness of life impressed itself upon him, and he resolved, "I must be busy." (1) It was a resolve which he more than kept. Of his larger works, two fall within the 'seventies; six within the 'eighties; and seven, including some of his greatest books, within the 'nineties. In this development it is instructive to watch where his interests lay, and also how consistent and permanent they were. There are apologetic works at the beginning, middle, and end; viz., "Chief End" (1881), "Apologetics" (1892), "Providential Order" (1897), and "Moral Order" (1899). The New Testament as a whole claimed his attention from 1876, the date of the "Humiliation", to the publication of "Hebrews", in 1899. But the Gospels were his earliest and strongest love. With them he began in "The Training of the Twelve" (1871), and to them he recurred again and again, in 1882, 1886, 1889, 1896, and 1897.

Though Bruce's books, with the exception of the "Humiliation", are rightly assigned to one or other of two groups, according as they are predominantly apologetic or exegetical, we must emphasize that the two groups belong to a living whole. Their author was, as Clow has said, "an exegetical apologist." (2) Even in the "Humiliation," which is essentially a contribution to Systematic Theology, it is the apologist who is writing. In the specifically apologetic works the writer's

point of view is that of one who is stating Christianity defensively, while in the books dealing with the New Testament the exegete has still the same troubled and anxious inquirers in view. Bruce was persuaded that many men had not accepted Christ because they had not understood Him. His books on the Gospels, in particular, were the fruit at once of his desire to let Christ in His simple beauty be known and of his conviction that none who so knew Him would stop short of His unsearchable riches.

B. BRUCE'S WORK AS NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGIAN.

Introduction.

His Aim and Method: A Study of the Four Leading Types of Doctrine concerning the Gift of Divine Grace in Jesus Christ.

Bruce's first four books to be classed under New Testament Theology — "The Training of the Twelve," "The Parabolic Teaching of Christ," "The Galilean Gospel," and "The Kingdom of God" — deal exclusively with the Gospels. This circumstance is seen to be highly natural when we recall the author's personal experience, and the development of his thought during the years of his ministry. After groping in the dark, he had found the light in "the Jesus of the Gospels."(1) After diving into "the deep sea of doubt," he had found the inestimable "pearl of faith" in "genuine Christianity, the Christianity of Christ."(2) When we bear in mind his spiritual history, we can understand how it was that Bruce took little interest in the traditional theology of his Church. He did not oppose that tradition, but he went behind it. What was the value, he asked himself, of any creed or tradition, or any demonstration of the absoluteness of Christianity, if there was no certainty about the life, the words, the

(1) Vide supra, p.37. (2) Vide supra, p.40.
deeds of Jesus? If, on the other hand, there was assurance as to the facts recorded by the Evangelists, did anything else make much difference? Such was Bruce's point of view. It has been concisely put by three of his students. Dr W.M. Macgregor states:

"From the beginnings of his faith, Bruce had found the centre of his theology in the endeavour with open face to see the Son of men in the Gospels, and for the rest he did not care." (1)

Denney writes:

"No matter at what he was working, his heart was in the Gospels; at bottom he cared for nothing but to see Jesus." (2)

And Clow says:

"Dr Bruce had only one subject; that was the glory, i.e. the character, of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ. In every word he wrote, he was either expounding that theme, and applying it, or defending it." (3)

Through the long toil of forty years the Synoptic Gospels remained for Bruce the soul of revelation and his interest in them never waned. In the course of his study, however, he was led increasingly to view these Gospels, not in isolation, but in the wider context of the New Testament as a whole. He developed a keen sense of the essential unity underlying the four principal expressions which are given by the New Testament writings to the gift of God in Christ; and he came to regard it as part of his life-work to call attention to, and to expound, this unity in variety. In the closing chapter of his third book, "The Chief End of Revelation" (1881), we have a clear indication that his thoughts were moving in this direction. In that volume he is concerned to show that the Bible is the record of a progressive Divine revelation in history, and that this revelation is before all things a self-manifestation of God as the God of grace:

"Grace is the highest category under which we can think of God. ... God cannot be said to have been fully revealed till He has been revealed in this aspect." (4)

Bringing to the scriptures the concept of grace, Bruce saw three things: (i) it is to a Divine purpose of grace that the contents of the Bible as a whole chiefly relate; (ii) the supreme concern of the New Testament is with the nature of the gift of grace -- \( \tau \alpha \delta \nu \alpha \theta \varepsilon \tau \alpha \) (iii) within the New Testament four leading types of doctrine on the subject may be distinguished. "The Kingdom of God" is the keynote or watchword of Christ's teaching in the Synoptic Gospels; "the Righteousness of God" is the great theme of Paul's teaching; "unrestricted Fellowship with God" is the leading thought of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and "Eternal Life" takes the place of the first in the Johannine account of our Lord's teaching. Bruce completes his analysis with these words:

"It would be an interesting and instructive study which proposed for its aim to develop the significance of each of these respective view-points and their mutual relations." (2)

Bruce himself acted upon this suggestion, thrown out in 1881. He planned a great work on New Testament Theology, to consist of four parts. In a real sense the first section had already been exhaustively treated in his first three books on the Gospels; but he decided to produce a new treatise on "The Kingdom of God" which would be more systematic in form and would fit into the comprehensive scheme. The volume was published in 1889. The purpose behind it is stated thus in the Preface:

"This book is a first instalment of a projected work on the leading types of doctrine in the New Testament concerning the Good that came to the world through Jesus Christ." (3)

In the "Critical Introduction" Bruce clearly indicates his line of approach to the study of New Testament Theology:

"There is one mode of looking at this department of theological inquiry which, if not exhaustive, has at least the merit of

definiteness and unflagging interest, that, viz., which makes it have supreme reference to the main drift and raison d'etre of the literature to be studied. Why is there a New Testament? Because Jesus Christ came into the world an epoch-making personage in the history of religion and revelation. The question of soverign importance therefore is, What is the significance of the new epoch? What is the good Christ brought to man? The Highest Good it must be, if Jesus be indeed the Christ, the fulfiller of the promises and hopes of foregoing ages. What, then, is the summum bonum? The New Testament contains the answer to the question, and New Testament theology has for its chief, if not sole problem, to ascertain what the answer is. It may therefore be defined as the study of the leading types of doctrine concerning the things freely given to us of God in Jesus Christ.\(^{(1)}\)

While the four leading types may be distinguished, they are not antagonistic or mutually exclusive but have a close relationship, which Bruce characterizes thus:

"These types have objective and not merely subjective value; they are more than modes under which particular writers apprehended the truth, deriving their colour from personal idiosyncrasy and peculiar experience, though these elements have their place. They are different aspects of the same thing, having a relative independence, and exhibiting Christianity under distinct relations of resemblance or contrast to other forms of religion."\(^{(2)}\)

Bruce gave prolonged and profound study to the first three of these types of doctrine. His second volume in the series, "St Paul's Conception of Christianity," was published in 1894. The third volume, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," appeared in 1899, only a few months before the author's death. The volume on the theology of the Fourth Gospel was never written, Bruce's only contributions to the subject being a chapter in his "Apologetics" (1892), and an article in the American "Biblical World" (1896).\(^{(3)}\)

Our task now is to review in some detail his presentation of these four leading types of doctrine in the New Testament. The first type, for which Bruce's favourite designation was "the Christianity of Christ" and to the discussion of which he devoted no fewer than six

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\(^{(1)}\) K.G., p.39. 
\(^{(2)}\) Ibid., pp.39f. 
volumes, we shall naturally study with greater fullness.

I. THE CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST: A STUDY OF THE SYNOPTIC
PRESENTATION OF THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JESUS.


In 1893 a distinguished British non-conformist theologian, Dr A.M. Fairbairn, having headed the Introduction to his book on "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology" with the phrase, "The Return to Christ," began with these notable words:

"The most distinctive and determinative element in modern theology is what we may term a new feeling for Christ. By this feeling its specific character is at once defined and expressed. But we feel Him more in our theology because we know Him better in history. His historical reality and significance have broken upon us with something of the surprise of a discovery, and He has, as it were, become to us a new and more actual Being. It is certainly not too much to say, He is to-day more studied and better known as He was and as He lived than at any period between now and the first age of the Church."(1)

At a later point in the book Fairbairn says of this new feeling for Christ:

"This is not an individual or incidental thing, but represents the tide and passion of the time; is, as it were, the sum and essence of the living historical, philosophical, and religious spirit."(2)

But great movements are often best studied as they are embodied in the spiritual strivings of individuals. More especially in the foremost thinkers of an age may its characteristic features be seen. In their intellectual and religious life the tendencies and aspirations of the time are reflected. It is this which makes any true insight into the life of a great man interesting and helpful; and it is from this standpoint that the life and work of Bruce are specially instructive. No one represented the Return to Christ more adequately or consistently than he did; and almost everything he wrote was an illustration

(1) "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," (London, 1893), p.3.
(2) Ibid., p.132.
and vindication of the movement. Here is his own confession:

"Every man has his bias, and it is well that a man should know and frankly acknowledge his bias. My sympathies are with the cry, "Back to Christ," and my aim is to show that the tendency it represents is fitted to exercise a wholesome influence on the spiritual life of the age."(1)

A very revealing passage, of similar tendency, occurs in Bruce's full and appreciative review of Fairbairn's book:

"The chief occupation of theology for the last half-century has been the quest of a lost Christ, and its present joy and ground of hope for the future is the rediscovery of Him. Christ had been lost in the creeds, lost in the cloister, lost in sacramentarian theories, lost even in the Bible. He had become once more, as at the beginning of His earthly career, "One among you whom ye know not." Within the memory of men now living there were not a few professional theologians who could not say for themselves as much as the evil spirit of which we read in the Book of Acts. "Jesus I know, and Paul I know," said the demon. Not so very long ago there were theologians who, speaking according to the fact, would have been obliged to confess, "Paul I know, but Jesus I do not know." ..... But the Christ of history has been restored to the knowledge of the Church. The angelic message has been spoken: "He is not here, He is risen; behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him." Multitudes of devout souls have seen Him there, and been satisfied; the beatific vision has been the great event of their lives."(2)

It was Bruce's fundamental conviction, then, that Christianity is Christ and that Christ is in the Gospels as He is nowhere else in Scripture. While the Old Testament points to Christ, and the Epistles express the new spirit that came with Him, the basic fact for Bruce was that "the Gospels are the core of the Bible."(3) He had himself found the Divine grace and truth, not in any apostolic expression of them, but as they shone in the face of Jesus; and he was persuaded that what the age needed more than anything was a fresh discovery of the great Teacher as He is mirrored in the pages of the Evangelists.

As McFadyen has put it:

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(3)Apol.,p.509.
"He saw that with the Christ of the Gospels Christianity stood or fell; and he sought to bring Him near by emphasising His humanity, His geniality, His originality, above all His love, the sweep and the hopefulness of His message, the antagonism it aroused among conventional men, the swiftness of its reception by the simple-hearted."(1)

"Back to Christ" was thus the governing principle of all Bruce's work, and it made the study of the Gospels with him nothing less than a passion.

Bruce regarded "historical Christianity," or "the Christianity of Christ" as he frequently calls it, as the test and corrective of three types of "Christians independent of history," which he saw to be prominent in contemporary religious life and literature. These types he designated the ecclesiastical, the philosophical, and the pietistic.

He has dealt with the matter most fully in a valuable paper on "The Historical Christ and Modern Christianity" contributed to "The Thinker," (1893), in the closing chapter of "The Kingdom of God," and in his review of Fairbairn's book in "The Contemporary Review."(6) The subject was treated also in two courses of lectures delivered, in 1895, at the Mansfield Summer School of Theology, Oxford, and at the University of Chicago.(8)

(a) Historical Christianity as a Test of Ecclesiastical Christianity. Bruce was convinced of two things, -- that the stream of ecclesiastical Christianity was full of impurities, and that these pointed back to something purer:

"It is natural that those among us who are dissatisfied with contemporary presentations of Christianity in the Church creeds and catechisms, in the pulpit, in religious literature, in living samples of Christians, should turn with loathing from the polluted waters of the River of Life far down the stream, and

revert with intense longing to the pure fountain as it leaps sparkling into light in the evangelic memoirs."(1)

Recognizing that it was matter of history that the Church had often fallen into need of reform, Bruce believed that the necessary reformations had been effected by those who heeded the historical Christ. But the work of reform was far from complete. In a typical sentence he is quoted as saying:

"The Church's idea of God is not even yet Christianized, and it has looked to Paul rather than Christ for its doctrine of salvation."(2)

As for the claims of sacerdotalism and its kindred ideas, Bruce was certain that they found no support whatsoever in the spirit and teaching of Christ. Again, he is quoted as saying characteristically:

"One who taught the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man could not possibly have originated Romanism."(3)

What Bruce was particularly concerned to oppose was the extravagant ecclesiasticism which claims that the Church as an institution has preserved all vital truth and that ecclesiastical authority is the final test of truth. In his Mansfield Lectures he refers amusingly to the letter of a clergyman who held that the New Testament was an after-thought, that the teaching of the Church was the chief thing, and that only when this was believed would there be Christian unity.(4)

Bruce fully admitted, of course, that many who insisted on the importance of the Church as a source of knowledge concerning Christ and Christianity, insisted also on the importance of acquaintance with all that can be ascertained regarding the Christian origins. The authors of "Lux Mundi,"(5) for example, while writing "as servants of the Catholic Creed and Church,"(6) wrote also as men who believed that it would be a fatal objection to ecclesiastical Christianity if it could

(6)Ibid.,Preface.
be shown to be out of harmony with the teaching and spirit of Jesus. Nevertheless, Bruce regarded it as a very real danger that the influence on susceptible readers of the doctrine of the Church and its functions taught in such a book as "Lux Mundi" might be --

"to strengthen the habit of looking to the Church, its institutions and means of grace, as for all practical purposes the sole and sufficient channel through which individual believers attain to Christian faith and life; ....... and to foster an excessive veneration for mother Church, as to all intents and purposes the ultimate authority in matters of religion."(1)

He was persuaded that those whose motto is: "Believe what the Church teaches, and do as she bids you," either neglect the Gospels as superfluous, or have no power of reading them with a fresh eye and discovering there a Jesus who sits in judgment on much which has passed for Christianity.

It was Bruce's conviction that both in faith and in conduct ecclesiastical Christianity requires the corrective supplied by an intimate knowledge of the Historical Jesus. (i). In her creeds, catechisms, and homilies the Church gives us a Christ who is Divine. Fearing, however, that the Divinity might be compromised, she has asserted the humanity only in a faint, hesitating, half-hearted way. A new consideration of the historical Jesus, Bruce believed, would make for sounder theologians. Moreover, it would make for better men; for the Christ of scholastic theology, being simply an unknown man of whom it is affirmed that He is God, cannot greatly help:

"The moral virtue, as well as the truth, lies in the confession that God is immanent in the well-known and well-beloved Man Jesus, the wise and good."(2)

(ii) In its ethical ideal also, so Bruce held, ecclesiastical Christianity stands in need of this same corrective. That degeneracy is only too possible he saw illustrated in the fact that the Divinely-

(1)"Thinker,"Vol.III.,p.31. (2)Ibid., p.35.
given religion of Moses and the prophets had issued in Rabbinism, which was in deadly antagonism to Jesus and was directly responsible for His crucifixion. What happened once might happen again:

"Would it be a calumny to say that to a large extent the spirit of Rabbinism has prevailed in the Church?"(1)

Believing that the answer to this question is in the negative, Bruce was convinced that, in the interests of a truly Christian ethical ideal, it was very necessary to appeal from the moral judgments of the Church to the judgment of Jesus, and that the Sermon on the Mount is the indispensable and salutary criterion of ecclesiastical righteousness.

Bruce's passionate opposition to ecclesiastical Christianity as embodied in Romanism and in sacerdotalism generally, we can readily understand. In his criticism of the Protestant Churches also, there is much which was, and is, justified. He has, however, largely failed to realize the importance and significance of the fact that it was the Church which made the Gospels and preserved them, and which has handed them down to us; and that apart from the Church's age-long life and testimony they cannot be interpreted aright. Judged by the standards of the New Testament itself, Bruce's doctrine of the Church and the sacraments is decidedly inadequate. We shall deal with this subject further when we come to his work as Systematic Theologian.

(b) Historical Christianity as a Test of Philosophical Christianity.

The philosophical type of Christianity is best understood when seen against the background of the destructive criticism of the Gospels carried on by Strauss and his followers. In many minds this criticism not only issued in a sceptical despair as to the possibility of knowing anything concerning the Author of our Faith, but raised the question whether the Faith and the Christian name ought not to be

(1)"Thinker", Vol.III., p.38.
abandoned. Here, however, philosophy stepped in with an argument which Bruce has stated thus:

"Granting to the full the results of the most destructive criticism of the Gospels, it remains true that we have received through them and the other New Testament writings, certain ideas of God and man and their relations which are self-evidencing and eternal, and possess an inherent truth and vitality entirely independent of the accidental vehicle through which they were introduced into the consciousness of mankind. These ideas constitute the essence of Christianity, and guarantee its perpetuity."(1)

Of this philosophicaj. type of Christianity Professor T.H. Green of Oxford, was regarded by Bruce as the most influential and worthy exponent. For Green the essence of Christianity was the idea that God is immanent in the moral life of man, --

"immanent as a spirit of self-sacrifice, of death to self and resurrection to a blessed life of love for the catholic interests of the Divine kingdom."(2)

Green readily admitted that through Jesus the great idea received exceptional exemplification, and first became a power in the thought of the world; but he did not believe that in Jesus the Divine moral immanence was either exclusively or perfectly realized, or that it is necessary to be always and anxiously connecting the idea with His history. Holding such views, Green not unnaturally preferred the Pauline and Johannine writings to the Synoptic Gospels. He felt that what Paul and John valued above all in Christ was the ideas or truths embodied in the great critical events of His birth, death, and resurrection. Thus these writers enabled him the more easily to get away from the historical to the ideal Christ.

In his large-hearted way Bruce readily admitted that Green's ideas were valuable and, in a real sense, Christian and morally helpful. Moreover, he was quite prepared to accept Green himself as a Christian. He considered, however, that a man holding such views

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would be a far better Christian if he did not treat as superfluous scaffolding the Gospel story by means of which he had built up his system of philosophical ideas. Here it is highly interesting and significant to observe that it is from an ethical standpoint that Bruce criticizes Green's Hegelian philosophy. This is typical of him and is a very large part of his strength:

"Disembodied ideas, however angelic the ghosts may be, yield a religion deficient in ethical inspiration. .... The real may in a true sense be the rational, but the rational gains in moral momentum from contact with empirical historic reality. There is power in details, in individual particulars, which from the high philosophic point of view are of no account. They turn the colourless light of truth into the coloured light which suit our mortal eyes. .... How faint the influence of the abstract idea of death to self and resurrection to a new life, compared with that arising from contemplation of the history of one in whom it was realized in a signal manner, and for whom it meant literal crucifixion. The story of the Passion touches men as the finest philosophic idea never can. Peter and John bore themselves bravely before the Sanhedrin. What was the explanation of their courage? They had been with Jesus and heard His searching words, felt His sincerity, witnessed His heroism. They had been with Him in daily companionship. How different from being with Him in a romance, or in a philosophic class-room. It may be that criticism threatens to take away from us the real historic Jesus, and to leave us nothing but a legendary or an ideal Christ. If so, all I have to say is, so much the worse for us and for Christianity."(1)

We have quoted this passage in full because we consider that it reveals at a glance both much of Bruce's strength and much of his weakness. He is certainly in line with the New Testament and with ordinary experience when he urges that without "empirical historic reality" philosophical ideas have little power to help men to live noble lives. But it is an exceedingly inadequate explanation of the remarkable courage of the first Christians in face of persecution to say that they had been with Jesus and had witnessed His own heroism. We read that, when their Master was arrested, the disciples forsook Him and fled, and that after the Crucifixion they shut themselves

behind bolted doors for fear of the Jews." The New Testament leaves us in no doubt that it was the experiences associated with Easter and Pentecost which made heroes of men who had so recently been cowards. While these experiences would give a new insight into the details of their Lord's earthly life, and above all into the Cross, it was His Resurrection and the gift of the Spirit which transformed tragedy into triumph and created the Church. To understand Christianity it is assuredly necessary to turn from philosophical ideas to historical reality, but it is equally necessary to interpret the facts of history aright; and this Bruce did not always succeed in doing.

(c) Historical Christianity as a Test of Pietistic Christianity.
The pietistic type of Christianity makes itself independent of history by leaning exclusively on the Risen Christ, whose presence and spiritual influence within the heart are manifested in conversion and sanctification. Here religious experience takes the place held by Church teaching and moral ideas in the other types. Bruce considered that R.W. Dale's book, "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels," might be taken by this school as its literary advocate. He admitted, however, that Dale could not justly be charged with disparaging the religious value of such knowledge of Jesus as the Gospels supply. Dale wrote in an apologetic interest. He tried to show that, even if by some unhappy accident such knowledge of the historical Christ were to perish, or be reduced to meagre dimensions, we could still get along fairly well. In brief, his argument is this. It is matter of observation that few Christians are greatly disturbed by the assaults on the Gospels made by destructive criticism. The explanation of this is that, whatever the original ground of faith, faith has been verified in personal experience. So great, indeed, is the verifying power of

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experience that it would give us back our Christ, even if the Gospel story were lost in oblivion. The experience of nineteen centuries would prove that Jesus had really risen and become the Prince of Life, and the generation bereft of the Gospels would thereby take heart to come to the Risen Lord for His grace and mercy, and would find in their own experience that they came not in vain.\(^1\)

Bruce considers that, however well intended in an apologetic interest this argument may be, it is likely to foster a spirit of indifference to history:

"Is there not a risk that when men have got by heart the lesson, that faith is independent of questions as to historicity, they will go one step further and leap to the conclusion that faith is equally independent of the contents of the history? This is all the more to be feared when it is considered that a tendency to historical indifference is inherent in such intense religious experiences as Dr Dale makes the foundation of his argument. The people who have such vivid experiences as he, in highly wrought language, describes need rather to be exhorted to study the Gospels, than to be addressed in such a way as might easily be construed into an encouragement to neglect them.\(^2\)

To its decided tendency to "historical indifference" Bruce traces that frequent lack of a wholesome ethical quality in pietism which he has made the strongest ground of his criticism. Protestant piety, he argues, has been intensely subjective. Starting from the question as to how a man shall be just before God, it is absorbingly interested in the problem of personal salvation. While acknowledging that it is our duty to turn from sin unto God, Bruce insists that conversion is only a beginning and must be followed by the steady living of the godly life. Where this is forgotten the result is "a religion of spiritual egotism, having no inward connection with morality."\(^3\) Bruce was, of course, quite well aware that there is a loftier form of pietism, which is passionately bent on attaining Christlikeness, and which wants, above all things, to have Christ in the heart, reigning

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\(^1\) Cf. "Thinker," Vol.III., p.32. \(^2\) Ibid., pp.32f. \(^3\) Ibid., p.37.
over will, intellect and imagination. He was persuaded, however, that there is still a fundamental question to be asked and answered:

"Who is the Christ that dwells in and reigns over you; whence do you get your idea of Him? Is your Christ an objective or a subjective one? Does He come in upon you from without, from the Gospel history, rectifying, enlightening, liberalizing — in a word, educating your conscience? or is He merely a projection of your undisciplined conscience, sharing and sanctioning its errors, prejudices, scruples, fanaticisms?"

Once again, Bruce drives it home that the best guarantee that our Christianity shall have the right ethical quality is a thorough acquaintance with the Jesus of the Gospels. Out of the religious consciousness men may evolve much, but never the Sermon on the Mount, or Christ's apologies for loving the sinful, or His withering exposure of counterfeit goodness, or His exquisite teaching in parable and proverb concerning the Kingdom; and these are very pillars of morality.

Along with its tendency to exaggerated subjectivity Bruce finds in pietistic Christianity another weakness:

"a craving for the stimulus that comes from the enthusiasm of numbers assembled in religious convention."(a)

While he readily acknowledges that good may be got at such assemblies, he fears that it is not unmixed with evil. Men may be hurried into premature decision; the emotions may be kindled while the mind remains unlighted; the individual conscience may be enslaved to "the average moral feelings of the multitude".(3)

"It is not a good sign when a man has greater enjoyment of a religious convention than in the quiet reading of the Gospels."(4)

Every fair-minded reader will admit that Bruce is justified in much of his criticism of pietism. When the Jesus of the Gospels and His teaching have been neglected, the result has frequently been an unhealthy subjectivism. On the other hand, it is only through the presence in the heart of the Spirit of the Living Christ that nineteen

centuries of history are bridged and the Gospels come alive. Apart from the Living Christ interest in the Gospel story may be so severely objective and historical as to prevent any adequate realization of its bearing upon the present life of personal religion. The ideal is a happy balance of the objective and the subjective elements in our faith; and to the latter Bruce, with his strong moral sense and his dread of the dangers of subjectivism, has done less than justice. The primitive Church, the New Testament being witness, did not win its victories by living in the memory or contemplation of the Jesus of history, but by the presence and power of the Spirit of the Living Lord, to whom it owed its very existence. Again, the early Christians never dreamed that to gather in religious conventions might be an unwholesome thing. Their Lord Himself had said: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them;"(1) and it had been when they were "all together in one place" that the Holy Spirit had come upon them. At least one apostolic writer regarded any tendency to forsake the assembling of themselves together as very near to sin.(2)

Once more we see the inadequacy of Bruce's teaching regarding the Church, the Holy Spirit, and the Living Christ. Allowing for these deficiencies in his theology, however, we can whole-heartedly agree with him that it is very necessary that we cultivate a close acquaintance with the Jesus of history; and we can say Amen! to his exhortation: "Some go to Rome, some to Oxford, and some to Keswick; let us not forget to visit Nazareth."(3)


To get behind the elaborate creeds of Christendom and the traditional ways of regarding Christ into the presence of the Master Himself was the aim of all Bruce's writings but supremely of his books on the Gospels. In these we have his sustained endeavour to lay bare the "Christianity of Christ." Six volumes fall to be discussed; and to these must be added the important article "Jesus", contributed to the "Encyclopaedia Biblica." In this section we shall make only a brief reference to three of the books, viz., "The Kingdom of God," "With Open Face," and the "Commentary." The first of these will largely provide the materials for our section on "The Christianity of Christ," while the other two will be discussed in connection with our section on "The Salient Features of Bruce's Work as Interpreter."

(a) "The Training of the Twelve," (1871).

In his Preface to the first edition Bruce tells us that this volume embodies thoughts that had occupied him from the beginning of his ministry, and the keynote of the whole is struck in the words which declare:

"I have constantly endeavoured to lay the subject under discussion alongside the age in which we live. All thoughtful men know that the great need of the present time is to make a new start in Christian belief and practice; and they would not thank any one for writing a book on Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ to His disciples, without applying it as a plumb-line to the Christianity of the nineteenth century, to see how far it is off the perpendicular." (1)

The book is thus both historical and practical, concerned primarily with the Christianity of Christ, but also with the Christianity of modern times. The general plan and scope are indicated in the subtitle: "Passages out of the Gospels Exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus under Discipline for the Apostleship." Taking practically the

whole of Christ's teaching and miracles, Bruce shows how, in addition to other purposes, these had an important bearing on the course of preparation for the apostleship through which the Twelve passed. Not that the Gospels describe a formal curriculum; but the association of these men with Christ, all that they saw and heard, parable and miracle, question, command, and reproof, did form a most valuable training for the peculiar mission on which they were sent. Bruce thus brings almost the entire Gospel history under review with reference to this single topic. In doing so, he might easily have fallen into either one of two errors. The exposition might have been so minute as to be tedious; or it might have been so general as to be commonplace. He succeeded, however, in hitting the true mean. Without descending to minute exegesis, he has firmly grasped and clearly presented the general lessons of the Gospels, so far as these are pertinent to the subject. One thing we do miss is a summing up in conclusion, a careful exhibition of the difference between the raw fishermen and the mature apostles. It is worthy of note that Bruce is not here concerned with questions of criticism. The footnotes to the second and later editions do, indeed, attempt to supply something of such material, especially with reference to the views of the Tübingen school, but neither very seriously nor very successfully. The standpoint is that of cultured, reverential orthodoxy. Most of the fundamental ideas that are more fully developed in the later works are found here in germ. One notable difference between the book and its successors is that here the Fourth Gospel is used throughout as of equal historical value with the three Synoptics.

Of the book's many elements of value, four stand out as specially worthy of attention. (1) Almost every reader will agree with the view expressed by Brown:
"The choicest element in the book, pervading it from first to last, is the portraiture of Jesus, the One whose simple personal presence was the chief factor in the training of the twelve." (1) Jesus is shown to us under three aspects — in His sympathetic charm and gracious humility, in His holy severity, and in His Divine majesty.

(1) In all his writing Bruce loved to dwell upon what may be called the "humanities" in the life and work of our Lord. Here we see the charm and humility of His life as He wins the Galilean fishermen (2), as He risks everything in calling Matthew the publican (3), as He offers the most precious things of the Kingdom to the Samaritan woman (4), as He girds Himself with a towel and washes the feet of His disciples, as He goes to the Cross forsaken by all. (ii) The holy severity of Jesus is vividly depicted as He rebukes Peter for his satanic suggestion, as He reproves James and John for their fiery bigotry (5), and, above all, as His righteous indignation is called forth by Pharisaic hypocrisy (6). (iii) Lastly, Jesus is shown in His Divine majesty from the time when, on the Mount of Inauguration, He speaks words of matchless authority and grace (7), until, on the Mount of Ascension, He utters that final commission which could come only from One who was conscious of having all power in heaven and on earth (8). These several aspects of the great Master blend into one finished portrait of such perfect grace and strength that, even by itself, it would give Bruce a foremost place among the religious writers of his time.

(2) A second element of value in the book is the delicacy and moral insight with which the characters of the disciples are studied. For a proper appreciation of Christ's teaching, it is of the first

importance that we understand the men whom He taught; and the subject affords ample scope for discrimination of character. Bruce had the gift of seeing men and things with his own eyes and as they really are. The Twelve he sees not as exceptionally gifted and holy men, but as very like the honest, hard-featured men whom we may see standing at the corner of any fishing village, or at whose superstitious legends, or domestic tales, or ignorant questions we may laugh when we spend a night with them in their boat. It is the actual men whom Christ chose, with their individual characteristics and their common prejudices, superstitions, and narrow-mindedness, that are here set forth; and, once we have seen them for what they are, we can follow intelligently the careful training which brought them through their vanity, jealousies and misunderstandings, to a condition of humility, harmony and wisdom. The Master's ethical ideal stands out in strikingly clear relief as we watch the transformation of Peter, John and Thomas in His school, and witness the failure of His infinite tenderness and forbearance in the case of Judas.\(^1\)

(3) Again, the book is valuable for its treatment of the religious teaching of Jesus. Here we see the early promise of the fine work Bruce was yet to do in Biblical Theology. We stand by while the disciples receive lessons on the Kingdom of God, prayer, religious liberty, the Person and claims of Jesus Himself, humility and kindred virtues, self-sacrifice, the leaven of Pharisaism and Sadduceism, and the mission of the Spirit. The doctrine of the Cross is treated with special fullness in a series of four chapters.\(^\text{10}\)

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\(^{(1)}\)T.T., pp. 358ff. \(^{(2)}\)Chaps. V, VIII. \(^{(3)}\)Chap. VI. \(^{(4)}\)Chap. VII. \(^{(5)}\)Chap. XI. \(^{(6)}\)Chaps. XIV, XV, XVII, XXI, XXIX. \(^{(7)}\)Chap. XVI. \(^{(8)}\)Chaps. VII, X, XX. \(^{(9)}\)Chaps. XXV, XXIX. \(^{(10)}\)Chaps. XII, XVII, XVIII, XXII.
(4) Apart from the excellence of its treatment of the proper subject in hand, the book has great charm in the delicate and profound knowledge of Christian ethics displayed on almost every page. Bruce had a clear conception not only of the principles of the Christian religion as these are found in the teaching of Christ, but of the adaptation of these to all that is deepest in human nature. As a specimen of the practical teaching, we may take what is said of the ascetic theory of life:

"This theory is based on an erroneous assumption — viz., that abstinence from things lawful is intrinsically a higher sort of virtue than temperance in the use of them. This is not true. Abstinence is the virtue of the weak, temperance is the virtue of the strong. Abstinence is certainly the safer way for those who are prone to inordinate affection, but it purchases safety at the expense of moral culture; for it removes us from those temptations connected with family relationships and earthly possessions, through which character, while it may be imperilled, is at the same time developed and strengthened. Abstinence is also inferior to temperance in healthiness of tone. It tends inevitably to morbidity, distortion, exaggeration. The ascetic virtues were wont to be called by their admirers angelic. They are certainly angelic in the negative sense of being unnatural and inhuman. Ascetic abstinence is the ghost or disembodied spirit of morality, while temperance is its soul, embodied in a genuine human life transacted amid earthly relations, occupations, and enjoyments."

This, then, is the book of which Denney, writing in 1899, almost thirty years after its publication, declared: "It remains incomparably the best introduction to the teaching of Jesus; and of which, when Bruce visited the University of Chicago in 1895, President Harper said: "The minister who has not read "The Training of the Twelve" betrays an indifference to modern thought which is unpardonable."

(b) "The Parabiblic Teaching of Christ." (1892).

This book, as Denney observed, is a "weighty supplement" to "The Training of the Twelve," and one of the most valuable bits of work

Bruce did. A discussion of the Parables in accordance with the principles and methods of modern historical exegesis had long been a desideratum in the English-speaking world. The work of Archbishop Trench, remarkable for its patristic learning, its fine discrimination of words and phrases, and its penetrating analysis, had hitherto occupied the field. In exposition, however, this and similar books used very largely the allegorical methods of the Fathers, and the inadequacy of such methods, frequently resulting in extravagant and fanciful constructions, was plain to Bruce and others who were familiar with the work of German scholars in Biblical Criticism and Biblical Theology. Bruce was thus led to endeavour to put the interpretation of the Parables on a sound and enlightened basis. To achieve this he did two things in particular: he classified the Parables, and he used the methods of historical exegesis.

(1) In any study of the Parables a matter to be decided is the order in which they shall be treated. On this point Bruce says:

"A merely casual method of arrangement is certainly not desirable, if there be any thought-affinities between the parables, any recognisable characteristics common to several of them, according to which they can be arranged in groups."(2)

It was his conviction that there are certain great ideas about which the Parables naturally cluster and that the key to their right classification is found in the triple division of our Lord's teaching ministry:

"Christ was a Master or Rabbi, with disciples whom He made it His business to instruct; He was an Evangelist, going about doing good among the common people, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom to the poor; and He was a Prophet, not merely or chiefly in the predictive sense of the word, but specially in the sense that He was one who proclaimed in the hearing of His contemporaries the great truth of the moral government

(2)P.T.C., p.2.
of God over the world at large, and over Israel in particular, and the sure doom of the impenitent under that righteous government."

Bruce, accordingly, distributed the Parables into three groups, corresponding to these three departments of Christ's ministry, and styled respectively theoretic, evangelic, and prophetic:

"First, the theoretic parables, containing the general truth concerning the kingdom of God; second, the evangelic parables, setting forth the Divine goodness and grace as the source of salvation and the law of Christian life; third, the prophetic parables, proclaiming the righteousness of God as the Supreme Ruler, rewarding men according to their works."

Fourteen parables are placed in the first group: the seven in Matt. 13, and that of the Blade, the Ear, and the Full Corn, in Mark 4:26ff., all of which relate to the general nature of the Kingdom; those of the Selfish Neighbour and the Unjust Judge, which have to do with the delays of Providence in fulfilling spiritual desires and with perseverance in prayer; that relating to Extra Service, Luke 17:7; and, finally, those illustrative of the principles of work and wages in the Kingdom, viz., the Labourers in the Market-place, the Talents, and the Pounds. In the second group are placed the following twelve: the Two Debtors, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son, which are treated as constituting Christ's apology for loving the sinful; the Children of the Bridechamber, in which apology is made for the joy of the children of the Kingdom; the Lowest Seats at Feasts, and the Pharisee and the Publican, showing that the Kingdom is for the humble; the Great Supper, teaching that the Kingdom is for the hungry; the Good Samaritan, the Unrighteous Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Unmerciful Servant, the two last having special reference to the conditions which prevent men from realizing the mercy of the Kingdom. The third group contains seven: the Children in the

(1)P.T.C., p.3.  (2)Ibid., p.4.
Market-place, giving Christ's moral estimate of the generation among whom He lived; the Barren Fig Tree, the Two Sons, the Wicked Husbandmen, and the Marriage of the King's Son, in all of which is exhibited more or less distinctly the action of Divine judgment upon Israel.

With these are associated the Unfaithful Servant and the Ten Virgins, setting forth similar judicial action within the Kingdom.

Bruce has emphasized that his system of classification is neither one imposed by dogmatic presuppositions nor a mere convenience for the purposes of exposition, but is the result of a synthesis of the Parables themselves.\(^{(1)}\) To Jülicher's complaint that he had spent his strength on systematizing rather than on explaining the Parables, he replies:

"The truth is that the classification adopted is little more than a hypothesis determining the order in which the Parables are to be taken up, and exercising comparatively little influence on the exposition of individual parables. ... The Parables appear here tied up in three bundles. No harm can come of that, provided no Parable is put into the wrong bundle, that is to say, has affixed to it a character which does not belong to it. Care was taken to guard against this by the study of each Parable by itself before grouping was thought of. Classification came last not first, and those Parables were put together in the same class which were found to possess a common label.\(^{(2)}\)

Having decided to which group a Parable rightly belongs, Bruce proceeds to set it in its proper relation to the general theme of the group and to other parables of the same group. By way of example we may take the Parable of Extra Service:

"As in the parables last considered He drew pictures of a selfish neighbour and an unjust judge, meaning these to represent God as He appears to His people when He delays answers to their prayers; so here He depicts God not according to the gracious reality of His character, but according to the stern facts of Christian life. As on other occasions Jesus spoke parables to teach that men ought always to pray and not faint, showing how importunity would ultimately prevail; so here He speaks a parable to teach that men ought always to work and not faint, schooling themselves into a spirit of severe dutifulness which yields not readily to weariness,

nor is prone to self-complacent contentment with past attainments and performances, seeing that such a spirit is demanded by the course of providence from all who serve the Lord."(1)

Bruce does not fail to point out that sometimes there is a difficulty in deciding under which of two categories a Parable partaking of the nature of both should be ranged.(2) That of the Great Supper, for instance, is both an evangelic and a prophetic Parable, and cannot be rigorously considered under one aspect without the loss of much of its primary meaning. We may note that among the Parables included in the book are eight "parable-germs," and some lesser Parables often omitted from treatises, such as the Children of the Bridechamber, the Lowest Seats at Feasts, and the Children in the Market-place, in the exposition of which we have specimens of fine exegesis. On the other hand, there are some utterances of Christ's generally regarded as parabolic, such as the Rock and the Send, the Builder of a Tower and the King going to War, and the Rich Fool, which do not receive any special notice from Bruce. He admits that these cannot easily be brought within his scheme of distribution; but he states that the main reason for their exclusion is that they are "of no independent didactic importance," being simply moral commonplaces "in concrete lively form."(4)

This is rather an indication of some deficiency in the system than a valid reason for excluding these from a systematic treatise.

(2) The second main feature of this work is Bruce's employment of the historical method of interpretation. Long before the appearance of Jülicher's important book, "Die Gleichnissesreden Jesu,"(1899-1910),(5) in which he applied a thoroughgoing criticism to the allegorical method, Bruce saw clearly that the primary meaning of a Parable cannot, except casually, disclose itself to one who regards it from any other

(1)P.T.C., p.173. (2)Cf.Ibid., p.7.
than the historical point of view. Past endeavours to transform the details of a parable into their theological equivalents had frequently resulted in the emphasis of truths that were not designed to be prominent. In the spirit of modern exegesis, accordingly, Bruce in the first place confines himself strictly to the incidents of each little story in their connection one with another, and to the circumstances which provoked the story's utterance. Only afterwards and in a homiletic interest does he concern himself with the religious interpretations which he thinks it yields. His instinct for historical reality is revealed in the very first sentence of the book, where he states that the Parables are "of an incidental character," and as such are to be treated as "parts of a larger whole in connection with the particular occasions which called them forth."(1) Out of the total background of circumstances, however, a selection has to be made, and Bruce believes the moral situation to be the element of most value:

"The moral situation is undoubtedly the principal thing to be determined; for we cannot believe that Christ was led to speak as He did by merely picturesque influences, any more than we can believe that He then and there opened His mouth in parables from a merely intellectual liking for that symbolic manner of expressing thought. The motive must have come from the spiritual composition and condition of the crowd."(2)

A parable may thus be said to enfold a kernel of definite spiritual truth expressing the mind of Christ in answer to a certain moral condition of the people about Him; and the true method of interpretation is not in a microscopic search for ingenious suggestions, not in a luxuriance of moral and doctrinal inferences, but rather in finding the kernel of spiritual truth and seeing its application to the moral situation which it was meant to meet. This is Bruce's method; and what he regards as this central truth of the Parables he has indicated in the frequently felicitous subtitles which he has provided for them,

(1)P.T.C., p.1.  (2)P.T.C., p.17.
e.g., "The Good Samaritan; or, Charity the True Sanctity." Thus they are lifted out of the realm of literary and archaic curiosities into the sphere of permanent moral values.

The kernel of a Parable reveals, however, not only a certain moral condition of the people, but the corresponding mental state of Christ: and for Bruce the element of highest value in the Parables as a whole is the data they furnish for the better understanding of the inner life of the great Teacher:

"The parables were neither deliberate mystifications, nor idle intellectual conceits, nor mere literary products of aesthetic taste: they were the utterances of a sorrowful heart. And herein lies their chief charm: not in the doctrine they teach, though that is both interesting and important; not in their literary beauty, though that is great; but in the sweet delicate odour of human pathos that breathes from them as from Alpine wild flowers. That He had to speak in parables was one of the burdens of the Son of Man, to be placed side by side with the fact that He had not where to lay His head."(1) "He uttered beatitudes before He uttered similitudes, and He uttered similitudes because the beatitudes had not been understood or appreciated."(2)

As to the actual design behind Christ's use of parables, Bruce is emphatic that it was not to produce blindness, but, if possible, vision. The parabolic forms, admittedly, half conceal and half reveal the Master's thoughts -- "reveal them more perfectly to those who understand, hide them from those who do not"(3) -- but the real intention behind them is clear:

"The direct primary aim of all Christ's teaching was to illuminate human minds and to soften human hearts. Such was both the aim and the tendency of His parabolic teaching in particular. ... He spoke parables, -- one now, another then; here a little, there a little, -- if by any means He might teach men the truth in which they might find rest to their souls."(4)

We shall now indicate briefly what we regard as the strong and the weak points of this book. (1) By way of praise. (1) In appreciating the theological import of the Parables Bruce has had regard to the modern comparative method of New Testament Theology, recognizing

(1)P.T.C., p.23. (2)Ibid.,p.20. (3)Ibid. (4)Ibid., p.22.
distinct doctrinal types, and noting the resemblances and differences between them. (1) In his study of Luke's Parables, -- the "Parables of Grace" (2) -- he reaches his best, especially in the Two Debtors, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Lost Son, which are treated as Christ's self-defence for loving sinners. (ii) He is severe in his condemnation of all straining of the Parables in favour of any particular system of theology, as in his exposition of the Tares (3), the Two Debtors (4), the Wedding Feast and the Wedding Robe (5), and repeatedly condemns the microscopic interpretation of the little details while the great lessons are overlooked. The distinction between the teaching of a Parable and what he calls its "felicity" is carefully and constantly kept in view. (iii) He has a fine appreciation of the artistic form of the Parables, and he uses this as an instrument to set forth the lessons more clearly and beautifully. In a comparison of the Parables of Jesus with those of the Haggada Literature of the Jews, he says of the latter:

"They help to deepen our impressions of the literary charm, and, what is more important, of the profound insight into moral and spiritual truth, displayed in the inimitable parables of Jesus." (7)

(2) By way of criticism we would say: (1) The division of the ministry of Jesus into His ministry as Teacher, as Evangelist, and as Prophet, and the corresponding grouping of the Parables as theoretic, evangelic, and prophetic, are somewhat arbitrary unless we are considering our Lord's life and teaching in very broad aspects. Even then, the more correct chronological order would be Evangelist, Teacher (especially in the training of the Twelve), and Prophet.

Certainly we are not dealing here with watertight compartments, for

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(1) Cf. P.T.C., Preface to 1st ed., p.xii.
(2) Cf. Ibid., Table of Contents, p.xiv.
we cannot think of Jesus as being the Teacher without being also to some extent the Evangelist and the Prophet, nor, indeed, as assuming any one of these roles to the exclusion of the other two. As to the grouping of the Parables, the Unjust Steward is classed as "evangelic" and the Unjust Judge as "theoretic"; but in neither case is the reason an obvious one. We should prefer to exchange the labels. The Parable of the Leaven would seem to be in a real sense "prophetic," and not merely "theoretic." The fact is that the Parables as a whole are too vital to be held within these somewhat artificial limits.

(ii) Bruce believed that, on inspection, very many of the Parables are found to be "of an apologetic or defensive character." (1) He would appear, however, to have laid an undue emphasis upon their apologetic function in the intention of Christ. It looks as if the Professor of Apologetics, unconsciously, had slightly coloured them in that interest.

(a) "The Galilean Gospel," (1882).

Denney's comment on this book is full of insight:

"Bruce never wrote anything more truly from the heart, and it may be commended to everyone who wishes a short and easy way to know the man and his message." (2)

Bruce has clearly indicated his purpose in the short but valuable Preface:

"My aim has been to convey as vivid an idea as possible of the Gospel Christ preached, and above all of the evangelic spirit as reflected in His teaching and life." (3)

It is not too much to say that this purpose is fully realized. We have already seen that the governing principle in all Bruce's work was "Back to Christ." In none of his books is this principle revealed in clearer or surer fashion than in "The Galilean Gospel." Being persuaded that in the course of the centuries the stream of

Christianity had become corrupted, he strives in these pages to lead men back to the pure fountainhead. Here the doctrines taught, and illustrated in many actions, by the Man of Nazareth are -- if we may change the figure -- relieved of the dust and cobwebs of the Fathers and the formularies, and revealed in their original light and beauty. Again, Bruce's point of view is given memorable expression in his Preface:

"While there is little in the actual Christianity of our day, or in the state of the churches to awaken enthusiasm, it is rest-giving to go back to the beginning of the Christian era, and drink of the pure wells of truth opened in Galilee in the days of the Son of Man. Reflecting on the baleful controversies of centuries, and the tragic divisions resulting therefrom, on the theological schools and their conflicting oracles, the sigh involuntarily escapes from the breast, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away to Jesus of Nazareth, and forget the windy storms of human opinions and passions!" He does not disappoint the weary heart. In His teaching is eternal wisdom; in Himself, perennial beauty."(2)

"The Galilean Gospel" was Bruce's favourite volume, and it bears evidence of being the most thoroughly congenial work he ever did. This is borne out by the report which Jenkinson has given of the conversation he had with him in 1893. Bruce could not remember the year in which he had written the book, but he knew the month was August:

"It was a beautiful August. The world was full of joy and sunshine, and of the wealth and ripeness of summer. I was happy. The religion of Jesus seemed to me like the bright golden days, and I tried to write a book which would help men to feel that the Galilean Gospel was like God's summer, beautiful, life-giving, soul-satisfying."(1)

Certainly the effort to reproduce the Gospel preached by Jesus seems to have stirred all the poetry and music in Bruce's own soul. As we turn the pages, we frequently come upon citations from hymn or poem, and not a few of his own paragraphs breathe a fine lyric spirit.

Early in the first chapter, for example, there is a striking passage

which beautifully reflects his intention and frame of mind:

"We desire to bring you back to the Galilean lake, to the haunts of Jesus and to the spirit of Jesus, to the brightness and sunny summer richness, and joy, and geniality, and freedom of the authentic Gospel preached by Him in the dawn of the era of grace. Some have not yet come to that happy place; many linger by the Dead Sea, and are disciples of John, to their great loss. For it is good to be with Jesus in Galilee. An evangelic faith, and still more if possible an evangelic temper, in sympathy with the Galilean proclamation, is a grand desideratum. It is what is needed to redeem the evangel from the suspicion of exhaustion or impotence, and to rescue the very term "evangelic" from the reproach under which it lies in the thoughts of many."(1)

"The Galilean Gospel" thus represents Bruce's special contribution towards that revival of evangelic life and spirit in the Church which he felt was greatly to be desired. The substance of the volume is indicated by the chapter-headings: "Beginning from Galilee"; "The Acceptable Year of the Lord"; "The Beatitudes"; "The Healer of Souls"; "Much Forgiveness, Much Love"; "The Joy of Finding Things Lost"; "The Sympathy of Christ"; "The Power of Faith"; "The Vicarious Virtue of Faith"; "Christ the Great Innovator"; "The Joy of the Jesus-Circle"; "The Evangelic Spirit." As presented in these chapters the Galilean Gospel is a gospel of Divine grace free to all mankind; a gospel of blessedness to the poor, hungry, and weeping, despite their poverty, want, and tears; a gospel of enthusiastic courage, and hope in the Divine enterprise of redeeming all the peoples that dwell on the face of the earth; a gospel of love for the lost, and joy in their restitution; a gospel of faith with all its creative power of regeneration, and all its vicarious virtue of intercession; a gospel of newness of life, freshness of truth, and freedom of spirit. In view of its rich content it is no wonder that Brown comments thus on the book as a whole:

"As Dr Bruce yearns for the outpouring of the Spirit of adoption on the Church everywhere, as he deplores that so many are

(1)G.G., pp.6f.
evangelic in creed but legalistic in spirit, as he calls for true "preachers of the gospel", of a gospel whose joy and freedom they have themselves experienced, it sounds as though the voice of Wesley were once more being heard."(1)

In many places in this volume the expository skill of the author of "The Training of the Twelve" and "The Parabolic Teaching of Christ" is revealed. Two criticisms, however, may be made. (1) Not infrequently there is in the exegesis a whimsical element, rather characteristic of Bruce. An example is provided by his comments on our Lord's words, "There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth".(2)

"He speaks of a joy in heaven, not of a joy in His own heart, though that is what He has to defend, and what He really means to proclaim. The reason of this is to be found in the fact that Jesus stood alone in His time in hoping for a spiritual change among the outcasts, and in regarding such a change, when it took place, with intense sympathy and unfeigned delight. He had no neighbours, on earth, like the shepherd and the housewife, to rejoice with Him. His nearest neighbours were in heaven. ... He is fain to declare to His censors: Up in heaven they understand me, there is sympathetic joy among the celestials over the repentance of even a solitary one of these people whom ye despise, in whom I take what to you appears so unaccountable an interest."(3)

(ii) This last quotation reveals a defect which the book shares with others (especially of the same period) dealing with our Lord's life and teaching, viz., the tendency to put words into His mouth, to paraphrase and expand His sayings. Such a method is to be deprecated on the ground of the awkwardness of the patchwork which results.

(d) "The Kingdom of God," (1839).

The scope of this book is indicated by the subtitle: "Christ's Teaching according to the Synoptical Gospels." The Critical Introduction, running to some forty pages, treats of Luke's variations from Matthew in his reporting of Christ's words. Since this is a topic belonging essentially to the apologetics of the Gospels, we shall deal with it later in our section on the "Hist..."
icity of the Gospels." (1) We have already seen how the Critical Introduction created, in a section of the Free Church, a feeling of doubt as to Bruce's soundness on the doctrine of scriptural inspiration, and how the General Assembly of 1890, before which he was brought, charged him to be more cautious in his teachings. The book as a whole, furnishing a systematic exposition of the teaching of Christ as given in the Synoptics, is the first volume of the series in which Bruce planned to deal with the Biblical Theology of the New Testament. We shall not review it in detail here, as it will be the main source for our study of the "Christianity of Christ" to be undertaken in our next section.

(2) "With Open Face; or, Jesus Mirrored in Matthew, Mark, and Luke," (1898).

This little book, which reminds one strongly of "The Galilean Gospel," is closely associated with the author's Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels in the "Expositor's Greek Testament." Its purpose and scope, as well as the relationship between the two volumes, are indicated in the Prefatory Note:

"These popular sketches of the spirit and teaching of our Lord, as exhibited in selected scenes from the Evangelic Records, are the overflow from severer studies on the first three Gospels, meant to meet the wants of professional students of Scripture. In the preparation of the larger work, I have seen some things in a fresh light, of which I endeavour, in the following pages, to give general readers the benefit."

The first three chapters -- "The Prophetic Picture of Matthew," "The Realistic Picture of Mark," and "The Idealised Picture of Luke" -- are concerned with the outstanding characteristics of the Evangelists. Since Bruce frequently turns these acutely to apologetic account, we shall deal with the matter later in connection with the "Historicity of the Gospels." (2)

(1)Vide infra, pp. 407-412. (2)Vide infra, 405-412.
Chapters four to twelve treat, in a popular fashion, of the ministry and teaching of Christ. The titles are: "The Synagogue Ministry"; "The Mission to the Publicans"; "Jesus Longing for Apt Disciples"; "The Escapes of Jesus"; "Your Father Who is in Heaven"; "The Worth of Man"; "The Moral Ideal"; "The Cross in Sight"; and "Gethsemane." We shall make some use of these materials in our section on the "Salient Features of Bruce's Work as Interpreter." (1)

The last chapter, entitled "The Christian Primer," contains a Catechism on the life of Jesus for the instruction of children. We shall deal with it when we come to Bruce's minor contributions to Systematic Theology. (2)


This large volume, in which, as Clow says, "the exegete poured forth the treasure of all his years," is the crown and completion of Bruce's work as an interpreter of the Gospels. We propose to use it later, together with its little companion-volume "With Open Face," as our main source for a study of the salient features of Bruce's work as Interpreter. The Commentary has its deficiencies, for Bruce does not concentrate on etymological studies or technical exegesis; but it is not disappointing to those who have learned from his previous work what to expect from him. There is abundant evidence that he had mined deep into the religious treasures of the Gospels, and that all his years of earnest study had taught him exceptionally well how to think the thoughts of Christ after Him.

(g) Article "Jesus" in the "Encyclopaedia Biblica," (1901).

Though the "Commentary" is in a true sense the crown and completion of Bruce's work as an interpreter of the Gospels, it is not his final

contribution to the subject. A posthumous article on "Jesus" appeared in the "Encyclopaedia Biblica," an article which many of Bruce's admirers have wished had never seen the light. We have frequently noted that it is a feature of all his works that his main interest is in the man Christ Jesus. As the years pass, the stress falls increasingly on the human aspect of our Lord's life and teaching. Until now, however, the Divine aspect has always been present in the background: it is never forgotten that Jesus is the Incarnate Son of God and the giver of a Divine revelation. When we come to this posthumous article, however, we feel we are in a different atmosphere and that it is not the same Bruce who is addressing us. We are conscious of what looks very like an attempt to eliminate the Divine claim from the life of Jesus and to leave the reality of the supernatural an open question.

Let us consider the facts. Coming to this Encyclopaedia for the first time, we look for the article "Jesus Christ." There is no such article. The article which does appear is under the name "Jesus"; but it covers only ten pages and is occupied mainly with a criticism of the sources for His life. When compared with Sanday's admirable treatment of the subject in "Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible," it is meagre and disappointing. Bruce tells us that the books which bear the name of Gospels "are of varying value from a historical point of view." He allows, however, a broad basis of trustworthy tradition. On the story of the Passion he says:

"For modern criticism the story, even in its most historic version, is not pure truth, but truth mixed with doubtful legend." As to the Resurrection, he has hardly a word to say except this:

(1) E.Bi., Vol.II., cols. 2434-2454.
(3) E.Bi., Vol.II., col. 2455.
(4) Ibid., col. 2452.
"Christianity could not have entered on its victorious career unless the followers of the Crucified had believed that He not only died but also rose again."(1)

Doubtless His followers "believed" that He rose again; but were they justified in their belief? Bruce is silent concerning the evidence for the Resurrection. As Dr. B.B. Warfield, of Princeton, put it, in his review of the article: "He dodges the question of the resurrection rather than dogmatically decides it in the negative."(2) With regard to the Healing Ministry of Jesus, after pointing out that it presents a problem at once for exegesis, for theology, and for science, Bruce goes on to say:

"There is one thing about which we may have comfortable certainty. Whether miraculous or not, whether the works of a mere man, or of one who is a man and more, these healing acts are a revelation of the love of Jesus, a manifestation of his "enthusiasm of humanity."

.... He was minded to do all the good in the world he could. ..... The healing ministry shows Jesus as in a large, grand, human way the friend of men, bearing by sympathy their sicknesses as well as their sorrows and sins as a burden in his heart."(3)

As we shall point out, we do not consider that we are justified in viewing this article as adequately representing the whole of Bruce's personal belief. It remains a fact, nevertheless, that in the article as it stands there is nothing inconsistent with the view of a purely human Jesus, born of a human father, who was merely believed to have risen from the dead, and who may or may not have worked some rather remarkable cures. The concluding paragraph, which seems to confirm this impression, contains these sentiments:

"The words of Jesus concerning the future show limitation of vision. In other directions we may discover indications that he was the child of his time and people. But his spiritual intuitions are pure truth, valid for all ages. God, man, and the moral ideal cannot be more truly or happily conceived. Far from having outgrown his thoughts on these themes, we are only beginning to perceive their true significance."(4)

(3)E.Bi., Vol.II., col. 2446.  (4)Ibid., col. 2454.
It is highly interesting to note the reactions to this article on the part of scholars who have reviewed it or commented upon it. H.N.

Bate expressed his dissatisfaction thus:

"The late Professor Bruce's article Jesus, especially when it is compared with the corresponding article in Hastings' Dictionary, is distinctly disappointing. It is general and "impressionist" in character, and though it gives one consistent interpretation of the life of its subject, we do not think that it does real justice to the evidence for another view. Thus to end the narrative with the Crucifixion surely implies hazardous assumptions, and yet these assumptions are unsupported by argument."(1)

Dr W.T. Davison expressed regret in these terms:

"That the author of "The Training of the Twelve" should have been supposed the volume would culminate, is comparatively brief (twenty columns) and not only comparatively but absolutely unimportant. . . . The entire article is saddening in the extreme: it is not what we had a right to expect from Professor Bruce: and what it gives us, more than Schmiedel, can be accounted only accidental retention of traditional views by one whose own faith had drifted from its moorings to a degree now and then unwillingly suspected, perhaps, but hardly credited, by the readers of his previously published writings. It is a thousand pities that this posthumous article should come forward at this late date so sadly to breach the old maxim of "nil nisi bonum de mortuis."(2)

Dr B.B. Warfield wrote in the same strain as Davison but even more forcibly:

"The article "Jesus" by the late Professor Bruce, in which it might have been supposed the volume would culminate, is comparatively brief (twenty columns) and not only comparatively but absolutely unimportant. . . . The entire article is saddening in the extreme: it is not what we had a right to expect from Professor Bruce: and what it gives us, more than Schmiedel, can be accounted only accidental retention of traditional views by one whose own faith had drifted from its moorings to a degree now and then unwillingly suspected, perhaps, but hardly credited, by the readers of his previously published writings. It is a thousand pities that this posthumous article should come forward at this late date so sadly to breach the old maxim of "nil nisi bonum de mortuis."(3)

Dr Shailer Mathews, of Chicago, also wrote in the same strain, but expressed a suspicion of incompleteness or redaction:

"The paper by Professor Bruce upon Jesus is perhaps the greatest disappointment of the volume -- all the more so because of the admirable treatment by Professor Sanday in the Hastings' Dictionary. The article is written so vaguely as to make it almost impossible to determine what Professor Bruce's conclusions may be, and the entire treatment is so superficial and partial as to awaken a suspicion of incompleteness or severe redaction, and to arouse regret that it should have been permitted posthumously to detract from the reputation of Professor Bruce."(4)

Most significant of all, perhaps, are the words of Dr David Smith, who had been a distinguished student of Bruce's:

"It is with extreme reluctance and no little pain that the writer adds the article on "Jesus" by his revered teacher and beloved friend, the late Dr A.B. Bruce. The contributions of that fearless and brilliant scholar to the exposition and defence of Christianity have laid the Church under a heavy and abiding debt; while his memory is cherished gratefully by generations of students who sat at his feet and learned from his lips "the truth as it is in Jesus," and attained, under his guidance, to triumphant faith in supernatural Christianity. It is a sense of amazement amounting to incredulity that is awakened by the "Jesus" article in one who knew Dr Bruce and enjoyed the privilege of his familiar intercourse. The tone and manner are our master's, but the teaching is none of his. It is hard to conceive how those pages could have been written by one who believed in the Incarnation, the Resurrection, or even the Sinlessness of Jesus. They depict Him as nothing more than a good and heroic man, and a teacher of unique but not perfect wisdom. ... Such is the final appraisement; and one who remembers the author's devotion to the historic Jesus and his enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God may be pardoned the suspicion that there is some explanation. That this should be their master's final message to the world would be a surprise and a grief to not a few who owe to him their establishment in the Christian faith." (1)

We consider it noteworthy that Dr Shailer Mathews should confess to "a suspicion of incompleteness or severe redaction," and Dr David Smith to "the suspicion that there is some explanation;" and we believe the explanation is given in the only favourable scholarly comment on Bruce's article which we have come across, viz., in that by Dr John Dickie:

"Towards the end of his days Dr Bruce wrote an article for the "Encyclopaedia Biblica" on the life of our Lord, which was much discussed, and distressed a goodly number of his friends and admirers by its supposedly too negative character. I never read it as they did. I took it for granted that the aim and intention was to give a clear statement of such facts regarding the historical Jesus as would be accepted as historically well-attested by competent investigators, whatever their personal attitude to Him and to the Christian religion." (2)

In other words, the explanation of the apparently negative tone of Bruce's article is provided by a consideration of the purpose and character of the volume in which it appears. The "Encyclopaedia

Biblica" and "Hastings' Dictionary" cannot properly be compared. The former is not really a Dictionary of the Bible, but a Dictionary of the Higher Criticism of the Bible. It does not profess to describe the contents of the Bible as the other does, but gives an encyclopaedic presentation of critical theories regarding the contents. In results which theologians might judge as positive and constructive its editors and writers had little interest. Accordingly, only ten pages are given to Bruce's article on "Jesus", while sixty-eight are given to Schmiedel's on "Gospel". The latter was rightly considered to be the place for the discussion of what is one of the most perplexing and momentous problems in Biblical Criticism, the field covered by "Jesus" — the Encyclopaedia having little or nothing to do with His life, character, or teaching — offering only a limited part of that very problem for treatment.

There can be little doubt, then, that Bruce's handling of his subject was influenced by his feeling that he was not free in a work of this purely critical character to admit theological presuppositions to control the presentation. His article is meant to be a summary of such facts as critical science knows and verifies. Among these facts there is a death of Jesus, but not, apparently, an atoning death of Christ. Thus there is one way of conceiving facts to which the fact of an Atonement is incommensurable; a way of writing on the Christian origins by a Christian which simply eliminates the most momentous fact from the facts that are to be dealt with. Even from the purely "critical" point of view, however, there is a very good case for granting the sinlessness of Jesus. As Dr Carnegie Simpson has said:

"His sinlessness is by far the most interesting and important historical tradition regarding Jesus: to write His life and not 

refer to it seems to me an extraordinary thing in so penetrating an author as Dr Bruce."
The fact is, the scientific method, Bruce's article being witness, is essentially a method of abstraction; and it is a grave question whether, once we have committed ourselves to this artificial, sceptical, outsider's attitude, we can return undamaged to the attitude of Christian faith, which knows Christ to be the Light of the World and His Death to be our life. Certainly the critical attitude is provisional, tentative, a first rather than a last view of the facts. Bruce was, doubtless, more or less aware of this; and, in so far as he was, we are not justified in regarding this article as expressing any significant change in his theological position. The article goes to prove, however, that from the purely "critical" point of view it is not really possible to write a satisfactory account of the Christian origins. Criticism is a sieve which retains the bones, but only too frequently allows the life to escape.

3. The Christianity of Christ.
"The Christianity of Christ" was Bruce's favourite designation for the Master's teaching. One whose governing principle was "Back to Christ" was bound to invite men to a fresh consideration of the subject. Christ's teaching is, indeed, the great theme of all Bruce's books on the Gospels; but in "The Kingdom of God" the matter is treated systematically in the manner of what was then the comparatively new science of Biblical Theology. Various continental writers, such as Reuss and B. Weiss, had already led the way to a thorough appreciation of the significance of Christ's teaching; but it remained for some writer to fill up their outlines and to correct their misapprehensions. With considerable originality and independence Bruce accomplished this in "The Kingdom of God," setting before the British public a clear and finely toned picture of the contents of Christ's mind. Dr James
Stalker, reviewing the book in the "British Weekly," gave it the double honour of being both "the first really scientific treatment of this transcendent theme" in English and "the best monograph on the subject" then in existence. (1)

Dr Marcus Dods, in his review, wrote:

"The astonishing vigour and the unfailing insight which characterise the book mark a new era in Biblical Theology." (2)

A valuable article, entitled "The Teaching of Christ in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke," and sketching the subject on the same lines as "The Kingdom of God," was contributed by Bruce in 1895 to the American "Biblical World." (3) To this article we shall make an occasional reference.

The title of the book is significant. To Bruce the phrase "Kingdom of God" is not a mere metaphor adopted by the great Teacher to serve an immediate end but not meant to be permanent. It is the category which summarizes and interprets every aspect of His Person and Work:

"The doctrine of Christ in these Gospels is the doctrine of the kingdom of God. Under this category all may be ranged; there is no other entitled to be placed above it, or that does not easily find a place under it. The ethical teaching of Christ is very important, and some have given it the first place, and made the doctrine of the kingdom subordinate and secondary. But the ethics of Jesus are the ethics of the kingdom, setting forth the laws by which its subjects are to guide their lives. The function of Christ as Redeemer is a still more important category, and it might seem as if the most appropriate general description of His teaching would be one giving prominence, as He did Himself, to the fact that He came to "save the lost" — the doctrine of salvation. But even this heading falls naturally under the doctrine of the kingdom. The doctrine of salvation shows the way by which men enter into the kingdom. .... I have no hesitation, therefore, in regarding the kingdom of God as an exhaustive category." (4)

Modern New Testament scholars are agreed that the primary meaning of the phrase ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ is "the sovereign rule of God," and that the meaning "the kingdom, or realm, of God," though uppermost in

(3) B.W., Vol. VI., pp. 455-466.
(4) K.C., pp. 40f.
certain sayings of Jesus, is essentially a secondary correlative. The primary meaning is by no means neglected by Bruce, as may be seen from a brief interpretation of the phrase which he offers:

"the highest form of dominion conceivable, the advent of which is emphatically fit to be the burden of a gospel, viz., the reign of divine love exercised by God in His grace over human hearts believing in His love, and constrained thereby to yield Him grateful affection and devoted service." (3)

Nevertheless, in common with most of the religious writers of his period, Bruce lays the main emphasis on the secondary meaning and presents the Kingdom as essentially social in its character. His book, accordingly, is especially interesting considered as a study in the social principles of the Christianity of Christ. Already in an earlier volume he had written:

"Men cannot be blessed in solitude, but only in and through brotherhood, as sons of God and members of one divine family." (4)

Now he speaks of the conception of the Kingdom as supplying "a needed antidote to religious individualism":

"The recent revival of the conception of the kingdom of God, which is so prominent in Christ's teaching as reported in the Synoptical Gospels, and which throughout the greater part of the Church's history, from the apostolic age downwards, has been eclipsed by other notions, is justly regarded as a wholesome movement for various reasons, and specially as supplying a needed antidote to religious individualism. This return to Christ's way of regarding salvation as a social thing is but a single phase of a much wider movement going on all around us, which may be described as a return to the Christianity of Christ." (5)

We shall now give an outline and criticism of Bruce's presentation of the "Christianity of Christ" under the "exhaustive category" of the Kingdom of God.

(a) The Kingdom of God. From the frequency of the occurrence of this phrase Bruce rightly draws the inference that it is Christ's name for the great Divine boon which He came to proclaim and bestow.

(1) E.g., Mark, 9:47; Matt., 21:31.
In the first chapter of the book he seeks to show from the Gospels that Christ's idea of the Kingdom was something new and not simply a higher conception of the Old Testament theocracy, as had been maintained by B. Weiss. Weiss's idea, worked out in his "Leben Jesu", was that Jesus set out from Nazareth with the dream of a theocratic Kingdom of Israel with Himself as King; that later, in the light of sad experience, He saw that the Kingdom would have to consist of a separate society gathered out of Israel; and that only finally did His mind open up to the thought of spiritual dominion, gained through death, over human hearts not in Judaea only but in all lands. Bruce argues convincingly that Christ's conception of a spiritual, universal Kingdom was present to His mind from the beginning of His ministry. The evidence adduced includes these points: the fact that the Kingdom is a "mystery," that is, a truth revealed for the first time by Jesus; the joyous effect of Christ's preaching; the offer of the Kingdom to the lowest classes, and the universal intention involved in this; the conditions of entrance, viz., faith and repentance. Bruce makes a further point of the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven," which he thinks was used alternatively by Jesus for the express purpose of emphasizing the spiritual character of the Kingdom. In this, however, he is wrong. Both expressions mean the same thing, "Heaven" being merely a reverent evasion of the name of God common in later Judaism.

The spiritual and universal nature of the Kingdom is further shown by Bruce in his second chapter, which is a study of Christ's attitude towards the Mosaic law, moral, ceremonial, and civil. Various incidental indications are mentioned as "showing like straws in what

(1) Mark, 4:11.  
direction the stream of tendency was flowing," e.g., -- Jesus says nothing of circumcision; He teaches that the heart is the seat of things that defile; He speaks of a higher law concerning divorce than that of Moses; He exalts the Sabbath above mere ritual; and He expects to originate a new and self-legislative life. Bruce's summary of his argument is worthy of quotation:

"The result of our inquiry, then, is this: Christ came to fulfill the law of the Ten Words by going back with new emphasis on its great underlying principle -- love to God and to man; He came to fulfill the meaning, and, not immediately, but as foreknown eventual result, to annul the obligation of the ceremonial law by putting substance in place of shadow, spiritual reality in place of ritual emblem; He came to antiquate the civil law by removing the sklerokardia, and raising up a race who should be able to order their lives according to a higher ideal. All this He did, however, after the manner of a prophet rather than after the manner of a legislator. He came not to be a rival to Moses, but to originate a new life which should be self-legislative."(2)

Bruce crowns his argument in this second chapter by contrasting John the Baptist's eschatological conception of the coming Kingdom with the ethical conception of its Inaugurator. John's announcement was awful news, while that of Jesus was good news. John spoke of an axe and a winnowing fan, of fire and judgment. Jesus spoke "words of grace," which awakened trust and hope even among the outcasts. Now, there can be no doubt that Christ's vision of the Kingdom went far beyond John's; but we consider that Bruce's antithesis between a John with a purely eschatological message and a Jesus with a purely ethical message is largely unhistorical. As Dr G.S. Duncan has recently reminded us:

"Eschatological preaching does not limit itself to a feverish proclamation of coming judgment; it confronts men with the living God and summons them to live as in His presence. The truest eschatological preaching is severely ethical; and there can be no effective ethical preaching divorced from eschatology."(4)

John's preaching fully conforms with this statement. It was ethical to the core. It called for repentance. It summoned to a "baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." It laid emphasis on the necessity to "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." John's message, in short, was essentially prophetic, not apocalyptic. He was the herald of the God of Israel, whose purpose was not to destroy but to save His people. He was thus a not unworthy forerunner of the Christ.

The spiritual and universal nature of the Kingdom is discussed by Bruce in a third chapter, entitled "The Conditions of Entrance." These conditions, viz., repentance and faith, are given by Christ in His opening announcement: "Repent ye, and believe in the gospel." In their conceptions of repentance Bruce finds a further contrast between Jesus and the Baptist. He thinks there is an inwardness in the one that is wholly lacking in the other; and, furthermore, that as John preached it, repentance was an affair of details, a reform of this or that bad habit, while as Christ preached it, it was a matter of principle, a radical change of mind, not in reference to this or the other department of conduct, but in reference to the fundamental question, What is man's chief end and chief good? Now, Christ's conception of repentance was, no doubt, higher and purer than John's; but here, again, the antithesis Bruce has set up between the Messiah and His forerunner is, we think, greatly exaggerated. As Dr Duncan has said:

"It is well to remember that to a pious Israelite repentance meant something far more than is implied in the Greek word metanoia, "change of mind"; it meant a "turning" to the Lord God, with an earnest desire to walk in His ways and to obey His will." (5)

Here Christ and the Baptist would be largely at one. As for John's emphasis upon details: it, surely, in no way detracts from his conception of repentance that he instructs various classes of inquirers, such as tax-gatherers and soldiers, as to how repentance ought to work out in the details of everyday life.

Bruce considers that, though in the opening announcement of the Kingdom's advent it is mentioned after repentance, faith is in Christ's teaching the chief condition of admission to the Kingdom and that it consists essentially in spiritual receptivity. He shows finely that Christ's adoption of faith as the new watchword was a prophecy of Christian universalism. Specially significant in this connection are the three narratives of the Woman who was a Sinner, the Roman Centurion, and the Woman of Syro-Phoenicia. These show that, in Christ's view, faith was not only the necessary but the sufficient condition of admission to the Kingdom. Thus "faith alone" was a motto for Christ not less than for Paul.

(b) The Fatherhood of God. Bruce held that, in the endeavour to arrive at the meaning which the "Kingdom" had for Christ, the surest guide is the name "Father" which He gave to God. While acknowledging that we do not find our Lord, in the manner of a Systematic Theologian, formally connecting the two words as mutually interpretative terms, he nevertheless argues thus:

"When you find an unsystematic religious teacher using constantly two words representing two cardinal religious ideas, you cannot help concluding that a real, radical, if unexpressed, synthesis unites them in his mind, and that kingdom and fatherhood, though formally as distinct as a kingdom and a family, are for him only different names for the same thing. The king rules by paternity and the father by his love becomes king."

This is well said. For Jesus, God was at once Father and King.

"I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." (1) "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." (2) Properly understood, the two conceptions imply one and the same thing, viz., the acknowledgment of God as at once Father and King. Dr Duncan has put this point excellently:

"To those who truly know God, all that He does is an expression at once of His Fatherhood and His Kingship. Love and power are not two separate and distinct manifestations of the Divine character; God's power cannot operate otherwise than through love, and His love is all-powerful. And man's response to such a God must therefore be a perfect blend of love and trust and obedience." (3)

Where we consider Bruce's exposition of the Fatherhood of God in Christ's teaching to be at fault is in this, that he treats the term as one having a universal reference to mankind, failing to see that, as our Lord used it, the appropriate human response would appear to be always implied. It is important to note, however, that while Bruce insists that the Divine Fatherhood has reference to all, he fully acknowledges that it does not necessarily mean the same thing for all. The full reality and benefit can only be experienced where there is a filial attitude and spiritual receptivity. Accordingly, says Bruce, we must ask what God's paternal love means for sinners, and what for saints; for men in general, and for the children of the Kingdom in particular. He replies that in both relations the Fatherhood of God has two aspects, a providential and a gracious, referring respectively to the temporal and to the spiritual interests of men. (4) That there is a Divine Providence over men in general is taught in the Sermon on the Mount and is, indeed, a simple truth of natural religion. The gracious side of God's universal Fatherhood is seen by Bruce, not

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only in the Parables of Luke 15 concerning the finding of the lost, but in Christ's own behaviour towards such and His care for their salvation.\(^{(1)}\) Passing to the Divine Fatherhood in relation to disciples, he rightly finds that this is very strongly asserted by Jesus. Our Lord told His followers that they need have no anxiety about temporal interests, inasmuch as the God who cares for all, even for the unthankful and the evil, will care much more for dutiful children who love the Father and do His will.\(^{(2)}\) And if the temporal wants of the children of the Kingdom are cared for by the Heavenly Father, we may be certain that their spiritual well-being is for Him an object of tender solicitude.\(^{(3)}\)

Particularly in his later books, Bruce has emphasized the contrast apparent to him between the Synoptic and the Johannine presentations of Christ's teaching regarding the Fatherhood of God; and he makes no secret of his preference for the former. A typical statement is this:

"The standing phrase in the Sermon on the Mount is your Father or thy Father. In the Fourth Gospel it is otherwise. The prevailing expression there is the Father, as if pointing to a unique exclusive divine relation between God and Jesus, theological rather than human. The humanity of the divine fatherhood in the first three Gospels is very wide, embracing not only disciples, though they are sons in the first rank, but men indiscriminately, publicans, sinners, evil as well as good, just as well as unjust (Matt.5:45), prodigals all, nevertheless sons. This also is changed in the Fourth Gospel. The sons of God there are believers in Jesus, born of the spirit; all others are simply sons of the evil one."\(^{(4)}\)

We readily admit that, in their respective modes of expression, there is here a contrast between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. As we shall presently show, however, the contrast does not amount to an antithesis. The three relationships so clearly distinguished in the

\(^{(1)}\) Cf.\,K.G., p.113. \(^{(2)}\) Cf.\,Matt., 6:31ff; Luke, 6:35.  
Fourth Gospel — that between Jesus and God, that between Christian disciples and God, and that between erring prodigals and God — are found in the Synoptics also.

The conception of the universal Fatherhood of God, as held by Bruce, may well be regarded as a postulate of Christianity. Men are not beasts: they are created in God's image. Our concern, however, is with Christ's actual teaching; and it is difficult, by an impartial exegesis of His words as reported by the Synoptists, to discover that He often, if ever, spoke of God as the universal Father. Dr T.W. Manson, after a detailed examination of the Synoptic sources, is led to conclude, not merely that "Jesus rarely if ever spoke directly of God as Father except to His disciples," but also that "He began to speak to them in this way only after Peter's confession." (1)

The evidence decidedly favours the view that by the terms "Father" and "Son" Jesus meant something more than a natural or necessary relationship. As Dr J. Alexander Findlay has put it:

"The words "Father" and "Son" with Him do not belong to the realm of nature, but of grace." (2)

With that wonderful literary insight that characterizes all His teaching, Jesus seems to have reserved the most sacred words of this life to express the most sacred relations of the spiritual life. Bruce does not attempt any weighty exegetical support of his view, but rather throws himself back upon the instincts of the human race. This is seen in such a characteristic phrase as "the humanity of the divine Fatherhood." With this attitude we can sympathize; but we must hesitate to apply words used by Christ in the narrower and intense sense to relations more general. God cannot be our Father,

(2) "What Did Jesus Teach?" (London, 1933), pp.28f.
in the full sense intended by Jesus, until we take our place in the home as His sons. Furthermore, that Jesus employs the same analogy for the relation between God and His human children as He does to express what He was to God and God was to Him, does not affect the solitariness of His own relation to God. This is sufficiently proved by the fact that in speaking of our relation to God, He never includes Himself in that relation. It is always "My Father" and "your Father." As Dr E.P. Dickie has said:

"Men are not sons of God in the same way as Jesus, for there are wicked persons, and all are wicked in measure. Through grace we are called sons: He is not a son, but the Son."(c)

Thus we have three qualitatively distinct relationships, viz., that between Jesus and God, that between Christian disciples and God, and that between erring prodigals and God. The last of these relationships is, indeed, differently expressed in the Synoptics and in the Fourth Gospel, the former, on the whole, viewing prodigals from the side of God as "lost sons", and the latter from the side of evil as "sons of the evil one." Whatever the language used, however, the three relationships are clearly recognized and distinguished in all our Gospels.

(c) Christ's Doctrine of Man. Bruce treats Christ's doctrine of man as a corollary of His doctrine of God. If all men be God's sons, at once recipients of His providential benefits and objects of His gracious paternal solicitude, what worth man, even at the worst, must have for God and ought to have for himself and for fellow-men? But, says Bruce, Jesus did not leave so important a truth to be a matter of logical inference. He expressly affirmed man's absolute, infinite significance, not, indeed, in philosophic terms, but by asking in His own inimitable way: "Is not man (any man) better (of more importance)
than flowers, fowls of the air, sparrows, than a sheep or an ox, or even a whole world?"(1) Bruce's comment is highly characteristic:

"I value greatly these simple naive questions of Jesus preserved for us in the Synoptic Gospels as a contribution to the doctrine of man. There is nothing like them elsewhere in the New Testament; nothing so good, so expressive and impressive, so suggestive, so humanely sympathetic, so quietly, yet severely condemnatory of all low unloving estimates of human worth. Compare with these questions of Jesus, Paul's "Doth God take care for oxen?" Jesus could not have asked that question with an implied negative in His mind. His doctrine was: "God does care even for oxen, but for men more."(2)

Christ's teaching does, indeed, contain a high doctrine concerning the dignity of man. Where we must offer some criticism of Bruce is in his exposition of our Lord's teaching regarding sin. He admits that there is in that teaching the recognition of universal sinfulness, but his main concern is with the hopeful side of Christ's doctrine:

"Christ's way of speaking concerning human depravity was in important respects unlike that of scholastic theology. The way of this theology is to take all Bible terms as used with scientific strictness, and thereon to build the edifice of dogma; forgetful that the Bible to a large extent is literature, not dogma, and that its words are fluid and poetic, not fixed and prosaic. Thus the natural man is held to be "dead" as a stone is dead. Christ's view was more sympathetic, hopeful, and kindly. He saw in the sinful something more than death, depravity, and bondage -- some spark of vitality, some latent affinity for good, an imprisoned spirit longing to be free, a true self victimized by Satanic agency, that would fain escape from thrall. On this better element He ever kept His eye; His constant effort was to get into contact with it, and He refused to despair of success."(3)

That Christ's doctrine of sin has its hopeful side is part of the glory of the Christian Faith. But behind the hopeful side is the sombre side. Our Lord says to all men who listen to Him, even as He compliments them on one of their good qualities, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, ...."(4) Bruce protests against such an "obiter dictum" being used to carry a great

There is no intention to teach a doctrine of depravity, or, as Chrysostom says, to calumniate human nature."(1)

It seems to us, however, that it is the very casualness of the saying that imparts to it such terrible force. It is as if Christ said, "Of course ye are evil, and ye know it; it requires no proof." Other sayings have a like implication. When He says, "Ye are the light of the world," what does this imply about the world? When He says, "Ye are the salt of the earth," what does this imply about the moral condition of the mass of men? And what a glance it is into the heart of man when our Lord says, "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings"!(4) Bruce has given a large place to Christ's denunciation of the sins of His time, particularly the sins of the Pharisees and the Sadducees; but the sins of individuals and of classes are only the outcropping above the surface of a solidarity of evil beneath the surface which is the property of the race as a whole.

(d) Jesus' Teaching Regarding Himself. Bruce proceeds to consider the relation of Jesus to Messianic hopes and functions, and His use of the terms "Son of Man" and "Son of God." In his article "Jesus" in the "Encyclopaedia Biblica" he says:

"By elective affinity Jesus would choose the purest and loftiest elements in prophetic delineations, and out of these form His Messianic idea. From certain indications in the Gospels, it may be inferred that Deutero-Isaiah was the chief source of His conception, and that His Messiah was one endowed abundantly with the charisma of love."(5)

Such a Messiah, says Bruce, Jesus not merely believed in, but claimed Himself to be. His Messianic consciousness appears from the time of His Baptism, and triumphs over the trial of foreseen suffering. This

triumph is in keeping with the fact that He regarded Messiahship not as an honour, but as a service, and as a service involving humiliation and pain.

But what was the genesis of the Messianic consciousness? To this question Bruce replies characteristically:

"In this connection stress has been laid on His perfect holiness. .... But one shrinks from the thought of Jesus arriving by reflection on His own personal holiness at the conclusion that He was the Messiah. It gives to His Messianic consciousness an aspect of self-righteousness. .... I prefer therefore to look in the direction of the deep intense human sympathies with which the heart of Jesus was filled."(1)

Here Bruce speaks as the typical "liberal Protestant" of his time. No one would for a moment question the "deep intense human sympathies" in the heart of Jesus. But the Messianic consciousness did not have its origin and primary ground there but rather in the filial love toward God which possessed Him, and which at His Baptism became charged with the quality of a supernatural revelation. As Dr W. Manson puts it:

"The Reign of God for Jesus derives its character and immediacy from the filial joy in God which is His possession. To make men sharers in His experience, to discover God afresh to their souls, to call Israel to an absolute acceptance of the Rule of God in the heart -- this is the task to which, as by a rending of the skies, Jesus is called."(2)

Christ's Messianic consciousness did, indeed, express itself in a compassionate love for men, a love that can be measured only by the Cross; but it had its roots in a consuming passion of filial love to the Father.

According to the Synoptists Jesus accepts, but does not parade, the title of Christ. The Messianic consciousness expresses itself rather in the titles "Son of Man" and "Son of God," the former, in Bruce's view, emphasizing its manward direction and the latter its

Characteristically Bruce holds — wrongly, we consider — that all definitions of the title "Son of Man" which convey a theological import are to be set aside as contrary to the simplicity of our Lord's method:

"I am inclined to dismiss at once, as improbable, any explanation which gives to Christ's favourite self-designation a prosaic or dogmatic character. I assume that in this as in all His utterances, He was like Himself, and spake not as a rabbi, or a theological doctor, but as a prophet and poet whose words came from the heart charged with emotion." (1)

The cases of the title's occurrence are grouped into three classes, setting forth respectively the ideas of suffering, sympathy, and glory. There can be little doubt that the dominant idea in the title is that of sovereignty. Bruce, however, takes it to be sympathy. He has failed to see that ultimately the title almost certainly goes back to Daniel 7:13f — "one of the few points on which scholars have reached virtual agreement," as Dr H.R. Mackintosh said. (2) The main ground for connecting the term with the Daniel passage is provided by the circumstance that not a few passages in the Gospels describe the Son of Man as "sitting at the right hand of Power" and "coming with the clouds of heaven." (3) The natural inference from this is thus stated by Dr W. Manson:

"Jesus found in the Daniel prophecy a language in which to express His unflattering assurance that in life and death He brings salvation to His nation. "Son of Man" therefore denotes Him as the Elect of God, the predestined Messiah." (4)

From other instances of Christ's use of the title, however, it is clear that with the idea of sovereignty He combined the idea of suffering. The source of this latter idea is undoubtedly the great prophetic picture of the Suffering Servant of the Lord. (5) We may

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(1) K.G., p.171.
(2) "The Person of Jesus Christ," (Edinburgh, 1912), p.21.
(5) Isaiah 53.
therefore say with all confidence that Jesus knew Himself called to fuse in His own Person and destiny the two roles of the Danielic "Son of Man" and the Isaianic "Servant of the Lord."

Inasmuch as a suffering Son of Man could hardly be other than a sympathetic Son of Man, there is justification for Bruce's emphasis upon the idea of sympathy. Moreover, the deep human sympathy of the Jesus of the Gospels is a clear fact of history. Bruce is seriously at fault, however, when he makes the sympathy of Christ the ground of His claim to forgive sins:

"God, Jesus says to His critics, is not such as ye imagine severe, slow to forgive, and jealous of His prerogative; He is good, and ready to forgive, and has no desire to monopolize the privilege of forgiving. He is willing that it should be exercised by all on earth in whom dwells His own spirit; and My right to forgive rests on this, that I am a sympathetic friend of the sinful, full of the grace and charity of heaven."(1)

Apart from the highly precarious assumption that "Son of Man" in Mark 2:10 should be interpreted as "man", there is nothing in the Synoptic account which remotely suggests that here Jesus is speaking as a type of spiritual humanity, and vindicating, not only for Himself, but for all who may share His sympathetic spirit, a title to pronounce forgiveness. That He takes the scribes' question as referring to Himself alone seems clear from the way in which He seeks to prove to them His right to pronounce forgiveness by visibly demonstrating His right to pronounce on the man a Divine blessing of another kind. By His act of healing He affirms His authority to be as complete and as exceptional in the spiritual sphere as He shows it to be in the natural. The central significance of His answer lies, not in His possession of a quality which He shares with others, and which it is their duty to strive to attain, but in the peculiar title possessed by Himself alone to pronounce forgiveness of sins. As Dr W. Manson

puts it:

"Jesus forgives sins because He is the Man to whom judgment is committed and who brings the Kingdom of God."(1) Moreover, neither history nor experience teaches us that any of His followers, however truly they may cherish His spirit, approach His confident assurance in pronouncing forgiveness on individuals, any more than they approach His consciousness of unbroken harmony with God.

Turning to the title "Son of God," Bruce finds that it is used in three senses, which he discriminates as the official, the ethical, and the metaphysical. In the official sense, three instances of which are given, Christ is regarded as ex officio Son of God. A peculiarly instructive example of the ethical or filial sense, which we may take to be the fundamental sense in Christ's own use of the term, occurs in the saying, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomesoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."(3) While he can find no texts in which Divine Sonship in the metaphysical sense is ascribed to Jesus "in a perfectly clear, indisputable manner," Bruce admits that there are some texts in which "a mysterious incommunicable relation to God seems darkly hinted at."(4)

(e) The Righteousness of the Kingdom. Christ's doctrine of righteousness is treated by Bruce in its negative and in its positive aspects. The negative aspect is revealed in our Lord's criticism of current ideas and practices in ethics and religion. Before entering on the matter of Christ's censure, Bruce notes the manner of it, pointing out that the exposure of Pharisaism or Rabbinism, while severe, is free from violence, bitterness, or undue emphasis:

"In such simple terms is Pharisaic vanity depicted. It is the style of one to whom the whole subject is familiar, and who contemplates it with an artist's placid penetrating eye." (1)

In its positive aspect the righteousness of the Kingdom is essentially filial righteousness, and the filial righteousness of the disciple is a product and reflection of the filial consciousness of Jesus. The component elements of this righteousness are shown to be these:

(i) filial submission and devotion to the Father's will; (ii) the spirit of confident trust in the Father's goodwill; (iii) fellowship with God; and (iv) the imitation of Christ, which is the righteousness of discipleship. Bruce considers that the imitation of Christ covers the whole ground of Christian duty:

"Jesus was a model in all things: in philanthropy, in sonship, in devotion to the kingdom, in temper. The following points, however, may here be specially mentioned. It behoves the Christian disciple to imitate the Master in His sympathies with the objects of pity, the poor, the sorrowful, the sinful; in His antipathies against the religious vices of Pharisaism; in His lowliness; and in His heroic devotion to duty at whatever cost of self-sacrifice. These four things stand out most prominently in the public ministry of Jesus." (6)

Bruce concludes his exposition of the righteousness of the Kingdom with three general observations. (i) In that righteousness religion and morality are blended. This is as it ought to be. Religion and morals may be separated in natural ethics, but not in the ethics of Christianity, which embrace the whole of human conduct under all aspects and relations. (7) (ii) The righteousness of the Kingdom is a many-sided thing. It is like a rich landscape to which justice cannot be done by a single painting taken from one point of view. This is true also of many other parts of Christ's teaching. His great words baffle all attempts at exhaustive treatment by a single train of thought. (8) (iii) The commands of Christ, though difficult,
are not grievous. They are essentially spiritual, and as such self-evidently reasonable. The motives for obedience consist not in intimidations but in aspirations and inspirations. The Divine ideal is exhibited, and is left to draw us towards itself by its own unearthly beauty.\(^{(1)}\) With this last observation we are not wholly in agreement. We feel like addressing to Bruce the famous sentence of Anselm: "Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum."\(^{(2)}\) The Divine ideal, as revealed, for example, in the Sermon on the Mount, far from drawing us towards itself by its acknowledged beauty and authority may rather cast us down in a hopeless realization of our inability to attain unto it. As Dr. A.M. Hunter has put it:

"The Sermon on the Mount is the most terrible indictment of human nature in all literature. . . . Who is sufficient for these merciless moral demands? . . . If that is the ideal, God have mercy on us all, sinners."\(^{(3)}\)

That assuredly is the ideal; and God has had mercy on us. We are led inevitably to the Cross of Christ.

\((f)\) The Death of Jesus and its Significance. Bruce's chapter on this subject is typical of much of his writing, and reveals him at once in his strength and in his weakness. It is a fine study on the purely historical plane and from the psychological point of view; but it is thin and disappointing to the man who is concerned with deeper theological meanings and who is persuaded that even the Synoptic Gospels are not devoid of these. Following up his thought as to the Divine-human social quality of Christianity, Bruce presents the Cross of Jesus as the great social dynamic of the Kingdom. He considers that from the very beginning of His public life our Lord possessed intuitive insight into the truth that a genuinely godly life

could not be lived in the world without trouble. Not only did experience verify His anticipations: He divined that the ill-will shown to Him would ripen into murderous purpose. To His disciples He spoke of this at first only in veiled language; but, as the fatal crisis drew near, He began to refer to it plainly and realistically and to instruct them as to its significance. Bruce finds four separate lessons on the "doctrine of the Cross."

(1) The first is our Lord's saying at Caesarea Philippi. After Peter's confession of Him as the Christ --

"He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." (1)

Mark says that "He spake the saying openly." (2) Then he goes on to record that, after administering a rebuke to Peter, Jesus said to the people and to His disciples:

"If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (3)

Bruce takes the lesson to be that the Master's coming sufferings were no isolated phenomenon in the moral universe, but only a signal instance of the operation of a universal law, viz., cross-bearing the inevitable consequence of fidelity to righteousness in an unrighteous world. (4) But here Bruce has surely missed a vital point. Although suffering and death were, without doubt, to come to our Lord in the faithful discharge of His duty, in that way in which the prophets had walked before Him and been killed, there is in His saying an unmistakable reference to the necessity that there was for the Christ so to suffer. The statement came immediately after Peter's confession of Him as the Christ, and the word was spoken "openly" in order that all might know what lay before the Christ. It was something necessary...

for Him — "the Son of Man must (Sçi) suffer many things," etc., implying that it was Divinely so appointed for Him. Such a reference is also implied in the answer to Peter: "Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."(1) The subject uppermost was Peter's recognition of the Christ of God in the lowly Son of Man. In this he gave evidence of receptivity to Divine teaching — "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven";(2) but he manifested the reverse of this when he thought that it was not possible for the Christ to suffer. Jesus told him that such suffering was inevitable if He was to fulfil the mission to which He was called by God.

(2) The second lesson was given in connection with the ambitious request of the two sons of Zebedee, on which occasion Jesus said: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many (λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν )."(3) Bruce considers that the saying teaches this much at least, but perhaps not much more:

"The death of Jesus, voluntarily endured, is somehow the means of delivering from death the souls of the many: He died that they might live."(4)

He suggests that the saying was directly connected in the mind of Jesus with the incident of the payment of the Temple-tax which occurred at Capernaum just before He and His disciples set out on the journey to Jerusalem. It is as if He said:

"This life, though they know it not, is, like the half-shekel, their ransom money, and I gladly yield it up to save their souls from death."(5)

But how the death of the Son of Man brings life to others, and whether the life thus procured could not be obtained in any other way, does

not, in Bruce's view, appear. He says that, while we may have recourse to the sacrificial system for supplementary explanations, particularly of the word \( \lambda \upsilon \rho \sigma \omicron \nu \), --

"to import exact theological determinations from other quarters into a text is not the function of strict exposition. In this profound saying our Lord has bequeathed to His Church a theological problem, rather than supplied her with a full solution." (1)

Even agreeing that our Lord's words leave us with a theological problem, we consider that they yield a larger meaning than Bruce admits. As Dr Vincent Taylor points out:

"Both the Greek and the Hebrew words -- \( \lambda \upsilon \rho \sigma \omicron \nu \), \( \gamma \gamma \gamma \) -- describe something which is counted as an equivalent for purposes of deliverance or redemption. There is thus a definitely substitutionary idea in the terminology, although, of course, not one that is necessarily mechanical, or which demands a theory of vicarious punishment. The meaning of \( \lambda \upsilon \rho \sigma \omicron \nu \) determines that of \( \alpha \nu \rho \iota \iota \), in the phrase \( \alpha \nu \rho \iota \iota \pi \alpha \lambda \alpha \omicron \nu \) .... The "ransom" is provided "instead of" or "in the place of" the "many." .... It is difficult to escape the conviction that Jesus regarded His death as in some way an act of requital." (2)

We conclude, therefore, that our Lord believed that, in giving His life as a \( \lambda \upsilon \rho \sigma \omicron \ \alpha \nu \rho \iota \iota \pi \alpha \lambda \alpha \omicron \nu \), He would be doing something for the many which they could not do for themselves, viz., achieving their deliverance or redemption.

(3) Bruce finds the third lesson on the meaning of the Cross in the story of the anointing of Jesus at Bethany:

"She hath done what she could: she hath anointed My body aforehand for the burying. And verily I say unto you, Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (3)

Our Lord's lesson, according to Bruce, is that His passion would be the supreme manifestation of His love. (4) Doubtless this lesson does appear in the parallel between the woman's costly munificence and His

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(1) K.G., p.242.
(2) "Jesus and His Sacrifice,"
(3) Mark 14:8f., (cf. Matt. 26:12f.).
sacrificial passion; but it is a lesson which is implicit rather than explicit. It was not so much the costliness of the act as its insight which moved Christ to such splendid praise. What that insight was has been well put by Dr A.M. Hunter:

"If we bear two things in mind -- first, that she broke the flask, and, second, that it was an anointing -- we shall get near its secret. For in anointing the dead it was customary to break the flask before laying it in the coffin, and the very name Messiah means "Anointed One." In other words, the woman had penetrated into the secret of the Suffering and Dying Messiah. Her act said more plainly than words to Christ "I know that you are the Messiah, and I know also that a cross awaits you."(1)

Our Lord's comment upon the deed adds little that is new from the point of view of theology. Its importance lies rather in the fact that it shows how strongly the thought of death occupied His mind in the last days of His ministry.

(4) The fourth lesson on the Cross was taught in connection with the institution of the Holy Supper. Rather strangely, Bruce does not take into consideration our Lord's words relating to the broken bread -- "Take ye: this is My body"(2) -- but only the words relating to the sacramental cup:

"This is My blood of the [new] covenant, which is shed for many, [unto remission of sins]."(3)

He considers that the differences in the reports of our Lord's words, as given by the Synoptists and Paul, are really of very little consequence. The covenant referred to, from the nature of the case, must be new. Being a covenant in Christ's blood, it is a covenant founded on sacrifice, and the expressions "shed for many" and "shed for you" are justified. Matthew's phrase, εἰς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, may, he thinks, be taken as expressing truly our Lord's thought, for according to all the analogies of the Old Testament sacrificial system

(2)Mark 14:22.  
"blood shed for many" can only mean blood shed for the remission of sins. Instead, therefore, of following the example of the Tübingen critics, and reducing the words of Jesus to a bald formula, Bruce accepts as nearer the truth, at least as to meaning, the account of the words of institution obtained by combination of all the narratives:

"Virtually, if not in so many words, He said: This cup denotes My blood, the blood of a new covenant shed for many for the remission of sins."(1)

But how little we know of the profound thoughts that were in our Lord's mind as He called His blood the covenant blood! The paschal lamb, the covenant at Sinai, and the prophetic oracle of Jeremiah concerning a new covenant of grace, suggest, says Bruce, that His blood shields from the destroying angel, that it is the blood of a peace-offering which consecrates His people to the Lord, and, chiefly, that it is a sin-offering on the ground of which God bestows upon men the forgiveness of their sins. (2) To our mind the clearest inference from the words of Jesus is that He regarded the offering of His life and the shedding of His blood as the means of establishing a new relation between God and men; and this is an inference which has been abundantly verified in the Christian experience of nineteen centuries.

Bruce's weakness as a theologian appears characteristically in his summing up of the "doctrine of the Cross," particularly as this doctrine is presented in the second and fourth of these lessons:

"These are great, broad utterances, suggesting deep questions which theology has been trying to answer by its various theories of atonement. Pending a final answer securing universal concurrence, this much is clear from our Lord's words: that His death was not a mere fate but a beneficent event serving high ends in the moral order of the world: procuring for man spiritual benefits. It is a legitimate inference that to some extent the same principle applies to the sufferings of the righteous in general, and that no sacrificial life is in vain, that every such life contributes its quota to the redemption of the world. Jesus is the Captain of

Salvation who by His unique merit saves all. But the saved are in turn saviours in proportion as they live and die in Christ's spirit. 

(1)

Here we see something like a disposition to be satisfied with a broad humanitarian interpretation of the Cross, tinctured with a religious flavour. Such an interpretation views Christ in His Passion as little more than "Primus inter pares," and considers that His self-sacrifice on behalf of men, though unique in quality, is such as His followers might well make for one another. Bruce does not actually adopt this purely humanitarian interpretation of the Cross; but sometimes, and particularly in his later writings, he comes dangerously near to it.

(g) Other Themes of Christ's Teaching. Here we can do little more than summarize Bruce's presentation of the more important of these.

(1) The Church is presented as an inspired effort on the part of Christ at the social embodiment of that spirit of sonship toward God and that spirit of brotherhood toward man which are the essence of the ideal of the Kingdom. Foreseen by Christ from the beginning of His ministry and foreshadowed by the constitution of the apostolic band, the Church was fully predicted at Caesarea Philippi. (2) It is made up of those who are elect, election being the method by which the few are used to carry salvation to the world. (3) Bruce believes that Baptism was enjoined by Christ Himself, and considers it nowise improbable that He furnished the Trinitarian formula as a summary of His teaching in connection with instructions concerning Baptism. (4) The Kingdom is not fully realized in the Church, for it embraces not only those who know the historical Christ, but also --

"many more, the children of the Father in every land who have unconsciously loved the Christ in the person of His representatives, the poor, the suffering, the sorrowful." (1)

Jesus desired that the righteousness of the Kingdom should be realized in the Church. The continued existence of the Church is dependent upon its fulfilling its proper function. (2)

(2) The Parousia and the Christian Era. Bruce has no doubt that Christ predicted a long period of development for the Church, during which the Gospel should be preached to the world. (3) The texts which seem to conflict with this, setting forth a catastrophe within the limits of the existing generation, are explained by resort to different senses of the expression "the coming of the Son of Man." (4)

The speedy coming refers to the judgment upon the Jews which is to prepare the way for Gentile Christianity. Bruce admits that this explanation can be carried out in the case of Matt. 24:34 only by supposing that the Evangelist has gathered together in one place words spoken on different occasions and has connected future events more closely in time than the actual utterances of Jesus justified. (5)

(3) The End. Christ's sayings on this theme are largely concerned with judgment, which Bruce interprets as the crisis of separation between the genuine and the counterfeit, between friends and foes, that the social ideal of the Kingdom of God may be realized in all purity and perfection. Three "judgment programmes" in Christ's teaching are distinguished: (i) the judgment of Christendom, or of false discipleship and unfaithful citizenship; (ii) the judgment of anti-Christendom, or of Pharisaic opposition to the Kingdom, the gravest expression of which is the sin of blasphemy against the Holy

Ghost; (ii) the judgment of heathendom, or of those who stand in no conscious relation to the Kingdom. Here the principle of judgment is love to the brethren of Christ, that is, all the poor, suffering, sorrow-laden sons of men:

"All who live in the spirit of love the Son of Man recognises as Christians unawares, and therefore as heirs of the kingdom. All who live a loveless life of selfishness He relegates to the congenial society of the devil and his angels."(3)

The question of the eternity of punishment is treated with reserve:

"Whether the end for the individual be the hour of death, or whether development of character may go on beyond that crisis, is a question for the determination of which few materials are to be found in the Gospels. .... In any case, when the "end" has come, finality seems a matter of course."(4)

It may be hoped, however, that few will be finally lost by becoming "so utterly depraved and dehumanized as to be fit companions for devils."(5) In the view of Jesus the everlasting fire was prepared not for men, but for the devil and his angels. God's original purpose was to bless all His creatures, angels and men alike. How far Jesus was from regarding men, all or any of them, as predestined to damnation, appears to Bruce from His doctrine of election, according to which the elect of any age are God's agents in the execution of His beneficent plan of universal human salvation.(7)

(4) The Christianity of Christ. The book as a whole has dealt with this theme; but the phrase is used as the title of the last chapter, which contains a free statement of opinion on various contemporary questions. The great desideratum is to get back to Christ:

"The ecclesiastical Christ is to a large extent not the Christ of the Gospels, but a creation of scholastic theology. .... Men are not permitted to see Jesus with open face, but only through the thick veil of a dogmatic system."(8)

with Bruce's views regarding the Westminster documents and the formation of a new "Christian Primer," framed on a historical method, we shall deal when we consider his work as Systematic theologian.\(^{(1)}\)

Here it is sufficient to note, in conclusion, his hope that the new Christward movement, for which he pleads, will bring on a reunion of divided Christendom. Should the existing Churches fail to serve the purpose, the new spiritual fellowship will create for itself new media of self-manifestation.\(^{(2)}\)

4. The Salient Features of Bruce's Work as Interpreter.

The salient features of Bruce's work as interpreter of the Gospels are conveniently seen in his large Commentary and in the associated volume of studies entitled "With Open Face." Published some three or four years before his death, these books are at once the product and the reflection of his thought in its full maturity.

The Synoptic Gospels were always Bruce's favourite study. It was to their simple, genial, human representation of the Son of Man that he was most attracted, and his consuming desire was to pass on to others through the medium of his books the treasures which he himself had found. In a few sentences in the Preface to the Commentary the author's soul is beautifully revealed:

"In this Commentary on the Synoptical Gospels I give to the public the fruit of studies carried on for many years. These Gospels have taken a more powerful and abiding hold of me than any other part of the Scriptures. I have learnt much from them concerning Christ in the course of these years; not a little since I began to prepare this work for the press. ..... I rise from this task with a deepened sense of the wisdom and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. If what I have written help others to a better understanding of His mind and heart, I shall feel that my labour has not been in vain."\(^{(3)}\)

Bruce has undoubtedly succeeded in presenting Jesus of Nazareth, the

\[^{(1)}\text{Vide infra, pp. 211-217.}\]  \[^{(2)}\text{Cf. K.G., p. 357.}\]  \[^{(3)}\text{C.S.G., pp. viif.}\]
great Prophet of Galilee, in a most winsome light. Our main quarrel with him is that he does not do justice to the evidence provided by the Synoptists themselves for that higher nature of Jesus which is so emphasized by the Fourth Evangelist. We must, it is true, judge a man's work by his professed purpose. Bruce's main concern is to reveal the glory of the man Christ Jesus. He does not say that this is all, and we must not conclude that he denies what he omits.

Theology is advanced by different writers concentrating their study on special fields. It remains a fact, nevertheless, that Bruce's studies of Christ and His Christianity are deficient in some respects which the Gospels themselves regard as all-important.

A not unfair verdict on the Commentary is given by Sir. W. Robertson Nicoll, the editor of the E.G.T. in which it appears, in a letter to Dr Marcus Dods:

"I have read Bruce carefully [i.e., his Commentary]. It is racy, almost jaunty at times, but I should doubt if it was masterly as pure exegesis. One has nothing of the feeling with which one reads Lightfoot. It is fresh and occasionally bright, and Brucianism -- which is at least as distinctive a thing as Zwinglianism -- appears everywhere. This is very well, but the New Testament is not a Brucian book at all, but a Catholic book. I never feel that Bruce deals in a really scientific way with matters of scholarship. On some points he takes a curious line. .... His energy and effluence of ideas down to a certain depth are amazing." (1)

The statement that "Brucianism appears everywhere" is both true and illuminating. In all Bruce's work the force of his strong personality is felt. His own ideas and convictions express themselves in his exegesis. This gives a remarkable flavour and an interesting piquancy to his writings. Not infrequently, however, we cannot but question whether what we are getting in his vivid and characteristic expositions is just things as they were in their own time and circumstance, or admirable ideas of Bruce's own, which these things are

We proceed now to a brief review of the salient features of Bruce's work as interpreter and shall present our comments — appreciative and critical — under six heads, viz., literary style, religious interest, enthusiasm of humanity and moral fervour, originality of interpretation, psychological interest, and theological interest.

(a) Bruce's writing is characterized by a style which is fresh and vigorous and at the same time easy and often charming. The reader of the Commentary, for example, instead of having to plod wearily through it, can peruse it with keen interest page after page. Sometimes, however, the language is not only easy but unconventional and colloquial, and a phrase occasionally slips in that could have found a different and better expression. For instance:

"Whom I uphold: Jehovah backs His servant, ideal Messianic Israel, however despised, against all comers." (1)

In connection with Mark 3:7ff., we read:

"This popularity (of Jesus) did not gratify Him; it rather bored Him." (2)

This unconventionalism, however, is best viewed as the defect of a quality for the absence of which no perfection of decorum could atone. That quality is the freshness and vigour of the writing, thus characterized by Dr James Hastings:

"Fresh aspects of old truths, fresh light on old texts, almost innumerable. And it makes you read; it makes you think. It does not hand you your theology ready made and respectable; it disturbs your respectable theology, and makes you think and live." (3)

(b) As this last quotation suggests, Bruce's books are rendered attractive by their very real and lively religious interest. Not infrequently this religious interest is enhanced for us through the writer's somewhat strange deficiency in historical interest. Evident-

ly he was not greatly conscious of the need of background in reading the Gospels. In the Commentary, at Matt. 3:7, for example, the Pharisees and Sadducees have only a single descriptive sentence. In his work as interpreter Bruce made not a little use of the ideas of his own time; but he did not endeavour with any thoroughness to relate the words and deeds of Christ to the common mind and life of the first century. Rather did he fasten on the words and thoughts of the Gospels, as if they were directly addressed to the nineteenth century intelligence, and to be directly apprehended by it. As Denny says:

"He read what the evangelists wrote not as history but as eternal truth -- not as a record of events or of words, but as something in which God is at this moment making appeal to man. Hence, in spite of what is not to be found in it, his commentary on the Synoptic Gospels is for the man who reads with a religious interest the most illuminating and inspiring of guides. No commentary is so free from commonplace. None is so free from homiletic, yet so suggestive to a preacher. None has such a quick sensitiveness to the mind of Jesus, or such a frank and glad appreciation of it." (2)

We must add, however, that, while Bruce in his exegesis is thoroughly independent and modern in outlook, he has carefully studied what his predecessors and contemporaries, notably Germans like B. Weiss, have had to say. Special features of the Commentary are the frequent illuminations derived from Furrer's "Wanderungen," and the constant use that is made of the commentary by Euthymius Zigabenus.

(c) On almost every page we have evidence of two closely related characteristics of Bruce, viz., an enthusiasm for humanity and an intense moral fervour. A few examples may be given. Of Christ's idea of the Kingdom as presented in the Sermon on the Mount, he says:

"Christ speaks of the Kingdom here, not as a known quantity, but as a thing whose nature He is in the act of defining by the aphorisms He utters. If so, then it consists essentially in states of mind. It is within. It is ourselves, the true ideal human." (3)

The note on Matt. 5:16 contains this remark:

"The double-sided doctrine of this logion of Jesus is that the divine is revealed by the heroic in human conduct, and that the moral hero is the true Son of God."(1)

On Matt. 10:41 it is said:

"The man who has goodness enough to reverence the ideal of goodness approximately or perfectly realised in another, though not in himself, shall, in the moral order of the world, be counted as a good man."(2)

At Luke 9:1 the comment is:

"Δύναμις καὶ ἐξουσία, power and right; power implies right. The man that can cast out devils and heal disease is entitled to do so, nay bound. This principle found an important application in St Paul's claim to be an apostle, which really rested on fitness, insight."(3)

Bruce, as we have already noted, owed not a little of his moral fervour to Carlyle, who considerably influenced him as a young man in his time of intellectual unsettlement.(4) Carlyle taught him to read the Gospels as a polemic against Pharisaism, and Bruce never ceased to read them under that light. As Denney has put it:

"He was vividly conscious that the gospels are not only a glorious proclamation of the true religion, but an incessant relentless criticism of all false religion. He learned from them to hate sham holiness with a perfect hatred. He dreaded the very beginnings of it. ... Of all that made religion a thing apart from life, and gave it a content distinct from the simple, wholesome, natural moralities, he was incurably suspicious. ... Formalism and legalism were in his eyes essentially antichristian, and he held it part of the duty of every minister of the gospel to keep up Christ's criticism of the degenerate and spurious forms which religion may assume, and especially to take care that the Church, which is only a means, did not become an end, and Church life usurp the place of Christianity. ... He discharged his own duty as a critic of religion whenever he found occasion."(5)

An instance may be given of Bruce's moral fervour expressing itself in an impatience with ecclesiasticism. On Matt. 16:18 he says of Christ's promise to Peter:

"It is as personal as the most zealous advocates of papal supremacy could desire. Yet it is as remote as the poles from what they

mean. Christ did not fight to death against one form of spiritual despotism to put another, if possible worse, in its room. .... The sense of this famous logion, if Christ really spoke the word, must be simple, elementary, suitable to the initial stage; withal religious and ethical rather than ecclesiastical.\(^{(1)}\)

The prevailingly ethical and practical tone of Bruce's exposition is illustrated in his adding that the promise of Christ is not an absolute promise but one that is conditioned on the Christ-spirit continuing to rule in the Church:

"When the Christ spirit is weak the Church will be weak, and neither creeds nor governments, nor keys, nor ecclesiastical dignities will be of much help to her."\(^{(2)}\)

(d) A main quality of Bruce's work is its freshness and originality of interpretation.

(1) He has not a few interesting things to say regarding what we may call the externals of Christ's ministry. That ministry embraced three functions: teaching, preaching, healing. Teaching (διδασκαλία) was for disciples; preaching (κήρυξις) was for the people. The teaching function is put first by "Matthew" in accordance with the character of his Gospel, which, as compared with Luke's, is weak in the evangelistic element.\(^{(3)}\) To the traditional title "Sermon on the Mount" Bruce prefers "Teaching on the Hill," for the discourse was evidently addressed to the inner circle of disciples and probably represents "the teaching, not of a single hour or day, but of a period of retirement."\(^{(4)}\) Two sections of Christ's public ministry are made to stand out in fresh light, viz., the "Synagogue Ministry" and the "Mission to the Publicans", to each of which a chapter is devoted in "With Open Face."\(^{(5)}\)

The former of these occupies so brief a space in the Gospel narrative that the ordinary reader does not realize that perhaps it covered months of continuous travel and preaching. Yet, says Bruce, it must

\(^{(1)}\)C.S.G., p.224. \(^{(2)}\)Ibid., p.225. \(^{(3)}\)Cf.Ibid., p.94. \(^{(4)}\)Ibid. \(^{(5)}\)Cf.W.O.F., pp.80-130.
have done so, even if through the hostility of the religious authorities it was impossible for Jesus to carry out His full design. The probable course adopted by our Lord in this ministry is worked out with marked skill. In similar fashion Bruce has treated the "Mission to the Publicans", pointing out that to influence them it would be necessary to deal with them specially. Accordingly, the call of Matthew was the preliminary to a work among the publicans. It must have been at Jesus' own suggestion, Bruce argues, that Matthew invited the publicans to eat with Him, for Matthew himself could hardly have ventured on so daring a proposal. Having won their confidence by this practical proof that He did not regard them as outcasts, Jesus would certainly preach to them; and Bruce suggests that it was to this audience that the parables in Luke 15 were spoken.

(2) Some of Bruce's original interpretations challenge discussion. Three examples may be given. (1) Matt. 8:20, — "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Bruce comments:

"I confess that I have always felt a certain measure of dissatisfaction with the current conception of our Lord's meaning. I have never been able to see any special aptitude of the saying, so understood, to the case of the person addressed, nor have I been able to get rid of the feeling that the word taken in the literal sense is not without a certain tone of exaggerated sentiment, according ill with the known character of Jesus."(1)

Bruce considers that there was no great hardship in the physical aspect of the life of our Lord and His disciples, such as might scare away anyone the least inclined to disciple-life. He therefore suggests a metaphorical interpretation according to which Christ's words do not refer to His actual physical homelessness, but to the want of sympathy between Him and the men of His age:

"Jesus was spiritually an alien, without a home in the religion of the time."(2)

The foxes and the birds were better off than He was, so far as a home for the soul was concerned. And with what point and pungency He might say this to a scribe! For it was the class to which this aspirant belonged that made Him homeless. Writing in 1896, Bruce confesses that the new interpretation only recently came to his mind, but that it came as a distinct relief. We consider it rather refined and fanciful. It is better to take the words as one of those occasional references which Jesus made to the conditions of His own ministry, and to His own minor experience. As Dr Curtis puts it:

"As man He has a greater right to possess a home than foxes and birds." "To build a home for earth's spiritual wanderers He forwent a home of His own." (2)

(ii) Matt. 11:28ff: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Bruce's interpretation of this "gracious invitation" is a marked departure from the one generally accepted. He understands the words, not as a universal invitation to the spiritually weary, but as the expression of the longing of Jesus for apt disciples, of whom He found few. He argues that the tone of the chapter as a whole is one of lament over the general unwillingness to believe, and that the words of invitation are really a soliloquy of Jesus expressing His disappointment with the disciples He had, and His longing for those who, like the Apostle Paul at a later period, have been prepared for Him by passing through another school, in which they have suffered disenchantment. "All that labour and are heavy laden! means, those who are weary in their struggle after wisdom. (5)

We do not think Bruce's view can be right. It is not merely that it does not lie on the surface, and is too subtle to be probable.

The reference in the context to the babes to whom the truths of the Kingdom have been revealed seems against it, and the mention of all who are weary and heavy laden suggests that Jesus had a large number in mind, whereas He had, evidently, not found one of the type to which Bruce refers. It is somewhat surprising that one who was so enthusiastic for the grace of Christ's teaching, should have accepted a weaker interpretation of so great a saying.

(iii) Luke 19:8, -- "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." In "The Kingdom of God" Bruce interprets these words as giving an account of the habitual procedure of Zacchaeus before he met with Jesus; so that what Jesus did was not to make Zacchaeus a good man, but to make the world, which had misunderstood him, aware how good he was. Zacchaeus was a hidden diamond, doing acts of justice and kindness by stealth and utterly demolishing the Pharisaic and the popular conception of a publican. It cannot be denied that, taken by themselves, the words might bear this construction, which has a certain piquancy. But what becomes of the words that follow, "To-day is salvation come to this house," -- or of the fervent words of Jesus immediately afterwards, "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost"? These words, it is true, express the joy of discovery; but the discovery is a more sacred one than the unearthing of the good deeds of a misunderstood moral hero. Anyone might have made such a discovery; but the discovery made by Jesus was one possible only to Himself. The whole scene, we feel, is emptied of its significance and separated from the others in the Gospels which exhibit the Saviour in the very act of transforming great sinners into great saints, if Bruce's meaning is thrust upon it. It was, doubtless, his realization

(1) Of K.G., pp. 137f.
of this which caused him in his Commentary to revert -- though with a "probably" -- to the usual interpretation. (1)

(f) In all his writings Bruce displays a keen desire to understand psychologically the motives and experiences of Jesus. His general standpoint is revealed in his note on Luke 2:52, dealing with the growth of Jesus:

"In wisdom and in stature, both growths alike real. Real in body, apparent in the mind; growth in manifestation of the wisdom within, complete from the first -- such is the docetic gloss of ecclesiastical interpreters, making the childhood of Jesus a monstros and His humanity a phantom." (2)

A typical sentence is this, relating to our Lord's Temptation:

"In the fight of faith and unbelief over the supernatural element in the story all sense of the inward psychological reality may be lost, and nothing remain but an external miraculous, theatrical transaction." (3)

Now, there is undoubtedly a legitimate interest in "the inward psychological reality" of Christ's life, and much of Bruce's use of psychology is both penetrating and rewarding. But there is much ground for criticism. Not infrequently we get the impression that psychology has been used to explain away rather than to explain. The list of inferences as to our Lord's consciousness deduced from the events at His Baptism leaves something to be desired. (4) We hardly feel satisfied with a sentence like this:

"Under powerful spiritual constraints Jesus had taken a great leap in the dark, if one may dare to say so." (5)

The statement that, in the "sayings of the Hill," "we see Jesus at His best" is scarcely consistent with the attitude of Christian reverence. In dealing with the case of the Roman centurion, Bruce gives expression to a curious sentiment, which will not meet with the approval of many:

"If Christ's praise was exaggerated, it but the more conspicuously evinces His philo-Pagan spirit. ... We may safely assume, however,

that the praise, while generous, as was always Christ's way, was in the main deserved."(1)

A similar note is heard in the comment on Matt. 5:22:

"In these words of Jesus against anger and contempt there is an aspect of exaggeration. They are the strong utterance of one in whom all forms of inhumanity roused feelings of passionate abhorrence. They are of the utmost value as a revelation of character."(2)

Again and again in his books on the Gospels, more particularly the later ones, we come upon words and phrases which, whatever we may think of them, are the outcome of Bruce's attempt to read the mind of Christ from a psychological point of view. We are told, for example, in connection with a certain incident, that Christ is speaking "impatiently," having passed "from pity to impatience."(3) On Christ's question to the disciples, "Do ye not yet understand?" we have this comment:

"Disappointment, bordering on impatience, ... was, it is to be feared, a chronic feeling in Christ's mind in reference to the men whom He had chosen."(5)

We read of "disappointment" leading to "a change in the plan of Jesus;"(6) of His making "an evangelizing experiment"; and of His acting "spontaneously, without calculation."(8) We confess to a shrinking from the idea of Christ being contemplated as an example of the purity of thought enjoined in Matt. 5:27f.(9)

(5) What we consider the least satisfactory feature of Bruce's work as interpreter is a certain deficiency of theological interest. This is seen in his failure to deal adequately with words with less or more theological meaning, and in the too slight handling of some of the deeper problems which the history presents, especially the more tragic aspects of the life of Christ. Sometimes what we miss is

carefully discriminated definition. On the difficult word ἡγεσίσως in Luke's Preface there is an excellent note; but with regard to δικαίωσία (Matt. 3:15), ἐκκλησία (Matt. 16:18), and other words calling for careful treatment at the hands of the interpreter, the reader is left in uncertainty. On many rich and pregnant words the comment is exceedingly thin. On Matt. 1:23 we are told:

"Emmanuel = "with us God", implying that God's help will come through the child Jesus. It does not necessarily imply the idea of incarnation."(1)

For the Evangelist himself it certainly did imply that idea. The comment on the phrase "the Son of God" in the opening verse of Mark runs:

"How much that was meant to convey cannot be certainly determined."(2)

A good modern commentary, such as that of Dr A. E. J. Rawlinson,(3) reveals just how rich in content the phrase is, and how the whole Gospel of Mark is intended to be a commentary upon it. Bruce's understanding of the phrase "the Son of Man" is, as we have seen, too humanistic. Its occurrence in Matt. 8:20 is thus explained:

"A remarkable designation occurring here for the first time. It means much for the Speaker, who has chosen it deliberately, in connection with private reflections, at whose nature we can only guess, by study of the many occasions on which the name is used. Here it seems to mean the man simpliciter (son of man = man, in Hebrew or Syriac), the unprivileged Man: not only no exception to the rule of ordinary human experience in the way of being better off, but rather an exception in the way of being worse off."(4)

A typically Brucian comment is that on the great passage in Matt. 24 regarding the "Parousia" in which our Lord said that He did not know "of that day and hour":

"It is an intimation that all statements as to the time of the ἐσπερία must be taken in a qualified sense as referring to a subject on which certain knowledge is not attainable or even

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desirable. It looks like Jesus correcting Himself, or using two ways of speaking, one for comfort (it will be soon), and one for caution (it may not be so soon as even I think or you expect)." (1)

The chapter on "The Cross in Sight" (2) is rather disappointing, as is the exposition of the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper. The comment on the latter includes these words:

"This symbol has had the fate of all religious symbolism, which is to run into fetish worship; in view of which the question is raising itself in some thoughtful minds whether discontinuance, at least for a time, of the use of sacraments would not be a benefit to the religion of the spirit and more in harmony with the mind of Christ than their obligatory observance." (3)

The Agony in the Garden merits a much fuller treatment than it has received. We are given this assurance:

"The scene in the garden is intrinsically probable and without doubt historical. .... It is not the creation of theology, though theology has made its own use of it." (4)

The explanation given of the agony is this:

"It was the Passion with all its horrors vividly realised that was causing the distress." (5)

This may be right, but it is too commonplace a reading of so great a crisis to pass without defence. Indeed, we greatly doubt whether an explanation that lies so on the surface can do justice to an experience of such infinite depth that we shudder as we try to peer into it. Bruce has himself warned us that we must not despise a certain apparently far-fetched interpretation of a saying of Christ, because, as he puts it,—

"We are only feeling our way as to the meaning of some of Christ's sayings." (6)

But surely our Lord's experiences lie deeper than His words, and we are only feeling our way to the meaning of some of these. Doubtless Bruce's shyness of handling the deeper theological questions was due to recoil from the older dogmatic exegesis, but the evidence we have adduced proves that he carried it much too far.

II. APOSTOLIC INTERPRETATIONS.

1. St Paul's Conception of Christianity.

In approaching Bruce's study of the Pauline theology we have to bear in mind two important considerations. (i) He was Professor of Apologetics as well as of New Testament Exegesis. Moreover, he was still fresh from the writing of his "Apologetics" and seems still to breathe the air of that subject. Those who do not bear in mind Bruce's apologetic purpose and spirit will probably fail to understand his determination to use as sources of Paul's teaching only those epistles which cannot be gainsaid, and the readiness with which he gives up everything which cannot be vindicated, no matter how venerable it may be. Some readers will feel it is a drawback that, like Paul himself in his controversial epistles, Bruce seems constantly to be writing with some opponent in view. But those who understand his attitude and aim will recognize the special value which the apologetic method of treatment gives the book for all who are really beset with difficulties and are laboriously building up the structure of their faith. (ii) As the title sufficiently indicates, we have in this volume not so much the section of the history of Revelation identified with the name of the great apostle, as the analysis of the Christian consciousness of the converted Pharisee, Paul. We must frankly recognize that, though he interprets the epistles with power, Bruce had not so much natural affinity for the Pauline presentation of the gospel as for that of the Synoptics. To his mind the intense individuality of Paul's experience and the controversial situation in which much of his work was born deprived his presentation of Christian truth of the catholic persuasiveness of the Gospels. "God could have done even without him," says Bruce, rather characteristically. (1) These

(1) Apol., p. 415.
considerations explain Bruce's freedom in criticizing both the apostle and his writings. His whole approach to Paul has been so admirably stated by Denney that we cannot do better than quote his words:

"The title is suggestive of the character of the book, and explains a great deal of the misgiving with which Dr Bruce was regarded by the ordinary evangelical Christian. Such a man does not go to St Paul for a conception of Christianity; he goes for the gospel, and he not only goes for it, but gets it. The Churches of the Reformation are characteristically Pauline Churches. ... The man who has become a Christian by the preaching in a Protestant Church has, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, received the gospel as preached by St Paul. But Dr Bruce did not go to St Paul for the gospel; he went to St Paul with his gospel. He had learned to know Jesus elsewhere, and though he had an enthusiastic appreciation for the apostle, he did not feel so absolutely dependent on him, he did not recognise such an immediate authority for the gospel in him, as the mass of Christians whose experience had been different. ... He had heard Jesus Himself, and could not listen to anybody else in precisely the same way. He never focussed the realities of revelation exactly as St Paul did. His Christ was Jesus of Nazareth; St Paul's Christ was the Lord of Glory."(1)

Before we enter upon a detailed review of this book, it is necessary to say something with regard to the arrangement of the chapters. The first two are personal and introductory, the one providing a sketch of the literary sources employed, and the other portraying the main features of the apostle's religious history, which is so intimately bound up with his theological system. Having approached the more elaborate discussion in four chapters on the Galatian, Corinthian, and Roman letters, Bruce then proceeds in chapter VII to deal topically with Paul's teaching on the great themes of Christian doctrine. The order in which the subjects are discussed is very interesting and in some respects peculiar. The underlying principle is that first a statement should be given of the good that came to the world through Jesus Christ. Accordingly, four chapters are devoted to Paul's "soteriological system of ideas," viz., sin, righteousness, redemption, and adoption. In Bruce's view the central

place in Paul's theology is occupied by the idea of the "righteousness of God," which is defined as "Divine credit for being righteous bestowed on a man when he believes in, or trusts, God." \(^{(1)}\)

The chapter on Sin deals with "the negative doctrine concerning justification,"\(^{(2)}\) that on "the Righteousness of God" with the "positive doctrine." The Death of Christ is studied as the means of redemption, and Adoption as its result. Bruce next deals, in a group of no fewer than seven chapters, with those doctrines which he believes Paul to have developed as the "apologetic buttresses" of his system. The Pauline apologetic is regarded as revolving around three great questions: (i) What guarantee is there for ethical interests, for real personal goodness, under the religious programme of righteousness by faith? (ii) What end does the Law serve? (iii) If the benefits of Christ are open to all men on absolutely equal terms, what becomes of the Jewish election and prerogative? Paul's proof of the ethical character of his doctrine is treated in five chapters. The preliminary one, entitled "Without and Within," is concerned with "the objective and the subjective"\(^{(4)}\) in soteriology, and the following three with "the Moral Energy of Faith," "the Influence of the Holy Spirit," and "the Flesh as a Hindrance to Holiness." A supplementary chapter deals with "the Likeness of Sinful Flesh." The discussion of Paul's apologetic is completed with two chapters on "the True Function of the Law", and "the Election of Israel." The book concludes with a final group of four chapters in which are studied Paul's views of "Christ", "the Christian Life", "the Church", and "the Last Things", as he thought of these, not so much in the stormy atmosphere of theological debate as in the serene light of peaceful contemplation and calm religious reverence. At the end of the volume there is a good supplementary

\(^{(1)}\)P.C.C., p.147. \(^{(2)}\)Ibid., p.125. \(^{(3)}\)Ibid., p.47. \(^{(4)}\)Ibid., p.208.
note on "The Teaching of St Paul compared with the Teaching of our Lord in the Synoptical Gospels."

Our chief objection to Bruce's arrangement of his book is that there is a certain disproportionateness in his treatment of individual doctrines, attributable to the undue prominence given by him to the apologetic elements in the apostle's thought. Furthermore, even if it be allowed as a general statement that "the apologetic ideas of his system came to the apostle latest of all," this judgment does not necessarily cover all the doctrines which Bruce has elected to treat as apologetic. We feel strongly that a doctrine so central as that of salvation through union with Christ by faith cannot be thrown into the subordinate position of an apologetic buttress, and that Bruce is wide of the mark when he says:

"The apostle's doctrine of the mystic solidarity between the believer and Christ was probably one of the latest, as it is certainly one of the most beautiful developments in his system of Christian thinking." (2)

It is true that in Romans 6 this doctrine is expounded to meet the objection that grace encouraged sin. But there is ample proof that for Paul this was the heart of the gospel and no late development, and on this account greater prominence should have been given to it.

We shall now discuss at greater length the salient features of Bruce's presentation of the Pauline theology.

(a) The Sources.

Bruce's apologetic interest manifests itself in his limiting his sources to the four controversial epistles. His reasons are frankly stated:

"It is due to the actual state of critical opinion that in a scientific attempt to ascertain the nature of St Paul's Christian teaching, primary importance should be attached to the Epistles which command a general, if not quite universal, consensus of critical approval." (3)

(1) P.C.C., p.47. (2) Ibid. (3) Ibid., pp.2f.
Apart from the interest of scientific claims, Bruce maintains that in Paul's controversial writings, where the very nature of the Christian Faith is concerned, there is exceptional value. In four excellent preliminary chapters he gives an analysis of the epistles on which he builds, and summarizes thus:

"In Galatians St Paul defends the independence of Christianity against those who would make Christendom subject to Jewish law and custom; in 1 and 2 Corinthians he defends his own independence and authority as a God-commissioned apostle of the Gentiles against those who asserted the exclusive authority of the Eleven; in Romans, while giving a comprehensive statement of his views on the gospel, he addresses himself very specially to the solution of the problem how to reconcile his idea of Christianity with the admitted truth that Israel had for many centuries been God's elect people." (2)

While we can agree that Paul's doctrine finds its classic expression in the four great epistles, and can understand why Bruce felt it better to confine himself to these in his detailed exposition, we cannot help thinking that his book is greatly impoverished by such a method. Remembering that the two most important Christological passages in Paul's writings occur in Philippians and Colossians, and that Ephesians presents us with his profoundest thoughts on the Church, we can only regret that they have been excluded by the general plan. No doubt the four epistles contain these doctrines more or less explicitly, but the statement has been limited at several points. As an example we may take the bare mention of the relation of Christ to the universe, which must have been dealt with at some length if Colossians had been used as a source.

In the chapter on the Sources Bruce devotes several very interesting pages to the theology of the Thessalonian Epistles. On chronological grounds he justly rejects the view of B. Weiss and others that

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these epistles contain a less developed form of Paulinism, antedating the pronounced type which the apostle's teaching assumed under the stress of the Judaistic controversy. He has, however, his own hypothesis for explaining the difference between them and the four controversial epistles, the view taken being that in the former we have a primer of Paul's teaching as uninfluenced by controversy, and as he presented it in "simple, untechnical language" to "nascent Christian communities":

"The most likely suggestion is, that the Epistles to the Thessalonian church show us the form in which St Paul judged it fitting to present the gospel to nascent Christian communities; when he had in view merely their immediate religious needs and capacities, and had no occasion to guard them against errors and misconceptions. This view sets the apostle's character in an interesting light. It makes him appear a Paulinist, so to speak, against his will. He preached Paulinism, that which was most distinctive in his way of apprehending the faith, under compulsion; when free from the constraint of false and mischievous opinions, he taught the common faith of Christians in simple, untechnical language."(1)

We do not take exception to the explanation offered of the peculiar character of the Thessalonian Epistles. As Bruce has pointed out, the fact that the teaching in these is simpler and less developed than that of the four controversial epistles does not necessarily prove that Paul had not yet worked out his theology when he wrote them. He may well have practised reserve or self-restraint when speaking to babes in Christ. We must protest, however, against the broad inference drawn by Bruce that Paul was a Paulinist under compulsion and in spite of himself. His tact in withholding from infant churches or from unconverted Gentile hearers the more pronounced and detailed formulation of his doctrine by no means justifies the inference that he himself attached little value to the latter outside of the sphere of controversy. This inference is flatly contradicted by numerous declarations in the other epistles. To the Galatian...

(1)P.C.C., pp.13f.
churches also Paul must have preached after this primitive fashion, and yet he rebukes them for having turned aside from the specific gospel of grace, which he calls the only gospel." There are no adequate grounds for saying that Paul made much of the distinction between religion and theology, and preached Paulinism under compulsion. In his defence of his theology he is always enthusiastic, for his theology is his religion expressing itself in intellectual forms. We feel that this whole distinction made by Bruce between Paul's religion and his theology is largely modern and foreign to the apostle's mind. In any case, it is highly improbable that Paul ever consciously dissociated in his mind the simple primer-gospel of religion from the developed theological gospel of controversy in the sense of attaching a higher value to the former than to the latter.

(b) St Paul's Religious History.

It is a main contention of Bruce, and a sound one, that Paul's theology is, in an unusual degree, the outgrowth of his religious experience; and the treatment he gives to the origin and growth of the apostle's doctrine of righteousness is of special interest and importance. That he was particularly fascinated by this theme is clearly shown by a long and valuable article on "Paul's Conversion and the Pauline Gospel," contributed by him to the "Presbyterian Review" as early as 1880.\(^2\) The volume of 1894 is, in essentials, an expansion of this article.

In any discussion of Paul's religious history two intimately related questions at once arise. The one is as to how far he had apprehended the real issues involved before his conversion and how far his momentous convictions were reached immediately after that event. The other question concerns the part played in the apostle's conversion........

by subjective experience and the part played by an objective revelation.

In opposition to those who find little or no struggle in the period antecedent to the conversion, Bruce holds that there was a very definite psychological preparation and that this preparation had been very thorough:

"On the day Saul of Tarsus was converted, his spiritual development to a large extent lay behind him. For him to become a Christian meant everything. It meant becoming a Paulinist Christian in the sense which the famous controversial Epistles enable us to put upon that expression. The preparation for the great change had been so thorough, that the convert leaped at a bound into a large cosmopolitan idea of Christianity, its nature and destination. The universalism, e.g., which we associate with the name of the Apostle Paul, dates from his conversion." (1)

While we heartily agree with Bruce that Paul's conversion had a subjective preparation, we do not quite agree with the sketch he has given of the latter. His conclusions, although independently arrived at, are largely a combination of the views of Beyschlag, who laid the emphasis exclusively on the fruitless struggle after righteousness, and of the views of Pfleiderer, who, with equal one-sidedness, insisted on Saul's familiarity with the Christian beliefs about Jesus and the processes of thought which these originated in his mind. Bruce finds the prime factor, in the unsettling of the young Pharisee, in the new view he took of the Law, and particularly in the discovery that came to him of the tremendous significance and the searching rigour of the tenth commandment. (2) We cannot think, however, that when Paul says, "I had not known coveting, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (3), he is referring to an experience that came to him in his mature Pharisaism, viz., the conviction that the Law dealt not simply with outward act but with inward motive. The difficulty is that Paul seems in the passage to identify this with his death to the life of childish innocence which followed on his knowledge of the Law. Could

(1) P. C. C., p. 36. (2) Ibid., p. 28. (3) Rom. 7:7.
he have said, "I was alive apart from the Law once" (1), of any part of his life as a Pharisee? The interpretation of the passage is important for the construction alike of Paul's religious history and of his doctrine of the Law.

With regard to the conversion experience itself, we are strongly of opinion that Bruce, in his desire to do justice to the subjective element, has seriously underestimated the place and importance of the objective revelation. It is, as we have seen, characteristic of him to emphasize the part which the apostle's subjective experience played in the production of his theology. He deprecates the derivation of its prominent elements from Hellenistic or Alexandrian Jewish sources; (2) and in almost every case where he takes issue with this tendency to account for the apostle by "eclectic patchwork" (3), he substitutes for the historical evolution a psychological, subjective one. While we have no objection to this principle as such, we must question whether Bruce everywhere applies it in accordance with the facts. There is good reason for doubting this in regard to his analysis of the apostle's conversion experience. He appears to hold that nearly the whole content of the specifically Pauline gospel lay in Paul's mind in a state of ferment before the critical event on the road to Damascus. But if this be so, where is the great need of an objective supernatural factor? In such a state of mind as is here attributed to Paul, little more than a slight touch was required to change his personal attitude towards the ideas that had already gathered in his mind. In other words, it was not so much a revelation that wrought the momentous change as a conversion. In Galatians, however, we find that Paul, while evidently implying both, speaks in terms of revelation and not of conversion (4). Could he truthfully have done so, if the principal

ideas of his gospel had been already familiar to him as the result of a psychological struggle? The conversion undoubtedly involved a change of will in an already undermined Jewish consciousness; but only by assuming that the fundamental factor in the experience was an objective revelation of the Risen Christ can we make sense of the apostle's statements. As Dr H. A. A. Kennedy well says, summing up the whole matter:

"The apostle himself makes no reference to a silent process which culminated in the revelation of Christ to him as risen and exalted. For him the crisis was altogether sudden and wonderful. ... What remained with him as the supreme impression was the unexpected transformation of his religious experience by the instrumentality of God. ... The conditions of receptivity were of course present. But the vision had a content which Paul had not created. ... What moves his soul is the loving hand stretched out to arrest him in his folly, the hand of Christ by which he was grasped."(6)

If Bruce has underestimated the place of the objective element in Paul's conversion, he has made amends by emphasizing the inexhaustible significance which such a spiritual crisis would have for such a man. As he puts it:

"The truth is, that a whole group of religious intuitions, the universal destination of Christianity being one of them, flashed simultaneously into the convert's mind, like a constellation of stars, on the day of his conversion. ... For thought is quick at such creative epochs, and feeling is quicker still."(2)

But Bruce is careful to point out that, dominant and determining as the conversion experience was for Paul, it by no means follows that his system of Christian thought underwent no expansion in any direction after the initial period. He does not, it is true, find any sufficient proof for the theory, so enthusiastically advocated by Sabatier and others, that the epistles, when regarded chronologically, reveal a marked growth in the apostle's theology.(3) He holds, however, that in the period following upon the conversion there were two distinguishable

(1)"The Theology of the Epistles,"(London, 1919), pp.51f.
(2)P.C.C., p.37.
(3)Cf.ibid., p.11.
intellectual developments:

"We must carefully distinguish here between his religious intuitions and his theological formulations. The former fell within the early years or even days of his Christian career, the latter may have been the slow growth of time; though even they may to a large extent have been worked out during the period of retirement in Arabia. ... Another distinction has to be taken into account in discussing the question as to the development of Paulinism. We must distinguish between the positive doctrines of the Pauline system and its apologetic elements. ... It is probable that the apologetic ideas of his system came to the apostle latest of all; first the intuitions, next the positive dogmatic formulae, lastly the apologetic buttresses."

This book as a whole is essentially a detailed account of Paul's doctrine as thus conceived by Bruce; and we may conclude our discussion of the apostle's religious history with a brief outline of it. In his conversion Paul perceived, as a religious intuition, that salvation is not attainable by the works of the Law, but only by the grace of God as made known and operative in the crucified Christ. As he debated and thought through the great question as to how a despairing man, in spite of his sin and failure, may get peace with God, Paul deduced from his early experience his doctrine of justification by faith: that God regards as righteous any man, be he even the greatest sinner, who trusts in His grace through Jesus Christ. Then as the apostle came to experience a buoyant sense of moral ability and victory, as he became conscious that the law of God, spiritualized and summed up in love, was being fulfilled in him, he reached what Bruce regards as the latest and most original phase of his Christian thinking, namely, "faith-mysticism" -- the doctrine that by the recreative power of faith and the immanent action of the Holy Spirit, the believer is brought into a mystic identity of real life and righteousness with Christ Himself.

(1)P.C.C., pp.46f.
(c) St Paul's Doctrine.

Under this head we propose to comment on those passages of the book which are of special interest and importance.

(1) Sin. In connection with this doctrine we have a fresh and luminous exposition of Romans 5:12, and in particular of the last clause: ἐπὶ τοῦ πάντος ζωογόνου. This is one of a number of instances in which Bruce gives striking evidence of independence of mind by coming exceedingly near to what scholastic theology long believed to be the apostle's meaning. Here the rendering of the Vulgate — "in quo omnes peccaverunt" — is conceded to be, though not grammatically, yet essentially correct. Paul, says Bruce, finds the solution of the problem of universal sin and death in the great principle of solidarity or the moral unity of mankind. The death of all is due to the sin of all in Adam. Sin as contrasted with righteousness, in the famous parallel between Adam and Christ, is primarily an objective force fighting not so much in man as over him:

"The idea of objective sin may appear objectionable on ethical grounds.... Yet modern science will teach even the freest theological thinker to be cautious in pressing this objection; for by its doctrine of heredity it has made it more manifest than ever that the solidarity of mankind is a great fact, and not merely a theological theory." (2)

With reference to popular ideas about the paradise state of our first parents, Bruce utters a characteristically apologetic note in the warning that Scripture must not be made responsible for ideas which might bring, or seem to bring, the Church's doctrine into collision with the ascertained facts of science. (3)

Typical of a number of illuminating footnotes throughout the book is one on the bearing of the distinction between ἀμαρτία and ἀμαρτίαι.

(1) P.C.C., p.130. (2) Ibid., p.135. (3) Cf. Ibid., p.142.
"To understand Paulinism we must carefully note the distinction between ἀμέρια and παράβασις. ἀμέρια is objective and common; παράβασις is subjective and personal. ἀμέρια entails some evil (1) effects, but παράβασις is necessary to guilt and final condemnation."

(2) Death of Christ. Bruce considers that Paul’s doctrine may be described generally as a theory of redemption by the self-humiliation of the Redeemer, and elsewhere he has given the following excellent summary of it:

"The Redeemer in love stoops down into the position of those whom He would redeem and the divinely appointed reward of this meritorious act is that men ipso facto enter into the state of privilege which properly belongs to Him. The Redeemer humbles Himself thoroughly, entering into the unblessed condition of His clients in all its aspects; coming under the law, its curse, God’s wrath, death, therefore sin, and the temptations arising from the flesh, because men are under these, and so delivering us from them all. Each act in the drama of self-humiliation possesses its own emancipating virtue. Coming under law (e.g., by being circumcised), Jesus delivers from bondage to the law, and so on with all the other categories."

In his book Bruce says:

"This is the principle of redemption. Christ’s whole state of humiliation was the λύτρον, the resulting benefit for us is ἀπολύτρωσις."

Objectively the redemption is complete at once. The Law’s dominion was at an end for humanity as soon as the Son of God condescended to come under it. But objective redemption simply means the view which God for Christ’s sake is graciously pleased to take of the world. The objective state of privilege must be subjectively realized in order that the redemption may be complete:

"The objective change takes place with a view to a corresponding subjective one, without which the former would remain an abstract ideal and a barren benefit."

Here faith is the great sine qua non. It is by faith that the general amnesty effected by our Lord’s death is realized in individual

(3) P.C.C., p.171. (4) Ibid., p.176.
experience as a Divine forgiveness of personal sin:

"It is faith's function to transmute the objective state of privilege into a subjective experience; to turn an ideal redemption into an actual one all along the line. .... It is through faith, and only for the believer, that Christ's death becomes effectively propitiatory, a real shield against the divine wrath."(1)

(3) The Objective and the Subjective in Soteriology. On this subject Bruce has a very instructive chapter entitled "Without and Within." The various theories regarding the relation between the objective and the subjective sides of Paul's doctrine of salvation are lucidly stated, and the compatibility and equal importance of both are forcibly demonstrated against all attempts to resolve one side into the other. But we cannot agree with Bruce's theory concerning the later origin of the apostle's subjective train of thought. His sketch of its evolution he himself fitly characterizes as "ideal history."(2)

Bruce's view, we may repeat, is that Paul's doctrine of an objective righteousness, wrought out by the death of Christ, was developed first in point of time; that this "met the spiritual need of the conversion crisis"; and that "the doctrine of subjective righteousness, its causes and hindrances .... came in due season to solve problems arising out of Christian experience."(3) The objective and the subjective, accordingly, are described as having been for Paul "two doctrines" and "two revelations"; but they were not incompatible:

"The two doctrines, when they had both been revealed, lived together peaceably in St Paul's mind. The latter did not come to cancel the earlier, or to put the Christian disciple out of conceit with his primitive intuitions. He conserved old views while gratefully welcoming the new. .... The two revelations served different purposes. They were not two incompatible answers to the same question, but compatible answers to two distinct questions."(4)

In an earlier chapter Bruce has found in the Epistle to the Romans

support for his view as to the chronology of the two sides of Paul’s doctrine:

"St Paul in his Epistle to the Romans does not refer to the subjective aspect of faith as a renewing power till he has finished his exposition of the doctrine of justification."(1)

Now it is true that the apostle views the way of salvation mainly in a forensic manner in Romans 1-5, and that he develops the ethical aspects of his doctrine in chapters 6-8. But this fact gives no real support to the idea that for Paul the objective and the subjective were "two revelations", one of which followed the other chronologically. The manner in which his thoughts are unfolded in Romans was determined by the purpose of his argument. In the early chapters he is concerned to prove the true method of justification, as against the false method, and it is only after this point is fully established that he has occasion to develop his thought of the inner nature of the Christian life. Moreover, in Galatians and in Philippians 3:9-11, the different forms of expression are used interchangeably. We consider, therefore, that a just exegesis, while it will distinguish the subjective and the objective factors in Paul’s doctrine, will not try to separate them in point of time or to array the one against the other. As Dr G. B. Stevens has said:

"In justice to Paul’s thought, we should refuse, on the one hand, to minimise the juridical form of his doctrine in the supposed interest of an ethical idea of justification, and, on the other, should decline to rest in the forensic analogies alone as if they were precise, scientific definitions of the spiritual realities. We should rather hold that for Paul the juridical and the ethical coincide. ... A legal analogy is in no way inconsistent with ethical and spiritual reality when, as in this case, the lawgiver is the God of all grace, the law itself holy love, and the condition of acquittal before God union with Christ."(2)

(1) P.C.C., p.159.
(4) The Moral Energy of Faith. The chapter on this subject is interesting and valuable. Faith is a great word in the Pauline theology. It could not fail to be, in a system whose fundamental axiom was that salvation is by grace, and which waged uncompromising war with the notion that a man could commend himself to God by legal righteousness.

In his earlier chapter on "The Righteousness of God" Bruce has already pointed out that the moral energy of faith arises from the fact that it trusts God and does justice to the Divine character, and that Jesus Christ, who is the embodiment of Divine grace, is the personal object of this saving faith. Now, in certain texts -- Rom. 5:19; I Cor. 1:26; II Cor. 5:21 -- it would seem as if Paul teaches that faith appropriates to itself the ideal righteousness of Christ; and Bruce discusses the question whether the idea of the imputation of Christ's personal righteousness to the believer is Pauline. Following Weiss, he answers, no. Nevertheless, while acknowledging that the doctrine lacks support in express Pauline phraseology, he says it may be regarded as a fair inference from Pauline texts:

"God regards as righteous all whose faith in Christ not only lays claim to His righteousness as its own, but contains in itself the guarantee for the ultimate reproduction of a kindred righteousness in the character of the believer." (2)

Bruce points out that here two tendencies have always been at work -- the one represented by the Protestant theological tradition; the other by Newman and others. The former empties faith of all its moral contents; the latter makes it the fruitful germ of all true righteousness. (3) He gives it as his view that the weakness of Protestant soteriology at this point is the result of the theorizings

(1)P.C.C., pp.149,152.  (2)Ibid., p.154.  (3)Cf. Ibid., pp.155ff.
of theologians who were more anxious to controvert Rome than to understand the great apostle:

"The justifying faith of this very controversial, extremely anti-Romish, theology, is an abstraction. A faith which is no more than a mere hand to lay hold of an external righteousness has no existence except in the brain of a scholastic theologian. ... At the very least, true faith is always a humble trust in the grace of God, and that is a thing of real moral value. Then it lies in the very nature of true faith to open the soul to the influence of Christ, so that from the day we believe in Him He becomes a renovating power in our life."(1)

In the later chapter on "The Moral Energy of Faith", Bruce describes faith finely:

"Faith, as St Paul conceives it, is a mighty principle, possessing a plurality of virtues, and capable of doing more things than one. For him, as for the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is the mother of heroic achievements, and can not only please God, but enable men to make their lives morally sublime. It is, in his view, as good for sanctification as for justification."(2)

In view of these sentiments, we can appreciate Bruce's eloquent protest against Weiss's minimizing of the function of faith in the latter's contention that justification and sanctification are independent of each other, and that baptism rather than faith is the main condition of our receiving the latter:

"The whole Christian life, from beginning to end, must be conceived of as an organic unity, with faith for its inspiring soul. The rupture of that unity, by the dissection of experience into two independent experiences, justification and renewal, is a fatal mistake on the part of anyone who undertakes to expound the Pauline theology. The resulting presentation is not Paulinism as it lives and breathes in the glowing pages of the four great Epistles, but the dead carcass of Paulinism as anatomised by scholastic interpreters."(3)

(5) The Flesh as a Hindrance to Holiness. Bruce's discussion of this topic is well-balanced. On the one hand, it is free from the one-sided exaggeration of those writers who have held that the apostle's doctrine is that of the inherent sinfulness of the flesh and have attributed it to the influence upon his mind of Greek

(1)P.C.C., p.156. (2)Ibid., p.225. (3)Ibid., p.237.
dualism. On the other hand, it is more faithful to Paul's views than the interpretation of Wendt and others who, guided by Old Testament usage, have made "the flesh" merely a synonym for man's creaturely weakness and perishable nature, in contrast to God. His own view Bruce has stated thus:

"If Hellenism does not explain it, as little does Hebrewism as interpreted by Wendt. The Pauline conception of the flesh seems to be a tertium quid, something intermediate between Hellenism and Hebrewism, the creation of a very intense religious experience, and of a very pronounced moral individuality."(1)

Sometimes, indeed, the word conveys little more than the idea of human weakness and dependence, but generally the content is fuller and more specific. As Dr Anderson Scott has said:

"Paul, giving it a significance of his own, uses it to imply human nature as it has historically come to be, corrupt through sin, under the domination of sin, prone to reject the right and choose the wrong."(2)

In other words, the ethical significance of the term is due to the fact that the flesh is not merely weak, but is the seat of passions and impulses which easily give occasion to sinful choices and actions.

We can agree with Bruce that it was probably on practical grounds of experience that Paul thought so badly of the flesh. But the particular psychological basis on which his explanation of the Pauline term is made to rest is surely not only inherently improbable, but not warranted by the evidence. Paul is made an earlier Augustine in that he had to pass through a serious struggle with "very common forms of temptation" arising from the flesh in the specific sense, and that not only before but also after his conversion. Bruce supports his view by some general considerations:

(1)P.C.C., p.277.
(3)P.C.C., p.267.
There is a mysterious, subtle, psychological connection between spiritual and sensual excitements, which some of the noblest men have detected and confessed. Hence it comes to pass, paradoxical as it may seem, that most earnest and successful endeavours to walk in the Spirit, or even to fly under His buoyant inspiration, may develop, by way of reaction, powerful temptations to fulfil the grossest lusts of the flesh.\(^{(1)}\)

Bruce confesses that it costs him an effort to put such words on paper; but he is forced to do so because he believes that along this road we will most readily arrive at an understanding of what St Paul means by his many strong words concerning the flesh and its "works."\(^{(2)}\)

We consider that the slight exegetical basis on which the hypothesis is constructed tells strongly against it. Dr Sydney Cave's verdict may be confidently accepted:

"St Paul was too strong a man to bare his soul to men's gaze, and we are here in the region of surmise. ... It is more probable that Paul's frequent references to impurity are due, not to his own struggles, but to the moral weakness of his Gentile converts. His letters reveal a man tempted more to pride and bitterness than to impure thoughts."\(^{(3)}\)

In the related chapter on "The Likeness of Sinful Flesh", we are not quite satisfied with Bruce's exposition of Romans 8:3, or rather with the objection he urges to the view that the condemnation of sin in the flesh took place at the crucifixion. Asking how this is to benefit us, he says:

"Shall we say to ourselves: In that death my flesh was crucified? Alas! the faith-mysticism will not help us here. The faith-mysticism may act on the imagination and the heart, but hardly on the flesh. It will remain as obstinately as ever opposed to all good, for anything the condemnation of Christ's flesh on Calvary effected."\(^{(4)}\)

It is not necessary to hold the theory of "redemption by sample" when the reference of the passage to the crucifixion is maintained. As a matter of fact, Paul does teach that the appropriation of the saving efficacy of Christ's death involves the reproduction in the believer

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\(^{(1)}\)P.O.C., pp.264f. \(^{(2)}\)Ibid., p.286.
\(^{(4)}\)P.O.C., pp.288f. \(^{(5)}\)Ibid., p.286.
of the experience of Christ. His doctrine has a double side. Christ on Calvary is not a mere individual; He is the new humanity, which in Him suffers and dies and rises again. But in experience this is worked out for the individual by the repetition in him of the same phenomena of suffering, death and resurrection through union with Christ. Hence the condemnation of sin in the flesh in the crucifixion is its condemnation in all men, not by way of sample, but by the union of the new humanity with its Head. Thus what the Christian has to do is simply by this "faith-mysticism" -- to use Bruce's phrase -- to reckon this crucifixion of the sinful principle as valid for his own individual experience. And if faith and union with Christ cannot crucify the flesh, what can? Certainly Paul held that those who were Christ's had crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. Bruce may have felt that "faith-mysticism" will not help us here, but would Paul have said so?

(6) Other Doctrines. Here we can only mention one or two salient points.

(i) It is hardly satisfactory that the whole doctrine of the Holy Spirit should be treated as a subdivision of the Pauline apologetic.

(ii) The chapter on "The Election of Israel" admirably sets forth Paul's teaching on election, from the apologetic point of view, in its national bearing on the destiny of Israel. But the individual application of the idea of election in the apostle's thought is entirely neglected.

(iii) The final chapters on "Christ", "The Christian Life", "The Church", and "The Last Things", together occupying a sixth of the volume, are inferior in power and interest to the discussions on the soteriological doctrines preceding them. To some extent, no doubt, this is due to the restricted sources with which Bruce worked; but
it may reveal also a defective sympathy with the apostle's later teaching.

(iv) The doctrine of "Christ" is taken up rather late, as Bruce admits. He postponed it thus far because he wished to escape from "the shadow of Judaistic antagonism" and raise the topic into "the serener atmosphere of calm contemplation," and -- what is another important consideration -- because "St Paul's conception of Christ's dignity was closely connected with his faith in Christ as the Redeemer."(3)

(v) A short quotation from the chapter on "The Church" illustrates Bruce's point of view under this head, and also shows what were two of his main aversions, viz., sacramentarianism and dogmatism. After declaring that his sympathies are very strongly with the advocates of a learned ministry, he adds:

"The bane of other Churches is sacramentarianism and priestcraft, under which prophetic προφητεία disappears, and mystery takes its place. The bane to be dreaded by Churches not sacramentarian in tendency, is a rabbinised pulpit, offering the people scholastic dogmas or philosophic ideas in place of the gospel."(4)

(vi) In the chapter on "The Last Things" there are unmistakable defects, mainly of omission. Bruce appears to us to have overstated the truth when he says: "On no subject, perhaps, was St Paul, in his way of thinking, more a man of his time than on that of eschatology."(5)

This judgment applies almost exclusively to the framework. As Dr H. A. A. Kennedy says:

"The spirit and central principles of Paul's eschatological conceptions were totally divergent from those of Pharisaism. We are all men of our time as regards the drapery in which we clothe our ideas of the Last Things."(6)

Paul's essentially creative individuality stands out clearly in his

conception of the resurrection body which differs equally from the Greek conception of the immortality of the soul and from the Jewish conception of the resurrection of the material body. The contrast has been well stated by Dr J. S. Stewart thus:

"His position was one midway between the Greek and the Jewish. And it seems to have been the direct consequence of the vision that came to him at his conversion. .... The Greek view of immortality safeguarded spirituality, but endangered personal identity. The Jewish view safeguarded identity, but endangered spirituality. Paul's view preserves both spirituality and personal identity. And this is what gives it its surpassing influence and appeal."(1)

Bruce closes his rather meagre treatment of the subject, and at the same time his book, with these words:

"I had rather read this chapter -- I Cor. 15 -- as a Christian man seeking religious edification and moral inspiration, than as a theologian in quest of positive dogmatic teaching. The spirit of the whole is life-giving, but the letter is ἄρμοστήρας, and while some interpreters feel able on the basis of it to tell us all about the millennium, and others find therein a universal ἄρμοστήρας, when God shall be all in all, and to every human spirit, I prefer to confess my ignorance and remain silent."(2)

2. Christianity in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Bruce finished his work on "Hebrews" only a few months before his death. It was intended as a "companion" to "The Kingdom of God" and "St Paul's Conception of Christianity," thus forming the third volume of the series on New Testament Theology which he had planned. In the Preface he tells us that the book is not "the product of a brief and hasty consideration," but is "the mature fruit of study carried on for a period of thirty years." The substance of it had been delivered as lectures to the Broughty Ferry congregation. Twenty years later the matter was revised and expanded into a series of articles for "The Expositor." Finally, for the present volume,

(2)P.C.C., p.395.  
(3)Preface, p.ix.
these articles were carefully revised and in some portions re-written. A completely new and highly important chapter on the "Theological Import of the Epistle" was added at the end of the book. Two further contributions to the study of "Hebrews" were made by Bruce: (i) an article on the theology of the Epistle in the American "Biblical World"; and (ii) the article "Epistle to Hebrews" in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible." While both of these are valuable, they are essentially summaries of those results of his prolonged study which Bruce has presented more fully in his book.

A few words are called for with regard to the general plan of the book. On the title page it is described as "an exegetical study." In other words, it is not precisely a section of New Testament theology in the same sense as "The Kingdom of God" or "St Paul's Conception of Christianity." It takes the form rather of a continuous theological exposition of the Epistle. This method has both advantages and disadvantages. Since the Epistle is for the most part a great progressive and connected argument, it is almost necessary, if it is to be understood, that the interpreter should follow the argument from point to point. On the other hand, if one desires a systematic statement of the writer's views on particular topics, such as a work on St Paul's teaching would give us, this method is not of such value. To some extent Bruce has met this defect by his last chapter on the "Theological Import of the Epistle."

(a) The Attraction of "Hebrews" for Bruce.

The first thing to be noted in a review of this book is that it is in a special way an expression of Bruce's individuality. The study of "Hebrews" was peculiarly congenial to his temperament and

theological interest. For this there were two main reasons.

(1) "Hebrews" is the Epistle of the Humiliation. Bruce's second work to be published was his classic treatise on "The Humiliation of Christ"; and again and again in his writings there arises the thought: the great glory of Jesus is His humiliation. It was the same instinct and interest which attracted him to the Synoptic Gospels. These, exhibiting the human life of Christ, ever remained Bruce's first and last love. Now, "Hebrews" is the New Testament lesson book on the significance of Christ's humanity, on the training in sympathy which qualified Him to be a merciful and trustworthy High Priest. With deep insight Bruce expounds the passages in the Epistle which throw stress on those elements in Christ's career -- such as His incarnation, temptations, sufferings and death -- which, to less sympathetic observers than the writer of the Epistle, seemed marks of inferiority, to be apologized for or explained away. Bruce, of course, did not go to this writer, any more than to St Paul, for his gospel. That he had already obtained from the Synoptics. But, going with his gospel, he found in the Epistle a wealth of religious ideas which had a peculiar charm for him. The poetry of the book, its originality, its emancipation from legalism, its central idea of unrestricted access to God through Christ alone, its conception of faith as the source of all heroic action, and of Jesus as the Captain of Salvation, who lived the life of faith from the beginning and lived it to the end -- all this was thoroughly congenial to Bruce, constituting the kind of spiritual world in which he could breathe freely and find himself at home. Sometimes, indeed, his tendency to glory in the humiliation of Christ carries him into injudicious statements. For example, after expounding the opening words of the Epistle, he raises the question whether it would not have been better if the
writer, instead of guaranteeing the superiority of the revelation by the fact that the Son was Divine, had guaranteed it by the fact that He was so eminently human. He answers by saying that this would have been so if the author had been writing for us, and not for Hebrew Christians:

"But the melancholy fact was that he was arguing with men who had no power of appreciating the humiliation state of Jesus, and the pathos of the contrast between the incomparable sweetness and light of His speech and the lowly condition of the Speaker. Therefore there was no course open but to fall back on a celestial dignity which was not apparent in the earthly life, and to borrow therefrom a robe of external authority wherewith to invest words which, on their own merits, however exceptional, would fail to command attention." (1)

Not many will follow Bruce in this. While we have the fullest sympathy with the stress he lays on the humiliation, we cannot sympathize with his apparent feeling that what lies behind the earthly life of Jesus is a matter of minor importance. What lends all its moral power to the humiliation is not the state in itself, but the fact that it was humiliation voluntarily undergone, a surrender of the highest prerogatives for the sake of saving men.

(2) The other element in the Epistle which powerfully appealed to Bruce was its apologetic character. This, indeed, he takes to be its strongest feature:

"It is the only writing in the New Testament of a formally and systematically apologetic nature." (2)

The subtitle, accordingly, characterizes the Epistle as the "First Apology for Christianity." This characterization may be allowed so long as we recognize that the Gospels, Acts, Romans, Galatians, and I Peter -- not to mention others -- are also in a real sense apologetic writings, even if not so "formally and systematically apologetic" as the Epistle to the Hebrews. As Dr. E. F. Scott has said:

(1) E.H., p.40.  (2) Ibid., p.21
"From the beginning our religion had been called on to defend itself against misunderstandings and bitter opposition. ..... It may be accepted as one of the most certain results of modern criticism that the New Testament is permeated with an apologetic interest, which is often strongest where it is least apparent."(1)

In his Preface Bruce clearly states his point of view and his purpose:

"There is room and need for fresh work in the unveiling of the soul of this sacred writing, in the light of its author's aim, which I take to be to show the excellence of Christianity to a community possessing a very defective insight into its true nature."(2)

Bruce thus completely parts company with interpreters who have assumed that the writer regarded his readers as, in the main, sympathizing with his position. He holds that some of thesimplest elements of Christian doctrine, as we should judge them, were quite unknown to, or at least not at all understood by, the Hebrew Christians. This is a question of considerable importance for the true interpretation of the Epistle, and Bruce is thoroughgoing in carrying out his views. By way of example we may take his treatment of the text, "Not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham."(3) He denies that this is an important link in the chain of argument. On the contrary, he regards it as one of the most significant indications of the imperfect insight of the readers into the nature of Christianity:

"They were so little at home, it appears, in Christian truth, that nothing could be taken for granted, and they had to be coaxed like children to engage in the most elementary process of thought on the subject."(4)

A more important point is that Bruce considers them to have had no understanding of the truth of the Priesthood of Christ. On some points where many have found a theological interest he assumes that it is really the apologetic interest that is at work. Thus state-

ments are frequently asserted to be rhetorical devices to gain the readers' sympathy, and arguments are considered to have been shaped primarily to win the readers' assent. Hence it comes that in Bruce's exposition there is sometimes a thinness in the thought, where theologians have been tempted to read in a more developed doctrine. Thus, on 2:14b-15, which speaks of Christ through death freeing from the fear of death, he says that we must not try "to put too much theology into the passage," or endeavour "to find in it the whole mystery and theory of the atonement." He speaks out of the fullness of his own experience when he says that the statements of apologists often look meagre to theologians, as the former sometimes discover to their cost. What must strike every reader is the way in which, as the exposition proceeds, he constantly points out the skill with which the argument is conducted, and the great tact which the writer exercises to win his readers' sympathy and carry them along with him.

(b) The Readers and their Spiritual Situation.

Bruce rightly insists that a proper understanding of the Epistle requires definite views as to the original readers and their spiritual situation.

(1) The Readers. Bruce adheres firmly to the traditional opinion that the Epistle was addressed to Jewish Christians exclusively. He wastes little space in dealing with the hypothesis that the recipients may have been Gentile Christians. He endorses Westcott's opinion that this theory -- supported by such eminent scholars as Schürer, Weizsäcker, Jülicher, Von Soden, Pfleiderer, McGiffert, and (since Bruce's day) by E. F. Scott, Moffatt, and others -- is simply "an ingenious paradox," and feels sure that criticism must swing back to the traditional view. The destination of the

(4) Ibid., p.4.
Epistle he leaves undecided, except that he strongly leans to the ancient opinion that it was sent to Jerusalem, though he adds "or Palestine," which is a rather less vulnerable hypothesis. The highly probable date of the Epistle's composition is considered to be while the Jewish War was drawing near to its crisis in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

We consider that Bruce is wrong in assigning a Palestinian destination to the Epistle, but that he is right in thinking that those addressed are Jewish Christians. The most likely destination was Rome. Not only is the Epistle first quoted there (by Clement of Rome), but the solitary clue within the Epistle -- the expression of ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας in the salutation -- is almost unintelligible on any other hypothesis. The weightiest proof that those addressed were Jewish Christians is supplied by the entire character of the writer's apologetic. As Dr H. A. A. Kennedy has put it:

"His whole argument presupposes a most minute knowledge of and sympathy with the Jewish ritual, as embodied in the Pentateuch, and the habit of using the Old Testament as the criterion of religious obligations. In any case, it would be an extraordinary method of demonstrating the finality of the Christian faith to Gentile converts, to prove in almost wearisome detail that the cultus of Judaism has at every point been superseded by Christianity."(4)

It is frequently argued that by this time the Old Testament had become the Bible of Gentile as well as of Jewish Christians. But for Gentile converts it had become authoritative only through the medium of the Christian Church. Peake has put this point very forcibly:

"It is quite beside the mark to say that the Old Testament was regarded as authoritative by Gentile as well as by Jewish Christians. It is more to the point to observe that the grounds of acceptance were very different. The Jew whether Christian or not accepted the Old Testament as the sacred book of his nation: his belief might be confirmed by Christianity but it was essent-

ially independent of it. With the Gentile Christian the case was altogether different. The Old Testament meant nothing to him apart from his Christianity. It was as an integral portion of his new religion that he recognised its authority. Of what use then was it to supply a Gentile in danger of apostasy from Christianity with arguments drawn from a book in which he believed simply because he was a Christian? The author's argument has force only if his readers accepted the Old Testament independently of their acceptance of the Gospel, and this suits Jewish Christians but not Gentiles."(1)

(2) The Spiritual Situation. Bruce has a quite definite conception of the spiritual situation of the community addressed:

"They were in danger of apostatising from the faith, because of persecution endured on account of it, and also because of doubts concerning its truth."(2) "Evidently those of whom such things can be said are men who have never had insight into the essential nature and distinctive features of the Christian religion."(3)

"The readers or hearers are persons with whom nothing can be taken for granted, not even the most elementary ideas as to the significance of Christ's death. No greater mistake, I believe, can be committed (though it is a common fault of commentators) than to assume that the first readers were in the main in sympathy with the doctrinal views of the writer, and that the chief or sole occasion for writing was the need of consolation and strengthening under outward trial."(4)

Bruce, then, while admitting that one side of the peril besetting this Church is a wavering under the stress of persecution and hardship, regards the other side as by far the more important of the two. The readers' doubts regarding the truth of Christianity are largely due to the hold which the old Levitical religion still has upon them. The apostasy, accordingly, is likely to take the form of a relapse into Judaism. It is chiefly for this reason that the writer engages in so elaborate a comparison of the two systems and sets himself to prove Christianity to be the final, perfect religion, calling men into an intimate relation with God never dreamed of under the old covenant.

It is noteworthy that several writers on "Hebrews" -- e.g.; Zahn,

(2)E.H., p.7. (3)Ibid., pp.8f. (4)Ibid., p.10.
Rendall, G. Milligan, and T. H. Robinson — who hold by the Jewish origin of the readers, will not hear of any reversion to Judaism. "There is no hint of any return to Judaism or for that matter to Paganism," says J. P. Alexander. "What the writer fears," he continues, "is something much worse, something really bad, a departing from the living God, a drawing back unto perdition, not quite the same thing as Judaism." But, as Marcus Dods cogently remarks, "the very point of the whole Epistle is that an abandonment of Christianity is an abandonment of God: that in it God has finally spoken." In view of the fact that the whole tenor of the writer's argument seems designed to prove that what the readers think they have in Judaism they have in perfect form in Christianity, we are surely justified in believing that they were being tempted to relapse into their old religion. Two verses in the Epistle would seem to give strong support to this view. In 13:13 the readers are exhorted to leave the camp and, bearing His reproach, to go forth to Jesus, "who suffered without the gate" of Jerusalem as a defiling criminal. Surely the plain significance of this metaphorical language is that they should break once for all with Judaism. Again, it is in the light of this hypothesis that we can discern the full force of the writer's language in 6:6, where he warns his readers against "crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame." To what can the warning refer but to their identifying themselves with the orthodox Jewish standpoint, which led to the crucifixion?

(c) The Author and His Argument.

(1) The Author. Bruce treats the question of authorship as of secondary importance. Luther's conjecture that the writer was

Apollos is regarded as having "plausibility, if not probability." In any case, he was "a Hellenist, Jew by race, Greek in culture"; he had some acquaintance with "the evangelic tradition," probably in a written form; and he had felt the influence, if not of Philo, at least of the Alexandrian philosophy. A caution is given, however, against a too close identification of him, whoever he was, with any one school of thought, Alexandrian, Pauline, or Rabbinical; he was a free, independent spirit, full of originalities. He used an imperfect translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and his quotations do not always sustain the arguments based upon them. Yet the Epistle properly belongs to the canon of sacred Scripture, and the inspiration of its author is quite independent of his accurate knowledge or correct use of the Old Testament. While all this is good, we feel that Bruce might have given a more definite estimate of the writer's affinities with Philo and the Alexandrian school. Such affinity undoubtedly existed, and a clear perception of the actual relationship would throw important light upon the use of the Old Testament in the Epistle.

Viewing "Hebrews" as furnishing a needful supplement to Paul's apology for Christianity in its relation to Judaism, Bruce has made an interesting contrast between the experience and the aims of the two writers. What Paul did for the ethical law, the writer of "Hebrews" did for the ritual law, showing that it, too, was "a shadow of good things to come." While Paul was "a moralist," the other was "a religious philosopher." The organ of spiritual knowledge with Paul was "conscience"; with the author of this Epistle it was "devout reason." Paul passed from under the spell of the old system.

(1) E.H., p. 25. (2) Ibid., p. 6. (3) Ibid., pp. 33, 63.
by a "moral education," and hence ever looked back upon it with the recoil of an outraged conscience. The writer of "Hebrews", on the other hand, seems to have passed from the old into the new by more of a "mental discipline", and could view even the old Levitical law as a sort of rudimentary gospel, setting forth emblems of spiritual verities which were to be made good and real in Christ.

(2) The Argument. The salient features of the writer's argument naturally have some correspondence to salient features in the spiritual situation of the readers. Bruce believes that observation of the points emphasized in the Epistle reveals that three things in particular, connected with Christianity, were stumbling-blocks to the Hebrew Christians: (i) "The superseding of an ancient, divinely appointed religion by what appeared to be a novelty and an innovation;" (1) (ii) "The humiliation and sufferings of Jesus regarded as the Christ;" (2) (iii) "The absence from Christianity of a priesthood, and a sacrificial ritual." (3) Viewing the Epistle as a masterly apologetic, Bruce shows how it fortifies Christian faith in face of these three objections. (i) As to the charge that Christianity is novel and innovating, the writer proves it to be the perfect and final religion, the religion answering the yearning of all religion for perfect communion with God. (ii) As to the stumbling-block of the Cross, he weaves about the Cross an aureole of glory, showing (in Bruce's interpretation) the Divine honour conferred upon Jesus in His appointment to taste death for every man, thereby to become a perfect Saviour of sinners and a perfect Author of faith in bringing many sons unto glory. (iii) As to the charge of poverty brought against Christianity because it has no priesthood and no sacrificial worship,

he presents Christ as at once Priest and Sacrifice, who, by His absolute priestly excellence and by His absolute self-devotion to the interests of sinful men, has opened up "a new and living way" whereby all men may draw near to God. Christ as the great High Priest of humanity, and Christianity as the religion of perfectly free access to God — these are the theological specialities of "Hebrews."

The basic contrast between Christianity as the religion of free access and Leviticalism as the religion of distant ceremonious relations naturally suggested to the writer the method of contrast as that which would best serve his apologetic aim. Accordingly, he institutes a series of comparisons which, while duly and even generously recognizing whatever was good in the old system, mark it indelibly with a stamp of inferiority. Bruce sums up thus:

"We have in all four contrasts, forming together a full statement as to the comparative merits of the two religions. In the first two Jesus, as Revealer, is contrasted with the Old Testament agents of Revelation, prophets and angels. In the second couple Jesus, as Redeemer, is contrasted with the Old Testament agents of Redemption, Moses and Aaron. The position formally proved is that in both respects the new religion is better than the old. The real view of the writer is that Christianity is the best religion possible, the ideally perfect and therefore final religion." (2)

In carrying through this comparison the writer gives frequent and emphatic expression to another contrast, which clearly shows that Christianity is not only the better but the best possible, the ideal religion. This is the contrast between the temporary character of the Levitical religion and the permanency of Christianity. Of everything connected with Christianity eternity is predicated. The salvation it provides is eternal, its priesthood is for ever, the great High Priest of humanity possesses the power of an endless life, and by the offering of Himself through an eternal spirit has obtained

(1) Heb. 10:20.  
(2) E.H., p. 20.
eternal redemption for men. Those who believe in Him have the promise of an eternal inheritance. The new covenant is everlasting. The whole burden of the Epistle is: Leviticalism for a time, Christianity for ever.

(d) The Theological Import of the Epistle.

Bruce's final chapter on "the Theological Import of the Epistle" is specially valuable. It admirably sums up the results of the detailed exegesis and, at the same time, is a real contribution to a subject which had not hitherto had much formal discussion.

In the writer's view the outstanding distinction of the Christian Faith is "that it brings men near to God." As we have seen, this great truth is brought into clear relief by means of the contrast with the old Levitical religion, a contrast which ultimately rests on "a difference in their respective provisions for dealing with human sin." The sacerdotal system of Leviticalism was a failure because it did not give the worshipper adequate assurance that God was gracious and that his sin was forgiven. The obligation imposed on the writer, therefore, is to prove that Christianity satisfies the needs of the case. This he does by means of his doctrine of the perfect Priesthood of Christ, which occupies a central place in the Epistle. As Bruce puts it:

"The doctrine of Christ's priesthood is a theological specialty of our Epistle. Practically it is the only book of the New Testament in which that doctrine finds any, or at least adequate, recognition."(3)

But, says Bruce, priestly functions are simply a special aspect of a larger idea which the writer took for granted, that of "salvation by mediation."(4) The radical question, therefore, is: What kind of mediator will be adequate to such a vocation. Seeing that Jesus had

no connection with the priestly tribe of Levi, the writer has introduced the figure of Melchisedec "as an apologetic medium", in order to clear his readers' minds of difficulties which might arise. Now, the line of argument followed in the seventh chapter, by which the "order of Melchisedec" is set in its true light, may appear strained to modern readers; and it would be helpful, Bruce thinks, if so important a doctrine as the Priesthood of Christ could be built up on a more satisfying foundation. In the Epistle itself he finds valuable suggestions for this purpose. These centre round two great principles: self-sacrifice and solidarity with sinners:

"If you want a name for one who is uniquely self-devoted, and endowed with unparalleled sympathy with sinful men, what better can you find than Priest?" (2)

The principle of solidarity finds utterance in 2:11, while the other -- the sacrifice of Christ -- is repeatedly brought forward, e.g., in 2:9, 7:27, 9:14.

At this point Bruce gives a very interesting exposition of the writer's doctrine of Christ's priesthood, holding that it is not so narrow a thing as dogmatic theology has made it:

"He is not a man of one idea, the slave of a formula. .... He firmly believes in the sacrificial character of Christ's death; it is a cardinal tenet of his theology. But that is not the only aspect under which he views the event. He handles the topic with great freedom." (3)

Bruce finds Christ's death presented under five different aspects, of which he gives an enumeration, beginning with the lowest and most elementary view, and rising gradually to the highest. (i) The first is found in 9:27. "Jesus died once, and once only, as it is appointed unto all men once to die. On this view Christ's death is simply an instance of the common lot." (4) (ii) The second is seen in 9:16. He

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died "as a testator who, by a will, bequeaths an inheritance." On this view the manner of the death is nothing: it might have been by disease or accident. All that is necessary is that the testator be known to be dead. (iii) The third is earlier, 2:10. The death of Jesus was the climax of a varied experience of suffering, which trained Him for His great function of being Captain of salvation. "Crucifixion, with all that went before it, was a discipline for Him, not a sacrifice for others." (iv) The fourth follows closely, 2:14f. Jesus, though sinless, died. Thus the close connection "between sin and death as its penalty" is broken, and sinful men are delivered "from the fear of death as penal." (v) The idea is not that the Sinless One dies instead of the sinful; it is only that, though sinless, He dies; and no emphasis is laid on the manner of His death. (v) The last is found in 10:14. "The death of Jesus was a priestly act of self-sacrifice whereby He "perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Bruce holds that all these five views possessed real apologetic value, in that they helped the Hebrew Christians to see why Jesus had to die. He complains, however, that dogmatic theology has made little use of any but the last. While admitting that this is by far the most important view, he considers that it is a serious ethical and theological loss that so little has been made of the third:

"From this point of view the earthly career of Jesus, with its tragic experience of suffering, is invested with the unique ethical interest of a heroic life lived under the hardest conditions. Then from the same point of view the whole suffering experience of Jesus, including His death, is seen to be the natural result of His moral fidelity. The cross came to Him because He cared supremely for the Divine interest and for duty."

We have frequently seen how eminently congenial to Bruce this whole

line of thought was.

The conception of Christ as Priest, he continues, involves a very high idea of His Person. One whose function it is to bring men nigh to God must Himself be very near to God both in character and in nature. Accordingly, as the ideal "Sanctifier" Christ possesses absolute holiness, and as "the Son" He has a place within the sphere of the Divine. Bruce considers that the effect of the opening statement of the Epistle is "to make Christ, to all intents and purposes, not the highest of creatures, but absolutely Divine;" and that the writer's Christological position is "not less advanced than that of the prologue of the Fourth Gospel." It was the interest of the writer, as the eulogist of Christ's priesthood, to charge His Sonship with the greatest possible fullness of meaning:

"The greater the condescension the greater the merit of the self-sacrifice, and the higher the dignity the greater the condescension. .... Christianity cannot be the absolute religion unless Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, have for faith the religious value of God. The Son and the Father must be one."(3)

Bruce insists, however, that the writer's purpose is not to furnish, in a scholastic or speculative spirit, a definition of the Son's Divinity. Rather is it to show the Son's fitness to be, in His humanity, the full and final Revealer of God to men. With this end in view, full justice is done to the self-humbling of the Son. His complete humanity, with its limitations, is insisted upon:

"The thoughtful student of our Epistle feels that the writer speaks of the humiliation state not by constraint but willingly, as one charmed by its unique pathos. No theme was more welcome to his mind. .... Nowhere else in the New Testament are the earthly lot and human behaviour of Jesus depicted in such vivid and lifelike colours."(5)

Bruce points out how this vivid presentation of the humiliation lends

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itself to the hortatory purposes of the Epistle in that it sets in clear relief Christ's ability to sympathize with those undergoing hard earthly experiences.

Inasmuch as the particular aspect of Christianity emphasized in the Epistle is that it is the open way into the presence of a God who is eminently accessible, Bruce considers that the writer "believed with all his heart in the Father-God of Jesus."(1) Faith, therefore, must come into the foreground, for "faith in man answers to grace in God."(2) As compared with Paul's handling of the subject, however, there is here some difference in the form which faith takes. With Paul the action of faith is confined to the moral and religious sphere, his main interest being to show that faith alone is able at once to "justify" and to "sanctify." The writer of "Hebrews" takes a larger view of faith's activity:

"He views it as a principle which enters into and is the secret spring of all great heroic conduct. .... Nothing great done in this world, in any sphere, without faith -- such is the comprehensive thesis of our author."(3)

But Bruce believes there is a contrast in Paul and "Hebrews" not only with regard to the range of faith's activity but with regard to its motive power. For Paul faith works by love, whereas for this writer it derives its virtue from its psychological character as a faculty of the human mind, whereby it can make the future present and the unseen visible:

"This faculty is not, as such, ethical or religious; it is a natural endowment of man. It was by faith that Columbus persevered in his voyage of discovery, quite as much as it was by faith that Abraham set out in quest of the land of promise."(4)

But it is not to be supposed, says Bruce, that one man's faith is in all respects the same as another's:

(1)E.H., p.446.  (2)Ibid., p.447.  (3)Ibid., pp.447f.  
(4)Ibid., p.448.
"A differentiating principle comes into play in connection with the kind of invisibles which faith makes visible. It may be a great trans-Atlantic western continent, or it may be a heavenly country, a city whose builder and maker is God, ... It is the faith which sees God, the world above, the life beyond the veil, which, in the view of our Epistle, emphatically saves."(1)

We shall point out below what we regard as a defect in Bruce's discussion of faith.

(2) Bruce's Treatment of Some Crucial Passages.

(1) The Angels. The chapter on this subject is not altogether satisfactory. In a comment on 6:1f Bruce gives the valuable hint that "the feeling of impatience with never getting beyond the elements ..... gives rise to an elliptical abruptness of style."(2) Occasionally, however, he reads something of this impatience, from his own standpoint, into his author. We have an instance in the statement that the subject of angels "was probably a weariness to the writer of our Epistle."(3) Bruce thinks that "a modern interpreter would not be sorry to pass over in silence this section about angels" and that "for modern men the angels are very much a dead theological category." This is, no doubt, true; but it does not follow that the writer "was tired of the angelic régime."(5) On the surface, at least, there is no trace of such weariness. Indeed, the writer appears to enter into the subject con amore. The idea that he was not "in sympathy" with the popular angelology has its roots in the presupposition, from which Bruce does not appear to have been able entirely to free himself, that the Biblical writers occupied the point of view of modern religious thought. A similar criticism may be made of his description of the Levitical priest as a "sacerdotal drudge", a phrase which is employed on at least five occasions.(7)

In his Cunningham Lectures on "The Humiliation of Christ" Bruce gave the following interpretation of this difficult verse:

"I agree with Hofmann in thinking that the reference is to an honour and glory which is not subsequent to, but contemporaneous with, the state of humiliation, -- the bright side, in fact, of one and the same experience. .... While it is a humiliation to die, it is glorious to taste death for others; and by dying, to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light." (1)

Bruce considered that this exegesis not only is inherently natural, but is supported by the following *9th-*clause:

"He speaks of Jesus as crowned with glory and honour: not because He has tasted death for men, but in order that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for men." (2)

In a footnote to his "Hebrews" Dr A. B. Davidson said of Bruce's exegesis:

"The statement, "while it is a humiliation to die, it is glorious to taste death for others" contains a fine modern idea, but one to which Scripture has hardly yet advanced. The humiliation of the Son with His death is a "grace" (2 Cor. 8:9), and a proof of love (John 15:13; Rom. 5:8), but Scripture does not seem to have permitted to itself the paradox of calling it a glory." (3)

Seven years later (1889), in one of his articles on "Hebrews" in the "Expositor", Bruce returned to the subject, upholding his interpretation:

"Since one or two writers ventured modestly to propound it, it has been treated by the learned as out of the question. Referring to my advocacy of it in "the Humiliation of Christ," Professor Davidson slyly pokes fun at me in a footnote. .... Such a verdict from such a quarter is enough to intimidate a modest man into the abandonment of the idea, and it has certainly led me very carefully to reconsider the text in the light of all that has been recently written upon it." (4)

To this Davidson replied in the "Expositor." (5) After repeating the words of the offending footnote, he courteously and -- as many think -- conclusively justified his exegesis. But Bruce stuck to his guns,

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(1) H.C., p.30.  (2) Ibid.
(3) "The Epistle to the Hebrews," (Edinburgh, 1882), p.59.
and in his "Hebrews" made this final comment on the matter at issue:

"It requires some courage to retain an opinion, long cherished, thus treated by great authorities, but the recent history of exegesis is reassuring. Not that one can boast of many new adherents, but that the embarrassments betrayed by supporters of the traditional view -- that the crowning refers to the state of exaltation -- have all the effect of a reductio ad absurdum." (1)

Bruce, then, regards the crowning as antecedent to the death, "an exaltation in the humiliation." (2) Giving to ἐξαλλήλων the force of εἰς, he translates ἐξαλλήλων τῷ πλήθυμα τοῦ θνάτου "in reference to the (prospective) suffering of death." (3) But, as Dr H. A. A. Kennedy says, "surely this is to beg the question." (4) Admittedly, the ἐστινο νομον clause, coming after ἐστιν αὐτὸς ὑμῶν, presents a difficulty; but whatever may be made of this, the preceding words almost certainly mean: "on account of the suffering ...... crowned, etc." Three considerations give weighty support to this view. (1) This exegesis is undoubtedly true to the normal New Testament standpoint, according to which the glory of Christ is the reward of the shame and humiliation which went before. (ii) The notion of "an exaltation in the humiliation" is foreign to the main drift of the passage, which is to the effect that for man (as for Jesus in His humanity) the pathway to glory is through suffering. This is the thought in the next verse where, as Moffatt says, "the use of ἐξαλλήλων tells against" Bruce's theory. (5) (iii) It is a thought which, as Narborough puts it, "was very apposite to the circumstances of the readers in the shadow of persecution." (6) But what are we to make of the ἐστινο νομον clause? The simplest expedient is to supply an idea like ἐξαλλήλων before ἐστινο νομον, and to regard the clause as resuming and completing the idea of ἐξαλλήλων τῷ πλήθυμα τοῦ θνάτου, -- "gathering up the full object and purpose of the experience which has

just been predicated of Jesus." (1)

(3) "Through eternal spirit," (9:14). Bruce gives an eminently suggestive interpretation of the important words: "ὅς δὲ πνεῦματος αἰωνίου ἔλαυνεν προσῆνεξεν ἐνῷ ὑπὸ τῷ Θεῷ." (9:14) (2) The importance of the clause lies in the fact that it gives the reason why the sacrifice of Christ possesses transcendent virtue. Bruce holds that, to reach the explanation of the difficult expression "ὅς πνεῦματος αἰωνίου," we must feel our way by means of ἔλαυνεν and ἐνώπιον following.

(i) Fundamental is the fact that Christ's sacrifice was Himself; and this means much:

"In this one fact is involved that Christ's sacrifice possessed certain moral attributes altogether lacking in the Levitical sacrifices: voluntariness and beneficent intention, the freedom of a rational being .... capable of self-determination, the love of a gracious personality in whom the soul of goodness dwells." (3)

Thus Christ's sacrifice was essentially an affair of spirit.

(ii) Christ's sacrifice "possesses incomparable worth and virtue" (4) that it was a spotless sacrifice, spotless in the ethical sense.

(iii) In the old legal sacrifices the important matter was the shedding and the sprinkling of the blood according to correct ritual. In Christ's sacrifice, however, what is of vital moment is the spirit in which His blood was shed. The writer might therefore have added some epithet of moral quality; instead, he chose "eternal" to remind his readers that, though "the act performed by Jesus in offering Himself may, as an historical event, become old with the lapse of ages," nevertheless, "the spirit in which the act was done can never become a thing of the past." (5) Bruce's summing up of his exegesis is worthy of quotation:

"This fitly chosen phrase thus makes the one sacrifice of Christ cover with its efficacy all prospective sin. But it does more

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(3) Ibid., pp. 337f.
(4) Ibid., p. 338.
(5) Ibid., p. 339.
*than that. It is retrospective as well as prospective, and makes the sacrifice valid for the ages going before. For an eternal spirit is independent of time, and gives to acts done through its inspiration validity for all time. In this respect it might be said of Christ, that though He offered Himself in historical fact after the world had been in existence for some thousands of years, He offered Himself in spirit "before the foundation of the world."(1)

(4) The Nature of Faith. In his exposition of the great eleventh chapter Bruce has given what seems to us a somewhat defective discussion of faith. He admits that the opening sentence might suggest that the leading aim of the passage is to illustrate the psychological character of faith as a faculty of the human mind whereby the future is made present and the unseen visible. But he does not regard this as the main purpose of the passage:

"There can be no doubt that the main purpose of the discourse as it here stands is to show, not the abstract nature of faith, but its moral power: how it enables men to live noble lives and so gain a good report. The writer's interest in the psychology of faith lies chiefly in the fact that it furnishes the key to faith's wonderful practical virtue."(2)

But surely the eleventh chapter is not introduced merely as an exhortation to heroic steadfastness. It is that, obviously, and is eminently fitted for the writer's practical purpose. But it is also an important part of his argument. He has to face the question: if Christianity is the religion of heavenly realities or of the world to come, how are Christians in better case than Hebrews in this world? If Christ has provided that which is the end of all religion, viz., the possibility of free fellowship with God, ought not this to be made available to us on earth? The answer is an emphatic affirmative; and this answer the writer secures by his doctrine of the realizing power of faith. Faith, as Bruce himself puts it, "makes one as sure of the future as if it were present, and brings the invisible within view."(3)

In other words, we have in faith both an earnest of the

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(1) E.H., pp. 339f. (2) Ibid., pp. 412f. (3) Ibid., p. 413.
unseen future and the certainty of the unseen present. But if this be so, it is surely a point of considerable apologetic importance, and one would have expected to find Bruce making more of it.

We have a further criticism to make. While we can agree with Bruce that on its formal side, as a psychical phenomenon, faith is "a natural endowment of man," and that both Columbus and Abraham are examples of men constrained by its power, we cannot think that this is an adequate account of religious faith. It leaves out the unique element, an element which Bruce himself recognizes when he says that "a differentiating principle comes into play in connection with the kind of invisibles which faith makes visible," and that "it is the faith which sees God, the world above, the life beyond the veil, which emphatically saves." Faith which can do this, however, is more than "a natural endowment of man." As Dr Daniel Lamont has said, to stand before God in the attitude of faith "is not something which we can do through any innate capacity of our own. No power but the Spirit of God can bring us into this attitude."(3)

(5) The Writer's Thought of God. Bruce says that the writer "believed with all his heart in the Father-God of Jesus."(4) This may be true, but the truth of it does not lie on the surface. While the writer's conception of God is a noble one, it lacks the warmer notes which we hear in the teaching of Jesus and of St Paul. Moffatt has pointed out that ἀγάπη is used only twice, in both cases in Old Testament quotations, and that ἀγάπη also is used but twice, and in neither case of man's attitude to God. The name "Father" is found only in the phrase "the Father of spirits" (12:9) and by implication in 12:7,9. It can hardly be said, then, that the doctrine of the

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Fatherliness of God is characteristic of the Epistle. Bruce, indeed, recognizes that the conception of God as Father "is comparatively in the background;" but he ascribes the fact to "the exigencies of the apologetic argument."[1] Dr Vincent Taylor is probably right when he suggests that the real relationship is the reverse of this, that "the argument takes the form it does because of the predominantly transcendent character of the author's idea of God," and that "the consequences are seen in the limitations of his argument."[2] None the less, by his emphasis upon noble aspects of God's Being, and therefore of redemption, the writer has richly served the cause of Christian truth. These aspects are easily lost sight of by the sentimentalism which accepts the Divine Fatherhood without adequately recognizing its strength as well as its graciousness.

3. The Johannine Conception of Christianity.

(a) Introductory.

The great work on New Testament theology which Bruce had planned was to consist of four parts. At the time of his death three of these had been exhaustively treated in his writings on the Synoptic Gospels, St Paul, and "Hebrews." Whether the fourth part, which was to have dealt with the supreme Christian good as it is represented in the Johannine writings, would have seen the light had Bruce lived, is at least questionable. He seems to have worked comparatively little on the subject. Denney, who was first of all one of his students and later for two years (1897-99) one of his colleagues, has stated:

"For the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, so far as appears, he had made no special preparation. .... It never had for Dr Bruce the interest of the other three. .... He never lectured

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systematically upon it, and though he once at least read the
First Epistle of John in his class room, it was with the same
sense of dealing with something by no means congenial."

In one of his sermons Denney says:

"I have heard an eminent scholar express impatience with the First
Epistle of John as a whole; it seemed to him, he said, the
innocent prattle of a good old man, not to be too seriously
followed."(2)

We have it on the authority of Dr Daniel Lamont, who was a student of
both Bruce and Denney, that the reference here is to Bruce. Further
light on Bruce's attitude to the Fourth Gospel is given by Dr Lewis
A. Muirhead, another scholar whom he trained:

"The Professor taught no advanced views on the Gospel of John.
Yet he used to advise his students not to involve themselves at
too early a stage in their ministries in systematic courses of
lectures or sermons on this Gospel. He seemed to fear that we
might be enticed by the author's simple style to venture on
waters that were too deep for us and that concealed some perils.
It has often seemed to the writer that this sagacious counsel
proceeded partly from a certain misgiving, which Bruce was too
candid to conceal from himself, in regard to views of the
Johannine Gospel which he had been accustomed to maintain in his
writings and which, in his time, were held with practical
unanimity by Anglo-Saxon scholars."(3)

Such external evidence with regard to Bruce's attitude to the Fourth
Gospel is at once interesting and valuable. From his own writings
on the subject, however, scanty though they are, we can see that he
was largely lacking in the gift of insight into, and appreciation of,
the distinctive ideas of the Johannine theology. Whether he could
have contributed much toward their elucidation, even had he written a
book, must therefore be considered doubtful.

It has been commonly assumed, as by Denney, that Bruce's only
contribution to the interpretation of the Fourth Gospel is a chapter
in his "Apologetics." There is, however, an important paper on the

(3)"The Message of the Fourth Gospel,"(London,1925), Foreword,
pp.xxiiiif.
theology of the Gospel, running to some eleven pages, hidden away in the American "Biblical World." Taken together, these two contributions are sufficient to indicate, in a general way, how Bruce would have treated the subject had the contemplated book been written. The former, though dealing in the main with matters which are of special interest to the apologist, provides us with a clear idea of Bruce's general attitude to this Gospel. His opening statement is:

"The Fourth Gospel presents the hardest apologetic problem connected with the origin of Christianity."(2)

Though he comes to the conclusion that its peculiarities are "not so vital as at first sight they may seem," he quotes with evident sympathy the saying of Watkins that "the key to the Fourth Gospel lies in translation."(4) Now, a translation is neither so good nor so authoritative as the original. Accordingly, the Fourth Evangelist's presentation of Jesus "sub specie aeternitatis," while admitted to be a perfectly legitimate one, is for Bruce neither so impressive nor so appealing as the moving historical narrative of the Synoptists. However important it may be as theology and as a testimony to the impression made by Jesus on a great mind of the early Church, it has not in Bruce's view the same clear relation to the facts as has the simple story, and therefore it has for him less religious value.

(b) Bruce's Exposition of the Johannine Theology.

A fairly adequate idea of Bruce's understanding of the Johannine conception of Christianity may be obtained from his article in the "Biblical World." Of this we now give a brief summary and shall conclude with one or two criticisms.

The Fourth Gospel was written either by the Apostle John or by a

(5) Ibid., p.479.
disciple of his belonging to the Christian School at Ephesus. The main difficulty in the way of the former alternative is the radical difference between the presentation of the personality of Jesus given here and that offered by the Synoptics:

"The first three Gospels show us a real man who seems Godlike, (1) the Fourth shows us a real God who seems only imperfectly manlike."

Furthermore, the words of Jesus in the two presentations are as different as the personality. All scholars acknowledge the difficulty of regarding both accounts as primary, and even such comparatively conservative critics as B. Weiss, Sanday, and Watkina, suppose the variation from the original to be in the Fourth Gospel. Bruce accepts provisionally the view that we have here not merely the substance of the Master's teaching, but the thoughts of a disciple on the great themes of Christian faith.

Analysis of the conception of Jesus given in the Prologue reveals the characteristics of the author's thought. Here one fundamental category is the Eternal. Jesus is set forth as

"a Divine Being possessing divine attributes, relations and powers, to whom it happened that He became flesh. .... The incarnation and earthly life of the Logos are reduced to the position of an incident in the life of an Eternal Being."(2)

Another fundamental category is the Absolute, which is exemplified in the writer's "broad unqualified antitheses", especially that of light and darkness. These two categories dominate the thought of the Evangelist:

"He looks at all things sub specie aeternitatis, and moves in the groove of unmitigated contrasts."(4)

The influence of the former category is seen in the fact that there is no real progress in the history of the incarnate Logos, no birth, no boyhood, no slow arrival at manhood, no growth in wisdom and

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stature. The eternal Christ simply became Flesh. Nor is there real progress in the public ministry. There is not, as in the Synoptics, a particular time at which Jesus began to speak plainly about His Messiahship or His Passion. Even on earth the Son of Man is in heaven:

"From the divine point of view there is no distinction between now and then, here and there, beginning and end, root and fruit. The divine point of view is the Evangelist's. He is a mystic, and looks at things with God's eyes."(2)

The category of the Absolute appears in the entire absence of shading in moral distinction. There is "only one grand cleavage" between good and evil, light and darkness, life and death, sons of God and sons of the Devil. The most significant illustration of this is the complete absence from the Fourth Gospel of those diverse attitudes assumed by Jesus, towards Scribes and Pharisees on the one hand and Publicans and sinners on the other, which are so conspicuous in the Synoptics. Another instance of this absolute moral judgment appears in Christ's saying, "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers."(4) While substantially these words give a true claim of Christ, the claim is expressed in unqualified terms where again shading is needed. Bruce rejects the view of Clement of Alexandria and others that the Fourth Gospel lets us see into the very heart of Christ, while the Synoptics show us only the exterior. His own view is put characteristically:

"The Jesus of the Synoptists is more human and humane, more considerate and discriminating, distinguishes between degrees of guilt according to varying measures of knowledge, sources of temptation, and the intrinsic differences in the nature of offences. He hates the sins of falsehood, pride and tyranny; He pities the sinner who has been much sinned against, who has been carried headlong by impulse, who knows he is a sinner and has moments of bitter regret when he would gladly be delivered from sin's bondage. This pity of Jesus is very dear to me as a trait in His character and as a revelation of the heart of God, and when I want to refresh my mind with a new impression of it,

it is to Matthew, Mark, and Luke I must go, not to John." (1)

These two categories, the Eternal and the Absolute, are used by Bruce as keys to an understanding of the theology of the Gospel.

(1) The good which came to the world through Jesus Christ is most frequently called eternal life. This means life absolute, life indeed and true, life which realizes the ideal. With reference to it the distinctions of time, place, and quality — now and then, here and there, imperfect and perfect — dwindle into insignificance. It is not subject to the law of gradual growth, but is perfect from the beginning, and is the same on earth as in heaven. Moreover, it is a sinless life. But we know, says Bruce, that statements conveying this sense are true only of the Divine ideal. In actual experience there is a difference between now and then, between the beginning and the end of the new life, between that life here below and that life as it will be in heaven. The distinction between life and life abundant, in "John" 10:10, is an example of a few cases in which the thought of the Gospel, at home in the Divine and the Eternal, stoops down for a moment to the human and the temporal.

(2) The writer's conception of God is implied in his prevailing name for God, viz., "the Father." The Synoptists have "your Father." The Johannine expression points to a relation, internal to Godhead, between an eternal Father and an eternal Son. It is true that the divine Fatherhood concerns men also, for believers on Jesus are empowered to become sons of God:

"But thereby they are as it were deified, taken up into the absolute, perfect life of God, along with Him in whom they believe." (3)

In the Fourth Gospel Bruce finds no trace of that universal aspect of

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Divine Fatherhood in providence and in grace which he regards as so characteristic of the Synoptics. Thus what the Johannine doctrine gains in height it loses in breadth. There is, it is true, a pronounced Christian universalism. The sons of God are born not of blood.\(^{(1)}\)

Salvation, though of the Jews, is for all in any place who worship the Father in spirit and in truth:

"But that God is good to all, Christian or non-Christian, is not a truth which the Evangelist has any mission to proclaim in language similar to that in which Jesus teaches the universal bounty of God's paternal providence in sunshine and shower in the Sermon on the Mount."\(^{(2)}\)

(3) In the Johannine doctrine of man no shading in moral judgment is observed. The good are very good, the evil very evil. The dualism is so thoroughgoing as to suggest, though not to justify, the view that God could not have been the common Creator of men so entirely different in their moral nature. Bruce considers that this unqualified manner of teaching resembles Manichaean dualism so much that, if we cannot affirm the latter is taught, as little can we say it is not taught:

"That is the Scylla of an anthropology in which there is no shading. Of course there is a Charybdis approached by an anthropology in which shading has full scope, that, viz., of minimising moral distinctions, ... The Scylla has been the rock of offence for a scholastic theology not skilled in the historical methods of Biblical interpretation; the Charybdis is the peril of modern literature entirely indifferent to theological theory, and devoted exclusively to the realistic presentation of the facts of the moral world."\(^{(4)}\)

(4) The Johannine conception of Christ is given in such expressions as, "I am the bread of life," and "I and the Father are one."\(^{(6)}\) These and similar claims amount to a declaration that Christ is the absolutely sufficient provision for the spiritual needs of humanity, and therefore that He is God, since God alone can satisfy

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the heart of man. We may, says Bruce, regard such assertions, put into the mouth of Jesus, as "propositions of faith" which have sprung up in the Evangelist's mind from words of Christ about Himself and from the impression made by His whole life as witnessed by the disciples. In any case, the Johannine Christ is "strictly divine":

"He is so divine that the human element may seem imperilled; the glory of the divine Logos so shines through the transparent veil of the flesh as to make the latter seem docetic, rather than a vulgar reality. ... The attempt of Berylsem to show that the Johannine Logos is simply the ideal man must be pronounced a brilliant failure."(3)

(5) The Death of Christ, viewed by the Evangelist sub specie aeternitatis, is His glorification. "The hour is come," said Jesus, "when the Son of Man should be glorified."(4) Various sayings of Jesus in this Gospel show that His death, far from being a mere waste of life, was destined to be a source of signal benefit to men. The uplifted Son of Man will heal like the uplifted brazen serpent in the wilderness, and draw men to Him like a magnet.(5) The Saviour dying resembles a grain of wheat cast into the ground and becoming fruitful by death.(6) These and other sayings state the effect of Christ's death in terms of historic precedent or of natural law. The analogies employed help us to see how the Death becomes a source of benefit, but, says Bruce --

"They do not accomplish much more than this. They do not express or suggest any theological theory of the atonement. Herein the Fourth Gospel differs from the Epistles of Paul. In another respect the former differs from the latter. Paul looks at the death of Jesus by itself as something unique, to be explained in terms applicable to no other experience. The Evangelist describes the effect of Christ's death in terms admitting of universal application. .... He who loses life in the spirit of self-sacrifice, not only gains it for himself but communicates it to others."(8)

Here, again, Bruce finds the category of the Absolute. Christ's

death is not sui generis, but the highest instance of a universal principle. The same law is exemplified in the Master and in the disciple. The analogy of the vine with its branches expresses, in Bruce's view, the thought of an even higher unity:

"The Lord is not apart from His people. A mystic identity prevails between them. They and He are one in vocation and in the experience which is a condition of power." (1)

(3) The means of attaining the sumnum bonum is the new birth. Such a verse as, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent," (2) might suggest that some form of \textit{g\i\u0107\v
\textit{\textsuperscript{\texttimes}}is} is the secret of attainment. But the knowledge referred to is not theoretical but such as comes "through fellowship of life":

"Life is first there and knowledge follows as a result; so that the ultimate fact is the true eternal life sovereignly communicated to certain souls by God, whence it comes that they believe in Jesus, see in Him the light of life, and become filled with the grace and truth that are in Him." (3)

Bruce finds the categories of the Eternal and the Absolute dominating here again. God has eternally given to the Son those to whom the Son in time gives eternal life, and the gift is absolute, unconditional, final. The sheep of the Good Shepherd are all good sheep, hear His voice, follow Him and shall never perish. And none but such belong to the fold.

Bruce sums up his exposition of the Johannine theology in a short paragraph which expresses his whole point of view so characteristically that we quote it:

"A noble and sublime conception of the Christian faith and life this of the Fourth Gospel. Yet I am thankful that it does not stand alone in the New Testament. This divine way of thinking is too Alpine in its elevation to live in constantly. The white light of the absolute is too dazzling for our weak eyes. We crave the coloured light of the limited and the relative. From the first three Gospels I come to the Fourth to learn some

advanced lessons they teach dimly if at all. But from the last of the four I go often back to the three to listen to the words of One who is so perfectly human, kindly, and brotherly; in all respects such as I myself am, sin only excepted."

(4) A Criticism of Bruce's Views.

It is not possible, nor is it necessary, to go into all the points which might be discussed in Bruce's brief presentation of the Johannine theology. Our purpose will be served by two criticisms.

(1) Modern scholarship has shown that the gulf between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel is not so wide as Bruce and many scholars of his period believed. The field of Christology may be taken by way of illustration. Bruce has largely overlooked the human element in the Johannine presentation; and he has not adequately realized the Divine element in the Synoptic presentation. The latter point may be taken first. There can be no doubt that the thesis which Mark sets himself to elaborate in his Gospel is that "Jesus is the Christ the Son of God." And "Son of God," as Rawlinson says, "means plainly a supernatural Being, supernatural in origin, and therefore supernatural in power." While it is true that no other evangelist has so realistically depicted the man Jesus in all His essential humanity, it is also true that Mark regards himself as writing the story of One who was not only the man Jesus but also the supernatural Christ. "In this respect," says Moffatt, "the Christology of Mark is not so distant from the essential features even of the Fourth Gospel." As for the other point: it is wrong to think that the writer of the Fourth Gospel is interested only in a Divine Being. It is he who tells us of a Jesus who was wearied at Jacob's well, who wept by the tomb of Lazarus, who cried "Now is my soul

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troubled," and, as He hung on the Cross, "I thirst." In the First Epistle of John, the man who denies the reality of the Incarnation is branded as "the master-liar." The Divine Being who is the subject of the Gospel is the same person who once had been baptized in Jordan and who at last had been nailed to a Cross. "In no early Christian document," says Burkitt, "is the real humanity of Jesus so emphasized as in the Fourth Gospel." (4)

(2) Bruce has failed to see that all through the Synoptic narrative there is a clamant call for interpretation in terms of ultimate reality. As Rawlinson puts it:

"The Synoptic tradition, though it bears witness to the Christ, is by no means self-explanatory: it cries aloud for interpretation. .... The Fourth Gospel is precisely such an interpretation." (5)

The great question which, for those who have ears to hear, the Synoptics keep putting is essentially a question about Christ. Who is this Man who makes for Himself an overwhelming claim to authority, and whose claim leads to a conflict culminating in His arrest, trial, condemnation, and -- as His followers affirmed -- resurrection? Who is this Man who is set forth as a worker of miracles, commanding the winds and the waves, healing the souls and the bodies of men, driving out demons, raising the dead? The writer of the Fourth Gospel realized that these questions involve a problem which cannot be solved on the plane of history alone, and, therefore, that what is required is a theological interpretation. To set forth this interpretation was his purpose in writing his Gospel. Jesus the Christ, he says, is the Eternal Word, the Son of God who came down out of heaven. Since He is one with the God whom He reveals, the revelation in Him...
is final: it has decisive significance, confronting mankind with the last alternative and the final issue. Thus Christ's teaching and His deeds are not simply the teaching and the deeds of the man Jesus. His words are the words of eternal life, and His deeds are the deeds whereby the life, the light, and the love of God are made manifest. But the Gospel is not simply a Gospel of revelation; it is also, as truly in the Johannine as in the Synoptic presentation, a Gospel of human redemption, and of salvation from sin. The Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (1) The great saying, "For their sakes I consecrate myself," is, in effect, the Johannine counterpart of the words at the Last Supper, whereby, in the Synoptic account, Christ interprets His approaching death as a sacrifice. The Johannine narrative leads up to the appointed "hour" in which the Saviour offers Himself in this capacity.

The Fourth Gospel is in many respects the most difficult of the Gospels; but many, learned and unlearned alike, have found it to be theologically the most satisfying. This point of view, which is our own and which is very different from Bruce's, has been admirably stated by Dr C. H. Dodd in a masterly review of "the History and Doctrine of the Apostolic Age;" and with his words we may fittingly close:

"If now we look back over the whole New Testament, we are disposed to conclude that the Fourth Evangelist, who of all its major writers stands farthest in time from the life and teaching of Jesus, has understood more clearly, and expressed more powerfully than any of them, the central purport of His teaching and the meaning of His life and death. His presentation of the Gospel has the profundity of a great philosophical thinker, the universality of one who has passed beyond the distinction of Jew and Greek, and in the end the simplicity appropriate to that Wisdom of God which is "revealed to babes."" (3)

C. BRUCE'S WORK AS SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGIAN.

Introduction: His Major and His Minor Contributions.

Principal G. C. M. Douglas, of the Glasgow Free Church College, in his closing lecture of the session 1899-1900, expressed the view that Bruce might have been a great Systematic Theologian:

"It is scarcely the common opinion, nevertheless I hold it that, if he had pleased, Dr Bruce had it in him to become a great systematic theologian. In support of my belief I appeal to his course of Cunningham Lectures on the Humiliation of Christ. It is somewhat tough reading. But if you take to it, you will be rewarded."(1)

The Cunningham Lectures are Bruce's only major contribution to Systematic Theology. In several of his books, however, and in some of his articles hidden away in periodicals, we have materials which not only enable us to see clearly something of his general attitude to Systematic Theology, but which merit consideration as minor contributions thereto. We propose to discuss his general attitude to Systematic Theology and also these minor contributions before turning to the Cunningham Lectures.

I. HIS GENERAL ATTITUDE TO SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND HIS MINOR CONTRIBUTIONS THERETO.

1. His General Attitude to Systematic Theology.

In a close-of-session address at New College Dr Rainy once remarked of his own predecessors there:

"As soon as they experienced the power of evangelical religion they instinctively ranged themselves in the succession of the Reformed Theology. Even John Duncan, who had wandered in so many fields of speculation, accepted at his conversion the whole system of the traditional theology of his Church, and remained satisfied with it to the end."(2)

Rainy considered that it was a testimony to the truth of the Reformed system that it thus seemed to give expression to the experience of

(2)Quoted by Macgregor, "Persons and Ideals," p.4.
deep-thinking and deeply religious men. Of the reality and depth of Bruce's religious experience there can be no doubt; but it did not lead him to range himself in the Reformed succession or to take up the responsibility of defending the traditional positions. He did not, indeed, oppose or explode the system, but he took little interest in it. Dr W. M. Maagregor testifies:

"He early discovered, as he bluntly confessed to me, that Owen and the great Puritans (except Baxter whom he loved) added nothing to him, and so he passed them by. Principal Cunningham, who so profoundly impressed Rainy and many notable figures in the first decade of the Free Church, had nothing to say to Bruce and some of the finest minds amongst the students of the middle fifties, for a new and less dogmatic age was coming in."(1)

What Bruce did was to go behind the traditional system. His whole theology was an endeavour to look with open face at the image of the Son of Man in the Gospels. His history, as we have already noted, did not impress him. The quotations in his books from the old divines of his own country are astonishingly few. He did not feel the glory which to some minds gathers round a doctrine when for generations and centuries it has been the expression of the faith of believers. In the murmur of the ages he heard not so much the consent of Christian testimony as the Babel of contending tongues; and he gladly escaped from it to follow the footsteps of Jesus and to listen to His words of grace and truth.

It would be wrong, however, to imagine that, valuing the Synoptic Gospels as he did, Bruce adopted a negative attitude to the rest of the Bible. "The Bible," he asserts, "is indeed profitable for doctrine."(2) Nevertheless, he recognized, as few of his contemporaries did, the delicacy and responsibility of the task of using the Scriptures for doctrinal purposes, and he stood forth as the champion of a natural, at most doctrinal, as opposed to a dogmatic,

interpretation, believing that at many points "we have to do with rhetoric and poetry rather than with dogmatic theology." (1) His mind on the doctrinal aspect of the Bible, and on the subject of Systematic Theology generally, is best seen in the final chapter -- entitled "The Doctrinal Significance of Revelation" -- of his book "The Chief End of Revelation" (1887); in a valuable paper contributed by him to a "Symposium" on "Progress in Theology" in the pages of the "Catholic Presbyterian" (2); and in the final chapter -- entitled "The Christianity of Christ" -- of his book "The Kingdom of God" (2nd ed., 1890). In the first of these, after pointing out that the method of the Bible is literary, not dogmatic, he continues:

"The Bible contains all sorts of literature -- histories, prophecies, poems lyric and dramatic, proverbs, parables, epistles. All are profitable for doctrine, but none are dogmatic. .... To use these writings for doctrinal purposes is a delicate task, demanding for its right performance much pains, patience, and wisdom. .... We must enter upon this study with profound humility, mindful of the risk we are exposed to of performing our part not wisely, but foolishly. We may miss the meaning altogether, and read into the book our errors instead of taking out of it God's truth. .... The risk of miscarriage somehow is so great that we do well to read with the prayer in our heart -- "Send forth Thy light and Thy truth." (3)

Bruce's ideas of the qualifications required for the interpretation of the Bible are clear and high. The organ of insight, he thinks, is not "theological lore," for the very profession of the technical theologian exposes him to "certain biasing and blinding influences." Nor is it "literary taste," for one may be an accomplished litterateur, a veritable Matthew Arnold, while that vital word "grace" is a stranger to his vocabulary. It is "an enlightened Christian consciousness," a mind at once believing in and pervasively influenced by God's redemptive grace:

"Our insight into the meaning of Holy Writ will be in proportion to the strength of our faith in Divine grace, and the measure in which it has proved in our experience an emancipating power, bringing liberty to our reason, our conscience, and our heart. While grace is not believed in, or while it is believed in feebly, there is a veil on the face which hides the glory of the Lord as reflected from the sacred page. To understand the Scriptures is above all things to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord; and it may be taken for granted that he who has narrow thoughts of God's love, end of the purposes of that love towards mankind, no matter what the extent of his learning may be, has but a very dim apprehension of the drift of the Scriptures."(1)

2. Bruce's Conception of Progress in Theology.

In his article on "Progress in Theology" Bruce points out three directions in which such progress seemed to him both possible and desirable. As they are directions in which he travelled himself, they shed further light on his own general attitude to Systematic Theology and indicate some of his contributions thereto.

(a) Keenly conscious of the sectarian abuse of the Bible as a mere repository of proof-texts for a dogmatic system, Bruce pleads for progress in method, and that in two respects.

(1) In the exchange of the old dogmatic method of using indiscriminately Scripture texts in proof of doctrines, for "the modern method of comparative Biblical theology" which recognizes distinct types of doctrine in the New Testament. We have seen how Bruce's great work in New Testament Theology was carried out in accordance with the principle here advocated, of which he says:

"It develops a faculty for juster appreciation of the true significance of Bible texts, and a deepened sense of the relativity of many statements which, taken by themselves, seem absolute and unqualified."(3)

(2) In the adoption of the "inductive method of modern science" in place of the "deductive method of the older dogmatic."(4) The importance of this change is illustrated in the case of the doctrine

"The older dogmaticians started with the idea -- the Bible the Word of God, and from this idea they determined deductively what the characteristics of the Bible must be in order to be a God-worthy writing; in some instances fixing on attributes demonstrably not in accordance with fact, and imposing on themselves, in all cases where theoretical claims seemed compromised, as -- e.g., in questions of harmony in the evangelic records, the necessity of handling the Scriptures in a manner barely compatible with exegetical candour. The inductive method begins where the deductive ends, and without prejudice or foregone conclusion asks what are the actual phenomena of Holy Writ as to authorship, date, style, etc., and only after these have been somewhat exhaustively ascertained, proceeds to form its idea of inspiration and to determine the sense in which the Book is to be regarded as the Word of God."(1)

(b) Bruce considered there was room for progress in the way of "rectification or modification of dogmatic findings" in reference to such cardinal topics as the idea of God, election, the natural condition of man, redemption, and sanctification. He was particularly sensible of the fact that not a few Gospel words had become impoverished and perverted by human definitions of them, and that it was necessary to take them back to their source and fill them again with their original meaning. The result was a certain recasting of traditional Calvinism. Four examples may be given.

(1) Bruce saw clearly that it was of essential importance to the faith and life of the Church that the idea of God should be thoroughly Christianized; that is to say, that our whole view of God's character should be shaped and inspired by the revelation given in the teaching and Person of Christ. In the creeds of the past, Bruce considered, the idea of God is not thoroughly Christianized. The watchwords there are not such as these: God is a Sun, God is Love, God is Light. The predominating idea is that of "a sovereign will, not subject to law, expressing itself in decrees." Bruce, accordingly, argues thus:

"It will be a great advance on present attainments, religious and theological, when the general mind of the Church has accepted the Bible doctrines that God and man are in moral nature essentially one; that Christ is the perfect Exegete of the inmost thoughts of the Divine Heart; and that the single word which most truly expresses the Divine character is — love. .... The christianising of the idea of God, the emphatic assertion of the great truth that God is an Ethical Being, morally simple, comprehensible in His moral nature by man made in His image, will signify the inbringing of a new spirit into theology and religion which will change the structure of the creeds, brighten Christian life, and bring about the breaking down of many partition walls by which God's people are kept apart from each other, and the fellowship of saints is rendered to a large extent a nullity."(1)

To this plea for a thoroughly Christian idea of God we can utter a sincere "Amen." In view of the reality of universal human sinfulness, however, Bruce's statement that "God and man are in moral nature essentially one," requires considerable qualification. Again, while it is sub-Christian to think of the Divine will as being "not subject to law" and therefore as arbitrarily "expressing itself in decrees," it must be remembered that the Divine will is none the less a sovereign will. In the same way, the love which, as Bruce says, is "the single word which most truly expresses the Divine character," is ever holy love.

(2) Bruce rightly held that the Church in his day had not yet attained to a "perfectly just, adequate, and truly Scriptural" idea of election. In the popular conception, election had come to signify the choice by God of certain persons to enjoy exclusively the benefits of His saving grace — a choice the ground of which lay in God's will alone. But "will", when used absolutely, has no meaning. As Denney has said: "Neither the mere will of God nor the mere will of man explains anything."(2) What Bruce did was to take Christ, "the Chosen of God," as the type and head of the elect. Thus a word that had been meaningless, and in many ways offensive, acquired a genuine

religious, and indeed Christian, import. Election was seen to be, not an unconditional choice of men to salvation, but election through a calling. The chosen of God were chosen, not to any peculiar exemptions, but in and for the bitter cup and the baptism of blood. They were elect, not to the exclusion of others from God's good will, but to be by their suffering and service the minister's of God's good will to the world. Election, in short, is not to favour but to function, not to salvation but to service. It is a Divine method of using some men to bless all men. Illustrations of this, the true idea of the word, Bruce found again and again in the Bible:

"Israel was chosen to be eventually a blessing to the world. The New Testament Church is called a chosen generation whose vocation is to show forth the Divine virtues for the illumination of the world. Christ called His elect ones the light of the world and the salt of the earth; and Paul, in the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, describes the function of the elect by the two figures of the first-fruit of harvest and the root of a tree. .... According to the one figure, the elect have a representative character. .... According to the other, the elect exercise a vital influence in society. .... This aspect of election has not yet found its way into the creeds, but it has obtained instinctive recognition by the conscience of the Church in missionary enterprise."

This interpretation of election, frequently appearing in Bruce's writings, was a real contribution to theological thought.

(3) Another word which Bruce did much to restore to its full Christian meaning was faith. In Protestant theology the word had sometimes been so attenuated that it was difficult to say what it meant, and hard to find in it any value whatever. This, Bruce saw, could not be the faith of which Jesus speaks. To Him faith was a great thing, and the least conceivable faith could move mountains. Faith was a kind of inspiration, giving to people intellectual and moral originality, so that in the power of it they did and said things which transcended their natural selves. Bruce's encomium of faith,

(1) C.P., Vol. IX, p. 373.
as it stands out in the life and teaching of our Lord, is worthy of quotation:

"Faith was a great word with Him, and through Him it became a great word in the New Testament literature, the watchword of the era of grace, so that it might also be called the era of faith. Christ was Himself emphatically a man of faith. He lived a life of perfect holiness by faith in His heavenly Father. He wrought His miracles by faith. He demanded faith in others as the condition of His ability to work miracles for their benefit. He regarded faith as an almighty power by which not only He but any of His disciples could do wonders, and without which nothing great could be accomplished. He was grieved by manifestations of unbelief or weak faith; from exhibitions of strong faith He derived intense pleasure. He had unbounded confidence in faith's virtue within the moral sphere as a recuperative influence, raising the fallen, sanctifying the sinful, restoring peace to the troubled conscience. He commended trust in their heavenly Father to His followers as the best religious service they could render, and as an infallible specific against fear and care."(1)

The only criticism which might be passed upon this passage is that Bruce, in saying that Christ was "emphatically a man of faith", has not allowed for the great qualitative difference which must have existed between the Saviour's faith and even the finest faith of His followers. But we can have nothing but praise for the way in which he has emphasized that faith, far from being something from which all moral value has been carefully strained, is the thing which alone gives moral value to all we are and do.

(4) As we saw in our review of his book on St Paul, Bruce greatly modified the doctrine of imputed righteousness.(2) He insisted that Paul does not teach that men are merely to get the credit of the righteousness of Christ, but that they are to have the reality of the Christ-righteousness within them by virtue of their faith-union with Christ.

(c) It was almost inevitable that one whose governing principle as a theologian was "Back to Christ," should have a clear sense of distinction between essentials and secondaries in Church doctrine.

(1)K.G., p.94.  (2)Vide supra, pp.161f.
Certainly it was one of Bruce's fundamental convictions that there was great need for progress in the study of theological perspective; and he threw the whole emphasis of his own life upon what he believed to be essential Christianity as distinct from denominational elaborations. As he has put it:

"We have to unlearn the bad habit of treating all doctrines or dogmas believed to be demonstrable from Scripture as of like value or certainty, and to acquire the habit of distinguishing between one set of theological propositions and another in these respects, and to give effect to the distinction in our creeds and catechisms as well as in our sermons." (2)

To drive home this lesson in theological perspective was one of the outstanding aims of his book "The Chief End of Revelation," in which the distinction referred to is expressed as that between doctrines of faith and theological dogmas:

"The hope of the future seems to lie neither in a creedless Church nor in a Church clinging superstitiously to all traditional dogmas, but in a Church which has the will and the wisdom to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential in religious belief, between catholic Christian certainties and matters of doubtful disputation; in other words, between doctrines of faith and theological dogmas." (3)

Doctrine and dogma, it may be replied, are easy words to play with. The difficulty is to know what is one and what is the other. Bruce believed that there could be no authoritative settlement of the question, either inside or outside the Scriptures. The problem as to what is vital to faith would have to be settled in free discussion by "the Christian consciousness," which, if not the test of the truth of doctrines, was at least, he considered, the test of their relative value. Even though the Christian consciousness might often err in its judgment, it was the best light we had. Hence Bruce's insistence upon the cardinal importance of the Church becoming filled with the

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spirit of Christ as unfolded in the Gospel story. The Church, he
maintained, would judge wisely or otherwise as to the fundamentals
just in proportion to the degree in which she was evangelic in spirit,
like-minded with Jesus Christ, sharing His faith in the grace of God
and His intense, wide charity towards men:

"The evangelic spirit of faith and love has the tact to discern
between the primary and the secondary, the central and the peri­
pheral. When the evangelic spirit is low, a dogmatic legalism
obtains under whose influence all sense of proportion is lost,
and the mind becomes enslaved by an elaborate system of dogmas
all regarded as equally vital. But where the evangelic spirit
is shed abroad abundantly, there is spiritual discernment and
freedom. Essential Christian truth is seen with unveiled face
and open eye, and in the light of its glory the moonlight of
scholasticism pales."  

This is one of the great sermons which Bruce keeps preaching in all
his writings.

3. Creeds and Catechisms; the Sacraments; and the Church.

Having discussed Bruce's general attitude to Systematic Theology,
we shall now observe how his mind expressed itself with regard to
three particular subjects, viz., (a) Creeds and Catechisms; (b) the
Sacraments; and (c) the Church.

(a) Creeds and Catechisms. (1) Bruce was persuaded that, in the
new intellectual atmosphere of his day, something would have to be
done in the matter of the Church's creeds. Writing in 1889, he
states: "Things as they are are far from satisfactory."  

The remedy, in his view, was that the Church should express her own faith, not
rest in ancient expressions of it. But Bruce was too great a man to
deny that there was a real sense in which the ancient creeds had
permanent validity. In the "Humiliation of Christ" he says that even
a crude elementary faith, if only it be vital, will grow, and as the
result of growth "may ultimately receive as truth dogmas from which

at first it recoiled in incredulity."\(^{(1)}\) After rejecting the various modern humanistic theories of Christ's Person, he deliberately adds: "We therefore decide to remain with the Christ of the creeds."\(^{(2)}\) It is true that that was in 1881, and that with the passing years Bruce's theology developed in a "liberal" direction. Anyone who knows his work, however, will agree that, in the deepest sense, it is conservative, with the reservation that to him the only orthodoxy worth conserving was one that "is right in the spirit as well as in the letter, an orthodoxy of moral conviction."\(^{(3)}\)

In "The Chief End of Revelation" (1881), Bruce discusses creeds in connection with the distinction he has drawn between doctrines of faith and theological dogmas. He points out that to his contemporaries, "accustomed to separatism in religion, or to what may be called the club-theory of church-fellowship," it appeared almost axiomatic that a creed should embrace all the theological propositions to which importance is attached. He argues, however, that such fullness of statement is neither possible nor desirable if the visible Church is to exhibit, in the widest sense, the fellowship of saints. As he puts it: "The more catholic the communion, the less comprehensive the creed."\(^{(5)}\) If catholicity in Church fellowship was to be the aim, as Bruce himself held it ought to be, men would have to be content with a creed embracing only the essential truths of faith to which enlightened Christian fidelity required them to bear witness. Bruce saw quite clearly that, if this principle were thoroughly carried out, it would involve considerable retrenchments in all the Reformed confessions.\(^{(6)}\) In this same volume he indicates the truths which, in his view, might with some measure of confidence be characterized as

\(^{(1)}\) H.C., p. 222. \(^{(2)}\) Ibid., p. 235. \(^{(3)}\) Ibid., p. 222. \(^{(4)}\) C.E.R., p. 308. \(^{(5)}\) Ibid. \(^{(6)}\) Cf. Ibid., p. 309.
of exceptional importance and therefore as qualifying for inclusion in a creed. To such belong the doctrine of God as manifested in the revelation of grace, the doctrine which unfolds the nature of the gift of grace, and the doctrine concerning man as God's grace finds him and as that grace exhibits him after it has wrought its full effect upon him. After discussing in some detail these "more essential truths of the revelation of grace," Bruce offers the following short creed:

"God manifested as a Trinity through the Incarnation of Christ, and the mission of the Comforter. Men found by God lost, impotent, dead, alienated, -- lifted up by His grace into a region of holiness and blessedness; forgiven for the sake of Him who was crucified for sin; admitted to intimate fellowship with God, and made partakers of eternal life; united into a holy commonwealth, in which they are related to God as sons, to each other as brethren, exhibiting in their mutual converse the communion of saints, and, as a spiritual society, having for their high vocation to bring about the consummation of the desires which Jesus taught His disciples to cherish for the advancement of God's glory, the coming of His kingdom ever more extensively, and the doing of His will on earth as it is done in heaven."(*)

It is interesting to note that Bruce includes here the four principal aspects under which he found the gift of grace presented to faith in the New Testament. Three of these he was later to study in great detail in his books on New Testament Theology.

In "The Kingdom of God,"(1889), the subject of creeds is discussed more particularly with reference to the contemporary situation in Scotland, and one can detect a slight change in Bruce's attitude. Though he still insists that a new creed is necessary, he considers that the times are not ripe for the making of it and that men must meantime be content with acknowledging that the ancient creeds "no longer express perfectly or even approximately the living faith of the Church."(2) What the situation in Scotland was, we have

outlined in our Historical Introduction. Two methods of meeting the
difficulty found special favour: on the one hand, altering the
Confession so as to bring it into line with contemporary beliefs;
and, on the other hand, defining anew the attitude of the Church to
the Confession. In Bruce's judgment neither of these solutions rose
much above the moral level of an artifice:

"The tinkering method of altering some details is a very partial
cure, making the articles left untinkered press harder on the
conscience because others have been altered to suit present
exigencies as judged of by majorities. The other method of
altering the formula of subscription amounts to touching your hat
to a document venerable for its antiquity, and highly respectible
on the score of theological acumen. The one thing to be said
for it is, that it gets rid of the ecclesiastical scandal of
making solemn pretence of receiving ex animo what is only
submitted to reluctantly as a condition of office." (1)

Bruce saw clearly that a written creed, if it was to have any
weight as a testimony to what the Church regarded as important truth,
ought to be the true reflection of the living faith of the Church,
and that, for this very reason, it would have to be subjected to
periodic revision. But he saw also these things -- that creeds
cannot be manufactured to order, and that creed-making is not the
business of every age:

"A new creed, fresh in conception and expression, is the work of
a creative, not of a critical age, and the outcome of a new
religious life." (2)

Just as there were metals altogether refractory to low temperatures,
so there were spiritual problems which could be solved only with great
heat, and creed-making was one of them. The necessary heat, however,
would not come from the friction of theological controversy, which
had rent the Church into innumerable fragments. It would come only

"from the central Sun of the spiritual world, dispelling with His
beams the mists of ages, and shining forth once more in full
effulgence." (3)

Thus in creed-making, too, "Back to Christ" was the sine qua non.

(2) Apart from the tentative outline given in "The Chief End of Revelation", Bruce did not himself formulate a creed. In a real sense, however, the construction of the creed which he felt to be indispensable was the work of his life. In years of patient toil he laid bare the solid foundation-facts on which men might securely build, and toward the end of his life he formulated those facts in a children's "Primer." The "Primer" appears as the final chapter of his book "With Open Face," and in time it might have been followed by a catechism on a more elaborate scale. (1) That was in 1896. Years before this, however, Bruce had expressed his sense of the need of such a new catechism and had indicated what, in his view, its character would be. Being intended for the religious instruction of the young, it would have to contain only the sincere milk of the word, expressed, as far as possible, in Scriptural terms:

"In the catechisms of the seventeenth century, milk is mixed with strong meat, doctrine with dogma, Scripture language with the terminology of the schools. The milk is, that God gave Christ to be a Redeemer of sinners, and the Scriptural way of stating the truth would have been to say, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But the catechism offers the child strong meat instead of milk, by stating the truth in terms of the dogma of election. Again, the milk is, that Christ exercised the office of a priest by dying on the cross for our souls; the strong meat mixed therewith is the dogma of satisfaction." (2)

The aim of the older catechisms had been to make the catechumens not only believers but dogmatically orthodox. Bruce felt that, in a time like his own, the result was apt to be the very opposite, viz., recoil from orthodoxy and, along with that, apostasy from the faith.

When he next discusses the subject -- in "The Kingdom of God" (1889) -- Bruce is very conscious of a further reason why a new

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catechism should be drawn up, at least for Scotland. It is that the "Westminster Shorter Catechism," which had occupied a very important place in the religious education of Scottish youth, was no longer extensively taught. The result was that many children were growing up very slightly informed as to "the things most important to be known, and most worthy to be believed concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the religion called by His name." (1)

Some had thought to revive interest in the old Catechism by producing commentaries upon it. To Bruce's mind, however, these were "of a purely scholastic type" and "written in a Rabbinical spirit," and he felt certain that a bolder policy was called for:

"What is wanted is a Christian Catechism or Primer, framed on a historical method: a little book intended to do for the young of our time what Luke did for his friend Theophilus; telling them the story of Jesus of Nazareth in a way suited to their years, and fitted to captivate their imaginations and their hearts, including the chief of His golden sayings, some representative acts and experiences, and telling briefly the story of His death and resurrection." (2)

The question which remained to be asked was, who should prepare the Primer? Bruce gives his answer in words which have so rich a biographical value that we feel constrained to quote them in full:

"Not, I think, any Church, or Assembly, or Assembly's committee. Ecclesiastical bodies are too conservative, too slow, too much given to drift, too prone to make fetishes and Nehushtans of past means of grace. The work must be done, in the first place, by some individual Christian man, who has seen with open face the beauty of Jesus, and on whose heart it lies as a burden to show to others what he has himself seen, and to whom he has been given the rare power to present spiritual truth in the poetic, naive, simple, yet not shallow way that wins children. And this man will not come from among those who make a Saviour of Church, or creed, or sacrament. Completely emancipated from ecclesiasticism, and dogmatism, and sacramentalism, he will have but one absorbing care and passion -- to make the young know and love Jesus Christ." (3)

Anyone who knows Bruce's mind and work cannot but regard that passage as a piece of unconscious autobiography.

In 1896, as we have noted, the Primer was published. It occupies 24 pages and consists of 122 questions and answers upon the life of Jesus. It did not give universal satisfaction, mainly because it did not directly concede -- some thought, even indirectly denied -- truths rightly regarded as essential to Christianity. A typical contemporary criticism is that of the conservative "Church Quarterly Review":

"There is no teaching that our Lord is God, and the only references to His resurrection are in the answers, "He told them that all who serve God faithfully in this world must suffer, that His sufferings would be for the good of the world, and that after His death He would rise again" (p.329); "Jesus is now in the house of His Father in Heaven, where He is preparing a place for all who bear His name and walk in His footsteps" (p.332). It would not be an unnatural inference that at the least Professor Bruce thinks it of little importance whether his readers and the children taught by the "Christian Primer" do or do not believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly God." (1)

To such criticism it may be replied that the "Primer" cannot be taken as representing the whole of Bruce's own creed. Transcendental mysteries, however credible, were deliberately excluded, insasmuch as they would be unintelligible to the child mind for which the "Primer" was intended.

(b) The Sacraments. In Bruce's books there occur only incidental expressions of his views on the Sacraments. In 1893, however, he contributed a short paper, entitled "The Sacraments," to a "Round Table Conference" which was being conducted at the time in the pages of "The Review of the Churches." (2) This paper gives a fairly revealing indication of his mind on the subject.

(1) He frankly acknowledges that, apart from the fact that he was not a dogmatic theologian by profession and had not made a special study of the locus of the sacraments, the subject had never had a

powerful attraction for his mind. The main reason he gives for this
is that "ritual" had always appeared to him of quite subordinate
importance compared with "the ethical." (1) Bruce's sense for the
ethical is undoubtedly a great part of his strength; but it is surely
a very inadequate description of the Church's sacraments merely to
categorize them as "ritual." Such an empty characterization we
might expect to get from an uncomprehending onlooker at their
celebration, but hardly from a Christian participant. The truth is
that Bruce's position represents a reaction. When he writes
disparagingly of "sacramentarianism" and of those who "make a Saviour
(2) of sacrament," he has in mind Roman Catholic, or at least extreme
High Church, doctrine and practice, in which he found nothing of the
ethical or spiritual which meant so much to him. His own interest
in, and evaluation of, sacraments he states thus:

"My interest in the topic is chiefly the practical interest of the
religious man. .... I regard the sacraments as expressive symbols
of personal faith in Jesus, and of the brotherhood of Christians,
and as such means of grace, though not in an exceptional degree,
or in any peculiar unique manner." (3)

These words, and indeed this whole article, appear to be written on
the assumption that there are only two types of sacramental doctrine,
according to which sacraments are either bare symbols or, as Bruce
expresses it, "mysterious magical ordinances." (4) In his own view the
sacraments are merely symbols expressive of "personal faith in Jesus,
and of the brotherhood of Christians." In sound Protestant doctrine,
however, the sacraments occupy a position intermediate between these
extremes. Admittedly, they are expressions of human faith and
fellowship. But that is not the really essential and distinctive
element in them. The emphasis is always upon God's part in them,

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God’s action and God’s grace. This, the true Scriptural and Protestant position, has been so admirably stated by Dr J. S. Whale that we quote his words:

"The word "symbol" may easily mislead us.... In the ancient world a symbol was always, in some sense, the thing it symbolized. And there is no ecclesiastical confession in Christendom which does not insist that the Sacraments, as a Swiss Declaration puts it, are never bare signs or mere illustrations, "nuda, vacua, inania signa." To use a classic expression, the Eucharist is a signum efficax; that is, it is a sign which verily effects something; it conveys what it signifies, namely the grace of Christ's finished work.... The Sacraments do verily mediate God's grace.... They are signs whereby the Holy Spirit inwardly affects us. Like the printed score of the Fifth Symphony, through which the music in Beethoven's mind is mediated to successive generations, so the Sacraments are "conveyances"; sign and effect coincide; the score is played and the music heard; so, God himself sacramentally unites the symbolic action and the grace which it conveys. In short the emphasis here is always on God and his action.... The essential fact in the Eucharist is not man's remembrance and commemoration of Christ's death, but the fact that Christ here gives himself to man."(1)

The fact that Bruce makes no explicit mention of the Divine action or grace in the Sacraments is clear evidence of the inadequacy of his views.

(2) It was mainly in his capacity as a student of Biblical Theology, particularly of the teaching of Jesus and of St Paul, that Bruce was concerned with the Sacraments, and what struck him was the quite subordinate place which they occupy in the New Testament as a whole. McFadyen has quoted him as saying to a young Roman Catholic who was arguing with him: "No text nor combination of texts could ever persuade me that Jesus Christ was a sacramentarian."(2) His grounds for this judgment are indicated in his article:

"The sacraments are barely mentioned in the teaching of Jesus. Some critics even go the length of questioning whether He ever so much as alluded to baptism. Can one be surprised at the slightness of our Lord's recognition? There would have been room for surprise had the fact been otherwise. It is not the way of religious initiators, in an age when radical reform is called for, to make themselves busy with rites. Their task is

(1)"Christian Doctrine,"(Cambridge,1942), pp.159f.
to recall men from rites to great principles. This was what was to be expected of Jesus, the greatest of all religious initiators, and the most spiritual; and according to all available testimony it is what He did. If He introduced new rites, it was in a spirit of perfect simplicity, and with no intent to enslave men's minds once more under the dominion of mysterious magical ordinances." (i)

On this statement one or two observations are called for. (1) The fact that sacraments are barely mentioned in Christ's teaching proves little. In His own intention and in the experience of the early Church they were closely linked with His self-sacrificing death, His resurrection from the dead, and the bestowal of the Spirit. Obviously, therefore, it lay outside of His purpose to make clear their full significance in advance. This could only be revealed later in the experience of His followers. (ii) There is not necessarily an antithesis between "rites" and "principles." The principles of the Gospel are not abstract ideas but elements in a Revelation which is rooted in history, and as such they may be powerfully brought home to our hearts and minds when embodied in "rites." (iii) The last sentence of the quotation, with its reference to "mysterious magical ordinances," shows not only Bruce's strong abhorrence of extreme High Church "sacramentarianism" but at the same time his failure to appreciate the true Protestant doctrine. (iv) The critics who question whether our Lord "ever so much as alluded to baptism" are, in the main, those who minimize or even reject the Gospel narratives of the Resurrection appearances. With the apologetic purpose of showing that even on the naturalistic view of the Resurrection it is not necessary to conclude that Christian baptism does not rest on Christ's personal authority, Bruce, in "The Kingdom of God," goes so far as to say that it is conceivable that our Lord gave the direction concerning the rite on some occasion

previous to His death, say on the eve of the Passion, at the same
time that the Holy Supper was instituted, and that it was transferred
by the Evangelist to what was deemed a specially suitable place in
the history, viz., the final leave-taking. Such a theory rests on
grounds of a purely hypothetical nature. The motive and the
conviction behind it, however, we can appreciate. Even if the
Trinitarian formula is held to be an addition to the original saying, Christ's command to make disciples and to baptize them commends itself,
as not only credible and appropriate, but as having a secure
historical basis.

(3) In his book on "St Paul's Conception of Christianity" Bruce
has discussed the Apostle's sacramental teaching. There he has
attacked with the utmost vigour the position of B. Weiss that baptism
is the second great principle of salvation, "not less indispensable
for regeneration, or the reception of the Holy Spirit, than faith is
for justification." He argues that the famous locus classicus in
Romana 6, on which such stress is laid by exponents of Pauline
sacramentarianism -- "We who were baptized into Christ Jesus were
baptized into His death" -- need not necessarily bear the construction
that is put upon it. The strain of poetry in the temperament of the
Apostle must not be overlooked:

"It is not necessary, in order to do full justice to the apostle's
argument, to assign to baptism more than symbolical significance.
..... It cannot be shown that baptism is for the apostle more than
a familiar Christian institution, which he uses in transitory to
state his view of the Christian life in vivid, concrete terms,
which appeal to the religious imagination. He employs it in his
free, poetic way as an aid to thought, just as elsewhere he
employs the veil of Moses, and the allegory of Sarah and Hagar." (4)

Bruce thus denies that baptism was anything more than a symbol to the
mind of St Paul and his converts.

(4)P.C.C., p.240.
In his article on the Sacraments Bruce amplifies his argument somewhat, as may be seen from a further quotation:

"The Apostle uses language in reference to baptism which no sacramentarian can, in his heart, understand or sympathise with. "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel!" This is precisely the tone I should look for from the great anti-legalist. How incredible that he, of all men, should assign to baptism or the Lord's Supper a vital place in salvation coordinate with faith! .... If this were the case we should be obliged to accuse Paul of building again the things which he destroyed. But there is no ground for the assertion in anything he has written, not, e.g., in the sixth of Romans. Baptism is there used for the purpose of vivid representation, simply as an emblem of spiritual experience, immersion beneath the water representing death to sin, and re-emergence representing resurrection to a new life. I know well that minds coming to Paul's words with certain preoccupations will discover much more in them than this, even the doctrine that baptism is as necessary to regeneration as faith to justification. We find what we bring, and till the world's end we shall never succeed in convincing one another by the more interpretation of individual texts. We have all our bias, and I frankly own mine. All the texts in the world would not make me believe that Paul meant to make regeneration depend on the rite of baptism administered by properly ordained priests."(1)

With Bruce's polemic, though not with his own position, we are in substantial agreement. After his day, it is true, the pendulum of criticism swung heavily in the sacramentarian direction, and the position represented by him was challenged from many quarters. The attack was all the more significant in that, in many cases, it came from scholars who could not be suspected of sacramentarianism. Men of such diverse outlook as Wernle, Pfeiderer, Weinel, Feins, Titius, Heitmüller, Schweitzer, and Kirsopp Lake -- some of them with extreme reluctance -- came to the conclusion that the sacramental principle is a vital element in the teaching of St Paul.(2) Many of our British scholars, however, -- men like H. A. A. Kennedy, Anderson (3) Scott, Sydney Cave (4) and J. S. Stewart (5) -- have contended that it is

impossible to regard St Paul as a sacramentarian, in the extreme sense of that word, without doing violence to his teaching on faith and salvation. But these scholars are, on the whole, equally agreed that in the Apostle's thought sacraments, while they are symbols, are more than symbols. They are faith's expression, and at the same time faith's confirmation. In them faith is powerfully intensified, and the solemn ritual becomes a real pledge and "conveyance" of the unfailing grace of God.

We consider, then, that Bruce's doctrine of the Sacraments must be judged inadequate in that for him they are merely "expressive symbols of personal faith in Jesus, and of the brotherhood of Christians," or, as he puts it elsewhere, "symbolic rites serving as bonds of union and means of fellowship."(1) His position represents a reaction from extreme sacramentarianism. The measure of his abhorrence of the latter is seen in the fact that he even contemplated the rise of a party in the Church who, on the following grounds, would advocate the complete abandonment of sacraments:

"These rites may have been of use at the first, and we impugn not the wisdom of Christ or His apostles in instituting them. But they have wrought such mischief, and been associated with such superstition, and are now so hopelessly involved in inextricable misunderstandings, that the only possible, sane, and wise course is to abolish them, which we hereby do, in the name of Christ and in obedience to His Spirit, if not to the letter of His teaching."(2)

That Bruce could have entertained such thoughts as these is all the more significant when we realize that he fully acknowledged that Christ meant the observance of the Holy Supper to be perpetual:

"We cannot doubt that a rite capable of giving symbolic utterance to so much meaning was intended to be repeated. .... To perform so pathetic an act once was to make it a standing institution."(3)

He concludes his article by saying that, should the example of the

Quakers and the Salvation Army in the abandonment or the disuse of sacraments be followed on a large scale, the "modern abettors of sacramentarian theories" would have their own share of responsibility for the result.

(c) The Church. The recovery of the sense of the Church as essential to the Gospel is one of the outstanding developments in modern theology, both Biblical and Systematic. In the light of this development Bruce's failure to do justice to the concept of the Church, at which we have already hinted, must be judged to be one of the most serious weaknesses in his theology as a whole. Many incidental expressions of his views occur in his writings; but the substance of them is to be found in three places -- in the chapter on "The Kingdom and the Church" in his book "The Kingdom of God" (1889); in an article on "The Reunion of Christendom" contributed to a "Round Table Conference" conducted in the pages of the "Review of the Churches" (1891); and in a lecture on "The Future of Christianity" delivered at the University of Chicago in 1895.

We might sum up Bruce's teaching on this theme by saying that there co-existed in his mind a lofty conception of the ideal Church and a low opinion of the actual Church. This fact was mentioned by Dr Stalker in the course of his beautiful memorial tribute to Bruce paid in the Assembly of 1900:

"His friends maintained that he loved his own Church; but if so, it was the ideal Free Church he loved; and this made him severe to the actual one, towards which his prevailing sentiment was a melancholy sense that it was less noble than it might be."

This distinction between the ideal Church and the actual Church was

explicitly stated by Bruce himself in the course of his apologia before the Assembly of 1890:

"The ideal casts a deep shadow on all reality -- on one's own character, on the religious life of the community, on the course of ecclesiastical history. It is the shadow of the ideal that rests on those passages in my books in which I speak of the Church. .... I have been looking at the Church in the dazzling light of the King and the Kingdom." (1)

Bruce undoubtedly cared more for the Kingdom than for the Church. In the visible Church he saw more rabbis than prophets. Torn by divisions, quibbling over speculative distinctions, resting upon ancient creeds which, to his mind, no longer represented the living faith of the Church, there could be no thought of "claiming for her authority." (2) What the situation called for was rather "that a considerate and generous view should be taken of her shortcomings." (3) Bruce could sympathize with men asking: "Is the Church of any use? Were it not well that it perished, that Christianity might the better thrive?" (4) He could understand a situation in which "instead of claiming for the Church that within it alone is salvation to be found, earnest men are more inclined to ask whether salvation is to be found in it at all, and does not rather consist in escaping from its influence." (5) He himself believed that many outside of all the Churches were Christian in faith and life, and that they were outside because they did not feel that the Church could do much for them, were perhaps even persuaded that Church fellowship would be rather a hindrance than a help to the life they desired to lead. Of these people he says:

"They constitute a kind of invisible church on earth. In our schemes of reconstruction we must aim at including this church of the churchless. .... Would it not be advisable to have them represented by deputation at our church congresses to give us a bit of their mind?" (6)

To appreciate Bruce's strong criticism of the actual Church it is necessary to remember that as a young man he had learned from Carlyle to read the Gospels as a polemic against Pharisaism, and that he never ceased to read them under that light. Thus he had an instinctive aversion for all that was "tradition", and nothing but tradition, in creed and in Church usage. He spoke from experience of the "bitter and relentless spirit of conservatism," which thwarts any attempt to introduce new thoughts about God and things divine, or new modes of giving outward expression to the spiritual life." Legalism" he regarded as the radical cause of the fact that the Church was "a ghastly failure." The essence of the legal spirit he believed to be its tendency to multiply causes of separation, both in religious faith and in religious practice; in the former by increasing needlessly the number of "fundamentals," in the latter by raising every petty scruple about social customs and forms of worship to the dignity of a principle separating adherents from all who did not conform. Legalism as such was essentially anti-catholic and had assumed two chief forms, viz., sacramentalism and dogmatism:

"S sacramental legalism, with all that goes along with it, is the vice of the Roman Catholic Church and all other churches kindred to it in spirit and tendency. Dogmatic legalism is the besetting sin of Protestantism. Salvation by sacraments and priests is the watchword of the one, salvation by orthodoxy is the watchword of the other. Hinc illae lacrimae. Both alike sin against the spirit of Christ and the true genius of Christianity. Sacramentalism and dogmatism are Antichrists, and till they are both destroyed there is no hope of reunion."

That these views were settled convictions with Bruce may be seen from the fact that he repeated them in his Chicago lecture delivered four years later:

"Sacramental superstition must die out, and along with it the overweening love of dogma, and in the place of these two idols of the

past must come a consuming devotion to the kingdom of God, a passion for righteousness, a resolute purpose that God's will shall be done."

Though Bruce had himself a strong "passion for righteousness", it would be wrong to think that he conceived the ideal Church of the future as a mere ethical society or benevolent association. In his Chicago lecture he states clearly that creed, theology, and philosophy are no idle encumbrances of a Church:

"It is well to have a definite religious creed, if it be sincere, well to have a philosophic theory of the universe in harmony with our creed. Furnished with these the man of ethical and benevolent bent engages in the fight clad in "the whole armour of God," without them he enters into battle defenceless and vulnerable. Our pius desiderium, therefore, for the future is not a church without a creed, or a theology, or a philosophy, or regarding these things as idle encumbrances. We desiderate a church possessing all these but knowing better what to do with them than the church of the past; using them as ideals not as compulsory ordinances, as goals not as starting points, as symbols and means of advanced fellowship not as conditions of admission to her communion, or even to the exercise of teaching functions."(2)

In his article on the "Reunion of Christendom" Bruce makes it clear that his ideal was some form of Broad Church which would be catholic enough to enable the various denominations to surmount their "tragic, disastrous alienations." He regarded all the forms of church government as legitimate and considered that a communion was all the richer when it included a number of theological schools:

"Personally I am a Broad Churchman in my ecclesiastical views, though by accident connected with a Nonconformist denomination holding very strict principles as to the conditions of church fellowship. I could without any trouble to my conscience belong to, and even be a minister in, any one of a dozen or a score of churches, if they would allow me, and give me liberty to speak and act according to my convictions. I think all the forms of church government legitimate and good when they are well worked out, and the reverse of good when they are mismanaged, as they all have been. I do not believe in elaborate creeds as terms of communion. I should gladly be in the same church with men belonging to an entirely different theological school from myself; if half a dozen different schools were represented within the same communion, so much the richer it would be."(4)

But if Bruce saw clearly what he believed to be some of the chief prerequisites of restored union and power, he was more than doubtful whether these conditions would ever be realized. He frankly confesses that even in his most sanguine moods he could not rise to such a lofty thought as that of the unification of Christendom, and that he would die happy if he lived to see so modest a consummation as the reconstruction of the Scottish Presbyterian Church. He had, indeed, not only his doubts for the future, but also his fears:

"Among the possibilities of the future are the ejection of the existing churches as salt that has lost its savour, leaving a clear field for the spirit of Christ, reincarnating itself in a wholly new organisation of whose constitution we know as little as of the life beyond the tomb."(2)

And yet, beyond all his doubts and all his fears, he had one great reassuring conviction, itself based on an absolute certainty. His governing principle, "Back to Christ," once again proved to be the sheetanchor of his soul; for the certainty was this:

"Christ will ever remain, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and the kingdom of God will remain, a kingdom that cannot be moved."(3)

II. THE HUMILIATION OF CHRIST: A REVIEW OF BRUCE'S STUDY OF SOME HISTORIC INTERPRETATIONS.

Bruce's powers as a Systematic Theologian are shown to best advantage by his Cunningham Lectures on "The Humiliation of Christ." In his Preface to the first edition he has accurately described the contents as "to a large extent a critical history of opinion on the subjects discussed." Subtly threading the labyrinths of the historic Christological theories, it is no wonder that the volume is, in the words of Principal G. C. M. Douglas, "somewhat tough reading."(4)

Practically all of Bruce's other writings have a distinctly popular tone and can be read with pleasure by the man of ordinary education.

Only a trained theologian, however, will appreciate the minute and abstruse discussions of "The Humiliation of Christ." The book suggests that, had he cared, Bruce might have been great not only in Systematic Theology but in speculation. But he cared not. For metaphysics he had little inclination, and purely speculative interests were swallowed up by that consuming passion for the ethical which, as we have frequently observed, was one of his most notable characteristics. The self-humiliation of Christ, accordingly, interested him not so much because of its metaphysical mystery as because of its power to captivate the moral imagination and affections.

Bruce's lectures did not arise amid any conflict of opinion in Scotland as to the Incarnation but reflect rather discussions which had been going on in Germany. What they spoke to in Scotland, and were helped by, was the rising interest in the historical Christ. In Christology proper very little, if anything, had been done by our divines. Even the most recent and able of the standard works on Systematic Theology contained little more than a re-statement of the dogmatic formulae of the seventeenth century. Bruce grappled with the subject in a manner that was at once fresh and fruitful by making the idea of humiliation the leading one, under which the other points connected with the Person and work of Christ are subsumed. In this way he produced a book which really advanced the theological understanding of the doctrines treated. Theologians had usually adopted the reverse arrangement of the topics, making the Person and work of Christ the general head and ranging under it His Deity and Incarnation and the execution of His threefold office. By this arrangement the doctrines of humiliation and exaltation came in only as subordinate details of His history. Bruce was persuaded, however, that the idea of humiliation is one which, in its own nature and according to New
Testament teaching, comprehends the whole redemptive work of our Lord, and therefore deserves a far more commanding position and real recognition than it had usually obtained. He believed that great advantages were to be gained by making it the chief head of doctrine and ranging under it as subordinate parts the Incarnation, Obedience, and Sacrifice of Christ. In particular, he was persuaded that the great moral element contained in the idea of humiliation was more fully brought out by this arrangement, and that the intricate and difficult questions in regard to the hypostatic union received light and warmth from the bearing upon them of the general principle that the Incarnation and work of Christ are to be regarded as the carrying out of His self-sacrificing love.


The first lecture, entitled "Christological Axioms," is introductory. Besides providing a general statement of the plan of the course, it contains an extended exposition of the two leading passages of Scripture in which the humiliation of Christ is brought out, viz., Philippians 2:5-9 and Hebrews 2:9-18, and enumerates certain elementary axioms which are deduced from those passages and which, in Bruce's view, must enter into every theory of the Incarnation.

(a) Bruce's exegesis of the Philippian passage may be briefly indicated. The pivotal phrases are ἐγενετο ἐκνωσεν and ἐπανενωσεν ἐκνων, the former relating to "an act of self-emptying, in virtue of which the Son became man," the latter relating to "a continuous act or habit of self-humiliation on the part of the incarnate One, which culminated in the endurance of death on the cross." (1)

(1) To the question, What does κένωσις signify? the apostle, in

(1) H.C., p.18.
Bruce's view, has given a twofold answer. (1) The first is expressed negatively and with reference to the pre-existent state —

"The kenosis signified a firm determination not to hold fast and selfishly cling to equality of state with God." (1)

"To be equal with God" is thus treated as exegetical of "being in the form of God." Bruce realizes that, if the two phrases are equivalent, no meaning can be assigned to either which would involve an inadmissible sense for the other. In particular, we are precluded from understanding by "the form of God" the Divine essence or nature, for such an interpretation would imply that "the Son of God in a spirit of self-renunciation parted with His divinity." (2) In what the thing parted with precisely consists, and what the dogmatic import of the exchange may be, are, in Bruce's view, points open to debate. He says we must be content, provisionally, with general statements. As to the former, "the thing renounced was not divine essence, or anything belonging essentially to the divine nature." (3) As to the latter, "the apostle conceives the Incarnation under the aspect of an exchange of a divine form for a human form of being." (4)

(ii) The second answer to the question, What does Këwò/s signify? is expressed positively and with reference to the Son's historical existence in the words, Morphèn dòulos lambów, en demoiomati anérópôwn énêmi=nos. Bruce treats the former of these clauses as declaring the end of the Incarnation, viz., the ethical quality of Christ's human life, and the latter as setting forth the Incarnation itself as the means to that end. (5) The servant-form, however, is not to be identified with the human nature, any more than the form of God is to be identified with the Divine nature. In all this we notice Bruce's

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(1) H.C., p. 17. (2) Ibid., p. 18. (3) Ibid., p. 20. (4) Ibid. (5) Cf. Ibid.
characteristic emphasis upon the ethical. He regards it as significant that ἀπαντάω is active, whereas γένοσίαν is passive: Christ was made man, but He took servile form. His discussion of the Κένωμι he sums up thus:

"Christ's end in becoming man was that He might be able to wear that form of existence which is at the greatest possible distance from, and presents the greatest possible contrast to, the form of God. He desired to live a human life, of which servitude should be the characteristic feature, -- servitude in every conceivable sense, and in the extreme degree. .... No view of our Lord's person and work can be satisfactory which does not do full justice to this great truth."{(1)}

(2) Bruce proceeds to deal briefly with what St Paul has to say regarding Christ's second great act -- the Ταυτείωσις or humiliation. He points out that what is emphasized is not the humanity of Christ, but the servile, suffering character of His life as a man:

"Having become man that He might be a servant, He, being now a man, gave Himself up to service; became obedient -- carried obedience to its extreme limit, submitting even to death, and to death in its most degrading form. .... Why obedience was carried this length is not explained; the reason is assumed to be known."{(2)}

(3) With the broader aspects of Bruce's exegesis of the Κένωμι and the Ταυτείωσις we are in cordial agreement. The general tenor of St Paul's argument is not in dispute. It is the apostle's intention, in commending the grace of humility and the duty of caring for the interests of others, to exhibit the exaltation of Christ as the grandest instance of the recognition by God of the infinite worth of a spirit of self-sacrifice. He is not content to dwell on the successive stages of the earthly career of Christ as marking the steps of a course marvellous for the spirit of self-denial which it disclosed. He goes back to what antedated Christ's earthly experiences, in order to show that the humble self-denying spirit that characterized the earthly life was the reproduction of the mind

{(1)H.C., p.21.} {(2)Ibid., pp.2ff.}
of the Eternal Pre-existent One and exhibited in detail the spirit that was manifested in the very act of coming into the world in the "form of a servant."

So much is clear. When we come to details, however, there are two main difficulties in the way of accepting Bruce's exegesis.

(i) It is practically certain that \( \mu \rho \gamma \sigma \) is a philosophical term having a definite sense, viz., that "appearance" of a thing or person that is distinctive, unchangeable, and inseparable from the person or thing itself. It is thus equivalent to "nature"; and we cannot conceive of Him who "was in the form of God," understood in this sense, divesting Himself of it without His ceasing thereby to be Divine. This is the view of the Greek Fathers.\(^{(1)}\) It is also the view, in modern times, of Lightfoot;\(^{(2)}\) and it was advocated with great force by Gifford in his masterly examination of this passage.\(^{(3)}\)

(ii) \( \theta \iota \varepsilon \iota \rho \alpha \sigma \) is, we think, more appropriately referred to that "Lordship over all" which, as we read in vv.9-10, was conferred upon Christ at His resurrection, and was not therefore His actual possession in His pre-incarnate state. This is the view of Dr H. A. A. Kennedy and of Dr Anderson Scott.\(^{(4)}\) The former of these scholars writes:

"The most difficult phrase in the paragraph is that which speaks of an "equality with God" at which Christ did not snatch. Plainly the apostle views the pre-incarnate attitude of Christ from the standpoint of His post-resurrection existence. He had come into contact with Him as the glorified Lord to whom was due the universal worship of men. His possession of this name (\( \kappa \varphi \iota \alpha \sigma \) ) placed Him side by side with God in the eyes of humanity. That is what Paul means by "equality". But He had reached that glory by a path of lowly obedience which led through the scorn and rejection of His earthly life, and the shame and agony of the cross."\(^{(5)}\)

Since we can scarcely speak in literal truth of one "emptying" himself of an object that is not yet his own, the significance of the phrase, "He emptied Himself," must be found rather in connection with what is said, in the words immediately following, about our Lord's taking the "form of a servant." Metaphysical implications in the apostle's language there may well be; but undoubtedly the essential reference is to the moral act of self-abnegation in which Christ assumed humanity for our redemption.

(b) In dealing with "Hebrews" 2:9-18, Bruce is concerned almost entirely with v.9 and, indeed, with two phrases in this verse, viz., ἐσπέραξεν πάντα ἴσητι ἡμῶν and Χριστός. (i) In our review of his book, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," we have already given reasons for dissatisfaction with his treatment of the former of these phrases. Here it will suffice to recall that he follows Hofmann in regarding the "glory and honour", with which Christ is said to have been crowned, as referring, not to His exaltation, but to His office and work on earth. (ii) In the case of the other of the two phrases, Bruce argues for an interpretation which makes Christ the object of "the grace of God." It was "a mark of signal grace or favour on the part of God" towards His Son to appoint Him to have the honour of dying for all:

"While it is a humiliation to die, it is glorious to taste death for others; and by dying, to abolish death, and bring life and immortality to light."(2)

On this view God was specially gracious to Jesus in giving Him this opportunity and privilege, and the writer's aim was to show how there was an inner bright side to the outward indignities of the Passion. With this exegesis we are unable to agree. It seems clear that the reference in χριστός is to the fact that behind and below all

that had happened to the Son, God's grace had been working. As Dr Moffatt has said:

"The whole action was of God, within the course of His eternal grace; by the grace of God covers the divine motive, the mission of the Son, the very methods of suffering, and the wide object in mind. ... The words ought not to be read apart from the general thought that Christ's suffering, so far from being accidental or arbitrary, was in keeping with the gracious will of God for men's salvation."(1)

This general thought is, of course, one which Bruce is constantly emphasizing.

(2) From the two classic passages which he has considered Bruce gathers eight "Christological axioms" or "elementary truths."(2) We give them in summary form. The first six -- inferences from the Philippian passage -- are all in harmony with the main scope of that passage, which is to eulogize the humility of Christ.(3) (i) The self-renouncing mind belonged to the sphere of Divinity. (ii) The act of self-exinanition involved a change of state for the Divine Actor. (iii) The personality continued the same. He who emptied Himself was the same with Him who humbled Himself. (iv) This personality had continuity of self-consciousness. Infinite moral value is thus given to every act of self-humiliation performed by Christ on earth. (v) Christ's life on earth was emphatically a life of service. (vi) Christ was a free, active agent throughout both the kenosia and the tapeinosis, and is thus a proper example of humility.

The two additional axioms derived from the passage in "Hebrews" are these.(4) (vii) Christ's vocation involved likeness to men in all possible respects, both in nature and in experience. (viii) The highest glory of Christ consists in His voluntary experience of the fullest possible humiliation without sin.

Having furnished himself with this series of axioms, Bruce proceeds, in the lectures that follow, to use them as helps in forming a critical estimate of conflicting Christological and soteriological theories. The subject-matter is discussed under the three aspects indicated in the subtitle, viz., physical, ethical, and official. "Physical" is not a very happily chosen expression. Used in its strict philosophical sense ($\phi\nu\sigma\varsigma$), it refers to the bearing of the category of humiliation on the constitution of Christ's person.

Under the ethical aspect Christ is considered as "the subject of a human experience involving moral trial, and supplying a stimulus to moral development." (1) Under the official aspect He is considered as "a servant, under law, and having a task appointed Him, involving humiliating experiences various in kind and degree." (2)

2. The Christological Aspect of the Humiliation.

This aspect of the humiliation is the one treated by Bruce at greatest length. In four lectures the subject is discussed in connection with (a) the Patristic Christology of the fourth and fifth centuries; (b) the Lutheran and Reformed Confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; (c) the Kenotic theories of the Incarnation advanced in the nineteenth century; and (d) the Humanistic theories of the same century.

When Bruce's book appeared in 1876 the Patristic Christology was already a well-worn theme, but the other phases of Christological speculation were comparatively new to this country. Leaving aside the Humanistic theories, which belong to a class of their own, we may say that, in each of the periods covered by the first three lectures, the problem was that of the relations of the two natures of Christ in the one person, and that the aim was to form a true conception of the

(1) H.C., p.37. (2) Ibid.
mode of the Incarnate existence. Objection may be taken in limine to such speculations. It may be argued that, since we are largely ignorant of the nature of our own life, it is presumptuous on our part to aspire to knowledge of the mode of a life at once Divine and human. Consideration of such questions, however, is the very spring and life of theology. Once the existence of the God-man is acknowledged as a fact of history, the mind cannot help interrogating it and endeavouring to realize in thought something of its tremendous significance. Fathers, councils, schoolmen, orthodox and heretic, have laboured at the problem. The problem is not solved, perhaps is not soluble; but the Christian intellect will not, and doubtless ought not to, give it up. While Bruce accepts the Catholic doctrine regarding the God-man, his own attitude towards the various theories discussed may be defined as one of suspended judgment.

(a) The Patristic Christology.

The lecture on this theme contains an able and searching criticism of the Christology that found its settlement in the Council of Chalcedon. In an eminently clear and judicious way Bruce exhibits the genesis and nature of the Apollinarian, Nestorian, and Eutychian views, doing justice to the elements of truth which each of these endeavoured, though in a one-sided way, to maintain. He shows how the formula of Chalcedon negatived the extreme positions on each side, while at the same time the chief teachers of the Church failed positively to do justice to the great reality of the Incarnation and humanity of Christ by allowing some of the essentials of true manhood to be swallowed up by the Divinity. This defect, it is pointed out, pervades also the doctrine of John of Damascus and Thomas Aquinas, though the latter started some ideas that were ultimately helpful in correcting it.
Attention may be drawn to a few points of special interest in this lecture. (1) Dr D. M. Baillie has recently pointed out the significant fact that as long ago as 1876 Bruce had the insight to raise the question: "Were Nestorius and those who thought with him Nestorians in the theological sense?" Bruce's conclusion is that it was only by implication, and not by conscious intention, that they occupied the "Nestorian" position of dividing Christ into two persons. (2) Dr Baillie adds the following comment:

"Since then (1876) this has been more than confirmed through the discovery in a Syrian translation of a work of Nestorius himself which had always been known to the Assyrian (Nestorian) Christians, though unknown to the western world. ... It is now pretty generally agreed among theologians that, whether Nestorius was orthodox or not, he was never a "Nestorian." (3)

(2) One of the commonest criticisms which Bruce has to make of the various theories reviewed is that in many cases they lack truly ethical conceptions of God or of Christ. Cyril of Alexandria may be taken, by way of example. (4) (1) In his Christology Cyril involves himself in contradictions by insisting too rigidly on the metaphysical, as against the ethical, conception of the Divine nature. His general position with regard to the relation of the two natures in Christ is that the properties of the higher nature pass over to the lower, just as the ρεπώμοατα of the lower are appropriated by the higher. At one point, however, he simply falls back on an emphatic declaration that neither nature in any wise parted with its own properties. (5) That which was proper to each was possible for each: consequently Christ Ἰπαθός Ἰπαθεὶν. The Divine element remained impassible amid the sufferings of the humanity, as heat in a mass of heated iron remains.

untouched by a stroke through which the iron itself is injured. In other words, the same person was at once exempt from human infirmity and subject to it. Bruce's comment on this is characteristic and apposite:

"Cyril apologises for this metaphor, in introducing it to illustrate how the divine nature remained impossible amid the sufferings of Christ. Well he might; for the metaphor fails to do justice either to the nature of God or to the nature of suffering. Of course the divine nature cannot suffer as the body suffers; but there is a moral suffering of which God is capable because He is love."(1)

(ii) Another inconsistency in Cyril's Christology concerns the humanity of Christ. The humanity, he repeatedly insists, was perfect. The Son of God, in assuming it, submitted to ordinary laws of human development and growth. In the intellectual sphere, however, Cyril will admit only the semblance of limitation. Real ignorance, real growth in knowledge, appeared to him to be incompatible with the 

"usefully pretending not to know the day of judgment;" or as speaking "economically" in professing ignorance.(2) This inconsistency seems to be due to the preconceptions with which Cyril approached the subject of the Incarnation. Both he and his Antiochene opponents assumed that, given an incarnation of God, a true human experience was impossible. The error of both, as Bruce puts it, is "over-confident dogmatism as to the conditions and possibilities of the Incarnation."(3) When we look into the matter, it appears that Cyril's difficulties and contradictory statements result from his effort to explain the mystery of a real Divine condescension, without the aid of a truly ethical conception of God. He is dominated by physical ideas. (4)

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(1) H.C., p.58. (2) The passages bearing on our Lord's knowledge as man are collected by Bruce, H.C., note A, pp.366ff. (3) H.C., p.56. (4) Cf. ibid., p.52.
central thought is that of the power of the Logos to appropriate human nature and reveal Himself under the limitations it imposes. Thus in the end he fails to find a place in his view of Christ's Person for the element of truth which Nestorius was anxious to maintain, viz., the ethical significance of Christ's manhood.

(3) Bruce devotes several pages to the Christology of Thomas Aquinas. According to Aquinas, Christ, in the days of His humiliation, was both a "comprehensor" and a "viator", i.e., one who had already reached the goal (of beatitude) as well as one hastening on toward it. His "viatorship", however, was extremely limited in its character. As "comprehensor" He could not increase in grace or in knowledge, being perfect from the first. Nor could He know what it is to walk by faith and hope. The question may be asked: Wherein, then, lay for Aquinas the "viatorship" of Christ? The answer is: He was a "viator" only with respect to certain bodily infirmities or defects -- death, hunger, thirst, and the like -- by assuming which He took on Himself the punishment of the sin of the human race and "satisfied" for it. Whatever this "epiphany" in time may be supposed to be, it is certainly not a genuine incarnation; and Bruce does not go too far, perhaps, when he says of the Figure thus described:

"The Christ of Aquinas is after all not our brother, not a man, but only a ghastly simulacrum. In many most important respects He is not like the members of His mystical body." (2)

Dr A. B. Macaulay has pointed out that, for genuine "viatorship", at least three conditions, closely interrelated to each other, must be added to those which Aquinas admits:

"A genuine viator must know by experience what it means "to walk by faith," "to be sustained by hope," and "to be subjected to temptation." In the Christ of the Gospel history these

(1) H.C., pp. 73-81. (2) Ibid., p. 79.
conditions are fulfilled. For a comprehensibl as described by Aquinas they are impossible."(1)

With this judgment Bruce would have whole-heartedly agreed.

(b) The Lutheran and Reformed Christologies.

In his third lecture Bruce unfolds the Christologies of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Reformation and post-Reformation periods. The fantastic and incomprehensible character of the former in its various modifications is exhibited, while the latter is commended as doing fuller justice to the real humanity of Christ than any previous form of doctrine. These two Christologies were, naturally, affected by the difference between the two types of Protestantism, a difference which appears in the dominant religious interest of each and especially in the view taken of the Lord's Supper. With regard to religious interest, the Lutheran creed was zealous for the real Divinity of Christ and the Reformed for the real humanity. Both, moreover, tended to go to extremes. It was in connection with the Lord's Supper, however, that the controversy arose. As Bruce puts it:

"The long, obstinate, and in its results unhappy controversy, originated in what to us may appear a very small matter -- a difference of opinion between Luther and Zuingli as to the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament of the Supper." (2)

(1) Luther's insistence on the presence of the body of the Saviour "in, with, and under" the elements, involved the question of the ubiquity of the body, the transference to the humanity of an attribute of the Divinity either before or after the Resurrection or Ascension. This, in turn, raised the wider question whether the union of the human and Divine natures did not involve a transference of all the attributes of the superior to the inferior nature from the first moment of incarnation. (3) If this last position were taken up,

(2) E.C., p. 82.
(3) Cf. ibid., p. 83.
then the further question arose as to how such a humanity could be reconciled with the facts of Christ's earthly history.

Such, in fact, were the questions discussed in the great Christological controversy. The controversy developed in three stages, which Bruce summarizes thus:

"In the first stage, that in which Luther himself and his opponents Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Carlstadt were the disputants, the contention was mainly confined to the doctrine of the Supper itself, and the single attribute of ubiquity; while in the second stage, from Brentz to the Formula of Concord, the debate widened into a discussion of the person of Christ, and the consequences of the union of the two natures in that person, with a view to a firm Christological basis for the doctrine of the Supper; and in the third and last stage, that of the Gieseen-Tübingen controversy (internal to the Lutheran Church), the leading subject was the earthly humiliation of Christ, the aim being to adjust Lutheran Christological theories to historical facts." (1)

In the second stage of the controversy the outstanding figures are Brentz and Chemnitz. According to the former, the unity of the Divine-human Person was such that from the moment of the Incarnation the Son of Man had all the attributes of the Divine, though in the time of exinanition He hid these qualities for the most part by an act of will. (2) Thus Brentz felt himself justified in saying of Christ,

"that at the institution of the Holy Supper He sat circumscriptively in one certain place at the table, and at the same time gave to His disciples His own true body in the bread to be eaten, and His own true blood in the wine to be drunk." (3)

On these terms our Lord's humanity was ubiquitous in the fullest sense, but it is a humanity in which it is impossible to recognize the nature that belongs to us. Chemnitz advanced a more moderate theory, holding that the human nature of Christ received the attributes of the Divine, but only in human measure. (4) In this way he was able to give some meaning to the growth in knowledge which marked Christ's human life. (5) His theory, however, lacked consistency,

(1)H.C., p.83. (2)Cf.ibid., pp.92,94. (3)Quoted in H.C., p.91. (4)Cf.ibid., p.96. (5)Cf.ibid., p.104.
for, like Brentz, he subordinated his doctrine of Christ to Luther's interpretation of the Lord's Supper. Although he denied in strong terms the ubiquity of Christ's body, he yet taught its "ubivoli-praesentia," that is, that it could be in any place at the will of the Divine Logos and so could be partaken at the Communion service.\(^{(1)}\)

A compromise between the two views was sought in the "Formula of Concord" of 1577; but it was a compromise which failed to satisfy either party, and the controversy between the schools of Brentz and Chemnitz was followed by the long strife between the Tübingen and Giessen theologians.\(^{(2)}\) The point at issue, which is so small that it is no longer more than just perceptible, was whether, during His earthly life, Christ entirely abstained from the use of His Divine attributes, or whether He used them secretly. The Giessen theologians maintained the former position, which was known as the kenosis. The Tübingen theologians maintained the latter, which was termed the krypsis. Both schools held that, during His state of humiliation, Christ retained all His Divine attributes. They differed only as to whether He made use of them. The Giessen theory was less consistent than the other, but it made of Christ's humanity something more than a mere illusion.

Bruce's main criticism of the Lutheran Christology as a whole is that the principle on which the system is based is arbitrarily applied. That principle is, that the union of natures in one person involves communication of attributes; and there seems to be no reason a\(^{\text{priori}}\) why the communication should not be reciprocal. As the principle is applied, however, the communication is all on one side. As Bruce puts it:

\begin{quote}
"Divine attributes are communicated to the human nature, but not vice versa. The axiom finitum non capax infiniti is set aside;"
\end{quote}

\(^{(1)}\text{Cf.H.C., p. 99.}\) \(^{(2)}\text{Cf.ibid., p. 106.}\)
while the correlative proposition infinitum non capax finiti is assumed to be axiomatically certain."

As we have seen, the problem was bound to emerge as to how such a conception of the Person of Christ could be reconciled with the facts of Jesus' earthly life, and many subtle distinctions were invented to overcome the docetic difficulties created by the one-sided doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum. The effort was honest but unavailing. The whole theory lies open to the criticism that it rather describes the exaltation of the human than the humiliation of the Divine. Its essentially baseless character is strikingly stated by Bruce thus:

"The final result of the whole controversy on the Lutheran side was the formation of a doctrine concerning the person of Christ so artificial, unnatural, and incredible, that any difficulty one may at first experience in understanding the Lutheran position, arises not from want of clearness in the writers, but from the slowness of a mind not familiar with the system to take in the idea that men could seriously believe and deliberately teach what their words seem plainly enough to say. The Christology of the Lutheran Church to an outsider wears the aspect of a vast pyramid resting in a state of most unstable equilibrium on its apex, Christ's bodily presence in the Supper; which again rests upon a water-worn pebble,—the word of institution, "This is my body," easily susceptible of another simple and edifying meaning,—the pyramid being upheld solely by the strong arms of theological giants, and tumbling into irretrievable ruin so soon as the race of the Titans died out."(2)

(2) The Reformed theologians, in opposition to the Lutherans, strenuously insisted on the full reality of the human nature of Christ, as not affected by its union with the Divine. Unlike the Lutherans, they formed their idea of Christ from the state of humiliation, not from the state of exaltation. But their way of affirming and safeguarding the true humanity of Christ took the form of insisting on the fact of two series of parallel states of experience, representing the separate functioning of the two natures of the one Divine Ego. As the "Westminster Confession" has it: "Christ, in the work of mediation, acteth according to both natures; by each nature doing

(1)H.C., p.106. (2)Ibid., pp.83f.
that which is proper to itself." (1)

Though Bruce is greatly attracted to the Reformed Christology by reason of its emphasis upon the real humanity of Christ, he is fully alive to the fact that it has its own difficulties; and to these he devotes several pages. (2) The two principal difficulties involved have been well put by Dr Macaulay:

"On the one hand, the independence attributed to the two natures ultimately made the Incarnation unreal, for, if they never interpenetrate but merely exist as separate entities, the unity of the person as the subject of two such disparate and alternate modes of functioning would seem to be only formal and nominal. .... On the other hand, if the unity of the Person be rigorously maintained, the rigid separateness of the two natures would seem to be an impossibility. The idea of a single subject transferring himself at intervals to and from a subject-relation to two utterly different series of experiences, and keeping them apart, is inconceivable." (3)

As Bruce points out, this inconceivability was recognized by an early Reformed theologian named Zanchius. (4) Influenced by Aquinas, Zanchius affirmed that "the soul of Jesus possessed in perfection from the first the vision of all things in God," and therefore could not be said to be acquainted with the experiences of faith and hope. The inconceivability was ignored, however, by a Dutch Reformed theologian of a later age, named Hulsius, who went the whole length in asserting that Christ was a "viator" only -- "like us in all respects save sin." (5)

Apart from details in his teaching, Hulsius represents the general spirit of the Reformed theology, which was determined, in spite of all the difficulties in the way, to uphold the true and full humanity of Christ.

It is not to be wondered at that, in the course of this Christological controversy, the Reformed theologians charged the Lutherans with being Monophysites or Docetists, and that the latter replied

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(1) Chap.VIII,7; quoted by Macaulay, op.cit.,p.52.
(5)Cf.ibid.,pp.130ff.
with the counter-charge that their opponents, by interpreting the hypostatic union as a mere "conglutination", were Nestorians. As Dr H. R. Mackintosh has pointed out, however, it is important that we observe "the great religious motives operating in the expressed convictions of both sides."(1) The Lutherans must be credited with a nobly conceived effort to formulate the truth that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, the concrete presence of God in perfect manhood. The Calvinists, on the other hand, must be accorded the honour of having asserted no less truly the reality of Jesus' human life as a religious and ethical experience.

Bruce's own mind on the issues of the controversy is well revealed in the closing paragraph of this lecture. After pointing out that, whether we be successful or not in reconciling the reality of Christ's humanity with the reality of His Divinity, we are bound by Scripture teaching to assert both, he continues:

"As indicated in our seventh axiom, the humanity must be allowed to be as real as if Christ had been a purely human personality. .... If we find the reconciliation of the two aspects of the personality a hard task, we must not think of simplifying it by sacrificing some of the cardinal facts, least of all those pertaining to the human side, which give to the life of the Saviour all its poetry, and pathos, and moral power. We must hold fast these facts, even if we should have to regard the person of Christ as an inscrutable mystery -- scientifically an insoluble problem."(2)

(1) Modern Kenotic Theories.

In the early part of the nineteenth century there was in Germany a movement for the reunion of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. This became the occasion for a renewed consideration of the doctrine of the Person of Christ on which the two communions were so widely divided. The Lutheran theologians stood as ever for the Divinity of Christ; the Reformed demanded a true humanity. It was as a via

media that the Kenotic theories were first advanced. They sought to do full justice to the real humanity of Jesus, as presented in the Gospels, and to find a warrant for the new departure in the teaching of the New Testament on the self-emptying (κενωσις) of the Son of God. From the Lutheran position they might be reached by the inverse application of the principle of the communicatio idiomatum, that is, by a communication of human properties to the Incarnate One. From the Reformed position they might be reached by means of a full insistence on the exinanition of the Logos in becoming man.

Bruce was among the very first to acquaint English-speaking Christians with the Kenotic theories, and his statement, classification, and estimate of them is the most original feature of this volume. The general idea of the theories he states thus:

"The dominant idea of the kenotic Christology is, that in becoming incarnate, and in order to make the Incarnation in its actual historical form possible, the eternal pre-existent Logos reduced Himself to the rank and measures of humanity." (4)

But when this general idea came to be discussed in details, many differences emerged. These gathered around three questions —

(i) Is the depotentiation of the Logos relative or absolute? (ii) In what relation does the depotentiated Logos stand to the man Jesus? Is it a case of dualism or metamorphosis? (iii) How far does the depotentiation or metamorphosis, as the case may be, go, within the Person of the Incarnate One? Is it partial, or is it complete? All these questions were variously answered by different writers. Here is Bruce's summary statement of the positions held:

"Some teach a relative kenoiosis only, some an absolute; some take a dualistic view of the constitution of Christ's person, as formed by the union of the depotentiated Logos, with a human nature consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul; others

regard the person of Christ from a metamorphic point of view, making the self-emptied Logos take the place of a human soul. Finally, there are differences among the kenotic Christologists as to the extent to which they carry the kenosis, -- some being Apollinarian in tendency, though careful to clear themselves from suspicion on that score; others inclining to the humanistic extreme."

As Bruce points out, had each of the possible combinations of these three sets of alternatives its representative among the Kenotic writers, the task of exposition would be formidable. Fortunately, however, the theories actually propounded can be reduced to four distinct kenotic types:

"(1) the absolute dualistic type, (2) the absolute metamorphic, (3) the absolute semi-metamorphic, and (4) the real but relative. Of the first, Thomasius may conveniently be taken as the representative; of the second, Gess; of the third, Ebrard; and of the fourth, Martensen."(2)

We proceed now to a brief outline and criticism of these four types discussed by Bruce. (1) It was with Thomasius that the Kenotic theory in its modern form first appeared in serious theology. The speculative foundation of his Christology is the important distinction between the absolute or immanent attributes of Godhead, which constitute the Divine essence and which cannot be held in suspense, and the attributes which are relative and so far external. The absolute attributes are truth, holiness, and love, while the relative ones are omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.(3) Thomasius contended that these last, lacking in the historical Christ, do not in strictness belong to the essence of God, but are evoked by His relation to the world. Truth, holiness, and love, on the other hand, constitute the very being of Deity, and it is precisely they which are incarnate in our Lord. This may be taken as the classic form of the Kenotic theory.(4)

Bruce's most important criticisms of Thomasius are these.

(i) According to him the Incarnation involves at once an act of assumption and an act of self-limitation, the former an act of omnipotence, the latter the loss of omnipotence. Are such contrary effects of one act of will compatible? (ii) The Kenosis reduces the Logos to a state of helpless passivity or impotence. (iii) The theory is open to objection with reference to the unity of the Person. It teaches the presence in Christ of two life centres, the depotentiated Logos and the human soul. Since, ex hypothesi, the depotentiated Logos is to all intents and purposes a human soul, why not say at once that the Logos underwent conversion into, or took the place and performed the function of, a human soul? In this way a dualism in the consciousness of the God-man would be avoided. Such is, indeed, the metamorphic form of the theory, and, as Bruce states, it has been supported by a "preponderance of opinion" among theologians of this school.

(2) Gess is the outstanding representative of the "absolute metamorphic" type of theory. Disallowing Thomasius' distinction between immanent and relative attributes, he taught a complete self-depotentiation of the Logos. His Christology beares a strong resemblance to Apollinarism. For, according to him, it was the Logos nature that took the place of the human soul in the body that was born of Mary; only (and here he differs from Apollinaris) it was the Logos nature depotentiated of all Divine attributes and reduced to a receptivity for the Divine. Only step by step did our Lord come to know who He really was:

"The Logos, in becoming man, suffered the extinction of His eternal self-consciousness, to regain it again after many months,

as a human, gradually developing, variable consciousness, sometimes, as in childhood, in sleep, in death, possessing no self-consciousness at all."(1)

Gess did not shrink from admitting that his theory involved certain consequences for the internal relations of the Trinity. In particular, it was necessary to conceive that, during the period covered by the earthly life, the eternal generation of the Son by the Father, and the cosmic functions of the Son, had undergone a temporary interruption.(2)

As propounded by Gess we have the Kenotic Christology in its most extreme and most consistent form. To his opponents, however, his views seemed the reductio ad absurdum of the whole theory. Bruce's main criticisms are these. (i) There is a breach of continuity in the mind which gave rise to the Incarnation. The love which moved the Son of God to become man lost itself for years; till at length the man Jesus found out the secret of His birth, and so reunited the broken thread of personal identity.(3) (ii) The theory gives an undue power to the flesh of the incarnate Logos to determine His condition. "Contact with flesh is fatal to the free, conscious life of God."(4) (iii) The theory ensures the reality of Christ's human experience in a way which imperils the end of the Incarnation, viz., the redemption of sinners, for which it is indispensable that the Redeemer Himself should be free from sin:

"This theory ... quite consistently treats sin as a real possibility for Jesus. ... All that Gess has to say is, that God foreknew that the man Jesus would not fall into sin, and therefore was willing that the risk should be run. ... This is simply giving up the problem as insoluble."(5)

(3) Ebrard agreed with Gess in making the incarnate Logos take the place of a human soul. The eternal Son of God gave up the form:

This self-reduction, however, did not amount to a depotentiation of the incarnate Logos. The Son of God, in becoming man, underwent, not a loss, but rather a disguise of His Divinity; not, however, in the old Reformed sense of occultatio, but in the sense that the Divine properties, while retained, were possessed by the God-man only in the time-form appropriate to a human mode of existence. Ebrard's views are expounded by Bruce thus:

"The kenosis does not mean that Christ laid aside His omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience; but that He retained these in such a way that they could be expressed or manifested, not in reference to the collective universe, but only in reference to particular objects presenting themselves to His notice in time and space. Omnipotence remained, but in an applied form, as an unlimited power to work miracles; omniscience remained in an applied form, as an unlimited power to see through all objects which He wished to see through; omnipresence remained in an applied form, as an unlimited power to transport Himself whither He would."(2)

Ebrard accepted the formula of Chalcedon — two natures in one person — but he put his own meaning on the word "natures." By this he meant not two concretes, two subsistent essences united to each other, but "two abstracta predicated of the one Christ; two aspects of the one divine human person."(3) His position is best stated in his own words as translated by Bruce:

"Divine nature as an abstractum is predicated of Christ, because He is the eternal Son of God entered into a time-form of existence, possessing the ethical and metaphysical attributes of God (that is, God's essence) in a finite form of appearance. Human nature is predicated of Christ, because He has assumed the existence form of humanity, and exists as centre of a human individuality with human soul, spirit, body, development. Christ is therefore not partly man, partly God, but wholly man; but if the question be asked, Who is this? the answer must be: He is the Son of God, who has by a free act denuded Himself of His world-governing, eternal form of being, and entered into the human form of being. It is a divine person who has made Himself a human person."(4)

Ebrard thus makes Christ retain all His Divine attributes, but in the applied form suited to existence in time. He stoutly denied that his theory laid him open to a charge of docetism. The Logos, he contended, does not exceed the dimensions of humanity. While His endowments far exceed those of man in his present degenerate state, they are nothing more than the realization of the ideal of humanity. If it be objected that, on this view, man and God are practically one, Ebrard's answer is that it was the Divine purpose that man should rise to the full realization of his ideal in becoming God and attaining to dominion over the laws of nature, over the objects of knowledge, and over space. Therefore Christ, in these respects, was not superhuman, but only ideally human. With Bruce's final estimate of Ebrard's views most students will be inclined to agree:

"The Christological theory of this author seems to be more in harmony with the pretentious philosophy with which it is associated, than with the facts of gospel history, or with the catholic faith concerning our Lord's person. Ebrard, indeed, is very confident that his theory is at once scriptural and ecclesiastically orthodox; but this circumstance need not influence us much, as overweening confidence is one of his most marked intellectual characteristics."(1)

(4) Martensen, in his theory, sought to meet the criticism that the system of Thomasius dislocated the Trinity. Distinguishing between a "Logos revelation" and a "Christ revelation," he contended that it was needful that the pre-existent Logos should become man, and supplement the Logos-revelation by a Christ-revelation. (2) During the Incarnation the eternal Logos continued His world functions; but the Logos, as incarnate, was in the form of a servant and experienced growth in the consciousness of Himself as a Divine-human ego. (3) In what sense, then, is the kenosis to be understood? Martensen's answer is in these terms:

"It means that the Logos, qua incarnate, possesses His Godhead in the limited forms of human consciousness. He is true God; but, in the Christ revelation, the true Godhead is never outside the true humanity. It is not the naked God we see in Christ, but the fulness of Godhead within the compass of humanity; not the properties of the divine nature in their unlimited world-infinitude, but these properties transformed into properties of human nature."(1)

It is important to note that Christ, in possession of these transformed attributes, is not less God than the Logos in His universal world-revelation. An awkward part of Martensen's theory is that it entails for the Logos a double life:

"As the pure divine Logos, He works throughout the kingdom of nature, preparing the conditions for the revelation of His all-completing love; as Christ, He works through the kingdom of grace and redemption, and indicates His consciousness of personal identity in the two spheres, by referring to His pre-existence, which to His human consciousness takes the form of a recollection."(2)

On two points Martensen has not fully explained himself. (i) The human soul of Christ. Though it is nowhere stated, it seems to be tacitly implied that the incarnate Logos took in Christ the place of a human soul. (3) (ii) The duality in the life of the Logos. How can one and the same mind be at once conscious and unconscious, omniscient and ignorant? Martensen seems to have regarded the problem as a mystery which he was not bound to clear up. (4)

Bruce points out that Martensen's view escapes some of the objections attending other forms of the kenotic theory. The Incarnation, for example, consists in a voluntary act, by which the Logos becomes a human life centre, without His power becoming exhausted in the act. (5) Again, the Logos is conscious of passing through the unconscious life of childhood, and shows His love by consenting to pass through it. (6) Martensen's doctrine thus seems to satisfy the demands of the ethical kenosis taught in Scripture. On

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the other hand, the idea of a "double life" of the Logos raises speculative questions which he has not attempted to answer.

In his exhaustive discussion of the Kenotic Christology in its older forms Bruce exhibits a thorough sympathy with the aim of the various theologians to solve the problem of the Person of Christ. Before proceeding to criticism, he points out three general considerations of a favourable nature. (i) Kenosis is "animated by a genuine orthodox interest." In all its forms it "presupposes the Church doctrines of the Trinity and the pre-existence of the Logos." (1) (ii) The ends of the theory are praiseworthy. One of these is religious, viz., "to do full justice to the divine Love as manifested in the Incarnation;" (2) and of this Bruce says:

"It is impossible not to have a kindly feeling towards a Christological theory which is earnestly bent on making the exinanition of the Son of God a great sublime moral reality." (3)

The other end is scientific, viz., "to give such a view of the person of Christ as shall allow His humanity to remain in all its historical truth." (4) Modern Kenoticists have been influenced much more by the scientific than by the religious interest. (iii) One of Bruce's most interesting observations is that it does not seem advisable to dispose of the Kenotic theory in a summary manner by a priori reasoning from the Divine immutability. By such reasoning this attribute might be brought to bear against the Incarnation itself! It is not wise to set any limit to what Divine omnipotence can do at the instance of Divine love:

"I am not inclined to dogmatise on what is possible or impossible for God; I think it best to keep the mind clear of too decided prepossessions on such matters. .... It is wiser to believe that God can do anything that is not incompatible with His moral nature, to refuse to allow metaphysical difficulties to stand as insuperable obstacles in the way of His gracious purposes, and so

(1)H.C.,p.164. (2)Ibid. (3)Ibid.,p.166. (4)Ibid.,p.164.
far to agree with the advocates of the kenosis as to hold that He can descend and empty Himself to the extent love requires."(1)

It is characteristic of Bruce's turn of mind that the difficulties on which he chiefly dwells are such as arise from deficiencies in ethical character and bearing. His own position he defines as an "attitude of suspended judgment":

"The hypotheses of a double life, of a gradual Incarnation, and of a depotentiated Logos, are all legitimate enough as tentative solutions of a hard problem; and those who require their aid may use any one of them as a prop around which faith may twine. But it is not necessary to adopt any one of them; we are not obliged to choose between them; we may stand aloof from them all; and it may be best when faith can afford to dispense with their services. For it is not good that the certainties of faith should lean too heavily upon uncertain and questionable theories. Wisdom dictates that we should clearly and broadly distinguish between the great truths revealed to us in Scripture, and the hypotheses which deep thinkers have invented for the purpose of bringing these truths more fully within the grasp of their understandings."(2)

Applying this discipline to the subject of Christology, Bruce gives it as his considered opinion that, after the most painstaking inquiry, what we know reduces itself as nearly as possible to the eight axioms enumerated in the first lecture, and that the effect, though not the design, of theories of Christ's Person, has been to a large extent to obscure some of these elementary truths, — the unity of the Person, or the reality of the humanity, or the Divinity dwelling within the man, or the voluntariness and ethical value of the state of humiliation.(3) In other words, certainties have been sacrificed for uncertainties, facts for hypotheses, faith for speculation. We may well agree with Bruce that such is the testimony of history, and that the lesson to be learned is this:

"Be content to walk by faith, and take care that no ambitious attempt to walk by sight rob you of any cardinal truth relating to Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."(4)

(1)H.O.,p.171. (2)Ibid.,pp.190f. (3)Cf.,ibid.,p.191. (4)Ibid.
(d) Modern Humanistic Theories of Christ's Person.

The lecture on this theme made its appearance in the second edition of "The Humiliation of Christ," (1881). Regarding its composition Bruce says:

"In this Lecture I have utilised the notes which appeared in the Appendix of the former edition on the Ideal-Man Theory of Christ's Person, and on the title "Son of Man." .... I have also in the same Lecture embodied the substance of an article on Naturalistic Views of Christ's Person, which appeared in the British and Foreign Evangelical Review for January 1879." (1)

As the subject matter of the lecture is hardly of the same historical or intrinsic importance as that of those already considered, we shall merely summarize the various positions adopted and indicate Bruce's grounds for rejecting them all.

He begins by pointing out that the discussions contained in the three preceding lectures leave on the mind the impression that the Person of Christ is a great mystery. Even the catholic believer, who in all sincerity accepts the doctrine of the Incarnation, acknowledges that the speculative construction of Christ's Person, as God incarnate, is a hard, if not an insoluble problem. (2) It is scarcely surprising that not a few, acutely conscious of the mystery and yielding to the temptation to desert the catholic foundation, should have adopted purely humanistic views of the subject. These views practically evacuate the idea of the humiliation of all significance by regarding Christ merely as a man, whether as the Perfect Ideal Man, or, as in the case of the naturalistic school, not even so much as that. (3) Bruce divides into five classes those who, on whatever ground, advocate a purely humanistic view of our Lord's Person.

(1) There are those who take their stand on "absolute, thorough-going naturalism." They refuse to recognize miracle in any sphere.

physical or moral, and therefore decline to accept even the old Unitarian view of Christ according to which, while only a man, He was yet a perfect man. Baur is an outstanding representative of this school. (1)

(2) There are those who, while naturalistic in their philosophical leanings, shrink from the thoroughgoing application of the principles with which they secretly sympathize. Though readily consenting to banish the supernatural from the physical sphere, at the expense of philosophical consistency they retain it in the ethical, and with the Church catholic confess the sinlessness of Jesus. Bruce designates this the "Ideal-Man Theory," and connects it with the name of Schleiermacher as having in his system a peculiar significance. (2)

Views similar to those of Schleiermacher were propounded in this country by Abbott, author of "Through Nature up to Christ" and other works. Abbott was an eclectic in philosophy, naturalistic on the physical side, supernatural on the ethical. Bruce's comment on his position is interesting and revealing:

"He represents Christ as perhaps as incapable of working miracles such as those recorded in the Gospels as of sinning. The naivete of this is charming. Dr Abbott does not seem to be aware that a sinless Christ is as great a miracle as a Christ who can walk on the water." (3)

(3) A third party, though really at one with the former of these two schools in opinion, side with the latter in feeling. While in no instance and in no sphere recognizing the veritably miraculous, they nevertheless endeavour in their whole delineation of Christ's life and character to embrace in the picture as much as possible of the extraordinary and wonderful. Bruce says this party may be designated the "mediation school," or, perhaps better, the school of "Sentimental Naturalism." Outstanding representatives are Keim,

Ewald, and Weizäcker. (1)

(4) A fourth phase of naturalistic opinion concerning Christ is that characteristic of those who, while imbued with the modern scientific spirit and paying great deference to the incredulous attitude of science towards the miraculous, can scarcely be regarded as occupying any definite philosophical position. Men belonging to this school are quite willing to accept the account Jesus gave of Himself, as far as they can gather it from the Gospels. Turning away from the multifarious theological controversies concerning the Person of Christ, as matters which they cannot understand and with which they have no sympathy, they go back to the fountain-head, and try to put themselves in the position of those who were eye and ear witnesses of the Word, and to form for themselves an impression of Him at first hand. The impression they do form is very like that expressed by Peter when he said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (2) But, says Bruce, when asked what they mean by such words, they reply in effect, We cannot tell. "The power of Christ is to be felt, not explained." You may, if you like, manufacture theological dogmas out of such words. It is quite possible that they can "by the kind of ingenuity common among professional theologians be brought within the proper lines of accepted opinion." But it is not worth while to do so; it is "a pitiful waste of time." Such are the views of Haweis, a prominent representative of what Bruce terms the school of "Nondescript Eclectic Naturalism." (3)

(5) The fifth class embraces those who, while advocating an "Ideal-Man" theory of Christ's person similar to that of Schleiermacher, do so not on philosophical grounds, but on the ground of

positive exegesis of Scripture. Here Beyschlag is taken as representative of his theory, and of the alleged pre-existence of the Logos as held in it, Bruce says:

"For myself, I confess my inability to form any clear idea of what the pre-existent state of the Logos is in this theory. It is neither one thing nor another; it hovers between idea and reality; it is impersonal, yet shares in the personality, thought, and will of God. And while speculatively indefinite, the theory has no practical compensations to commend it. It is liable to the grave objection that it excludes the possibility of seeing in the Incarnation a manifestation of gracious, free condescension. Christ did not come into the world, freely, to save sinners. He was sent as we are all sent, without knowledge, consciousness, or choice; sent in the sense of being born into an existence which dates from birth. All beyond, the so-called pre-existence, is simply a nimbus engendered by a poetic imagination." (2)

To all these schools of opinion, as Bruce points out, the Person of Christ is a mystery not less than to those who cordially accept as their own the creeds of the Church catholic. The question still remains: To whom shall we go to escape mystery? Part of the answer, even if it be in the negative, is clear:

"We cannot go to Baur, for there we meet with a Christ whom theory requires to be sinful, while all the facts testify to sinlessness. Neither can we go to Schleiermacher, for there we meet with a Christ who is a moral miracle, while in the interest of naturalistic philosophy He is not allowed to be miraculous in other respects. We cannot go to Keim, for there we meet with a Christ who is a natural-supernatural being, a mere man, yet something altogether exceptional and outside the sphere of ordinary humanity. Still less can we go to Haweis and other popular apostles of theological liberalism, for there we meet with a Christ who is a congeries of crudities, not to say absurdities. We cannot even find rest to our souls in the Christ offered to our faith by Beyschlag; for while we gladly accept Him as the ideal of humanity realised, we cannot understand the relation in which He stands to God, and are at a loss to know whether what is presented to our view be the eternal Son of the catholic theory, or something else of which we can form no distinct idea." (3)

When, in answer to Christ's question: "Would ye also go away?" Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (4) he clearly perceived that he could not better his position, and wisely decided to remain where he

was. It is Bruce’s contention that when, on account of its acknowledged difficulties, we are tempted to abandon the conception of Christ which the Church has taught us, we do well to ask ourselves whether we shall escape difficulty by exchanging that conception for any other offered by modern theories. His own conclusion and decision he expresses thus:

"We therefore decide to remain with the Christ of the creeds, feeling that if there be in Him that which perplexes and confounds our intellect, there is also that which gives unspeakable satisfaction to the heart; a Christ who came from glory to save the lost, who humbled Himself to become man and die on the cross; a Christ in whom God manifests Himself as a self-sacrificing being, and exhibits to our view the maximum of Gracious Possibility."(1)

3. The Ethical Aspect of the Humiliation.

Bruce’s sixth lecture treats of the humiliation of Christ in its ethical aspect, and discusses two important and difficult questions which arise in this connection, viz., the possibility of temptation and of moral development for the incarnate Son of God.

(a) On the former of these themes, Bruce vindicates most emphatically and convincingly the reality of temptation for our Lord. It was no mere sham fight in which He was engaged, but a real struggle. Apart from the explicit statements of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Gospels make it abundantly clear that He felt the stress of resistance to evil and the agony of absolute devotion to the way of Gethsemane and Calvary. The best admit of being the most severely tempted. Bruce goes on to discuss the question whether it was fallen or unfallen human nature that Christ assumed in the Incarnation. The orthodox tradition, whether Catholic or Protestant, has always said that it was unfallen human nature.(2) The contrary position was taken by the Adoptionists of the eighth century, and in the early nineteenth

century by Menken of Bremen and by the Scottish Edward Irving. While Irving passionately repudiated the idea of Christ having actually sinned, he held strongly that only a fallen nature could be tempted, and that to deny this is to deny Christ's proper manhood. Christ's humanity was "corrupt" with a corruptness which only the Holy Spirit could hold in check. Dr H. R. Mackintosh's comment on Irving's position is enlightening:

"Misled probably by the patristic habit of using "flesh" as a synonym of "manhood". Irving confused the idea of "corrupt" with that of "corruptible" (in the sense of liable to corruption or decay), and hence from the fact that Christ was liable to decay and death, as being capable of dying, deduced the rash conclusion that His humanity was fallen." (2)

Concluding that it was unfallen human nature that Christ assumed in the Incarnation, Bruce goes on to consider the question whether we ought to ascribe to our Lord in His humiliation an absolute impossibility of sinning, or merely a possibility of not sinning. Here we come face to face with the old scholastic debate over the two Latin expressions, *potuit non peccare* and *non potuit peccare*. To assert the first is to lay stress on the humanity of Jesus, to acknowledge that He could have sinned while holding that He did not. To assert the second is to emphasize the Divinity of our Lord and to hold that, because of that Divinity, there existed no possibility of His falling into sin. Bruce discusses this question with great caution and judgment and comes to the conclusion that in different aspects both statements of the case are true and may be combined. This seems to us an eminently balanced and sane view. It has recently been supported by Dr J. W. Bowman, who writes:

"This old debate holds elements of interest, and it is possible that in different ways both statements express a truth, the one on the psychological level, the other on the higher theological.

plane. For it does seem that there are various levels of truth and that often the acceptance of both of two apparently opposing views rather than a choice between them comes nearer to an exact apprehension of the whole truth.\((1)\)

It appears, then, that the truth in this matter is in the form of a paradox. Most people will have little difficulty in granting what is covered by the first part of it, viz., \textit{potuit non peccare}. Their difficulty will be with the other part, viz., \textit{non potuit peccare}. An excellent exegesis of this latter expression, and one with which Bruce would have heartily agreed, is that put forward by Dr D. M. Baillie:

"When we say \textit{non potuit peccare}, we do not mean that He was completely raised above the struggle against sin, as we conceive the life of the redeemed to be in heaven, in patria. In the days of His flesh our Lord was victor. And when we say that He was incapable of sinning, we mean that He was the supreme case of what we can say with limited and relative truth about many a good man. "He is incapable of doing a mean or underhand thing," we say about a man whom we know to be honourable; and so we say in a more universal and absolute way about Jesus: \textit{Non potuit peccare}, without in any way reducing the reality of His conflict with His temptations."\((2)\)

In other words, Jesus overcame His temptations in the way in which every man who triumphs in the struggle overcomes his -- by the constancy of the will. From the start Christians might have learnt this lesson about our Lord from the Epistle to the Hebrews, but it is only in modern times that it has been fully realized. It was from "Hebrews" that Bruce learnt it, finding it confirmed and amplified in the Gospels; and no one did more than he to press it home.

(b) The second and briefer part of this lecture is concerned with the question of the moral development of our Lord.\((3)\) Bruce must be judged as completely successful in showing that the sinlessness of Jesus was not incompatible with real moral growth. The whole course of His life was a progress in moral education. On the one hand, He

\begin{itemize}
  \item (3)Cf.H.C.,pp.272-288.
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was ever coming to know in a new moral sense by experience what He learned by silent thought and secret communion with the Father. On the other hand, He was ever learning new lessons in obedience and sympathy as He was ever coming into contact with new phases of human wickedness and misery. In brief, it was through His communion with His Father and His comradeship in human suffering and temptation that He was perfected. This is another of the great lessons of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and it had a special appeal for the mind and heart of Bruce.


In his seventh and last lecture Bruce gives a suggestive classification and a careful criticism of the various theories that have been adopted to account for the sufferings and death of Christ and for the results attributed to them in Scripture. Five main theories are discussed.

(a) The prophetic theory, advocated by Socinus, Robertson, and Ritschl:

"On this theory, our Lord's sufferings, including His death, were simply incidental to His prophetic office, as exercised in this evil world; and their redemptive power lies in this, that they exhibit Christ as a fellow-combatant for truth and right, and show us that fellowship with God is independent of outward happiness, and so prevent our peace of mind from being disturbed by the mistaken notion that all suffering is on account of sin." (1)

This theory corresponds with what Bruce, in his books on the Gospels, terms "Christ's first lesson on the doctrine of the Cross."

(b) The sympathetic theory, as held by Abelard and Bushnell:

"In this theory suffering is not an incident, but a chief end of the Incarnation. Christ not only suffered inevitably by coming into contact with the evil of the world, but came into the world for the express purpose of revealing divine love through self-

sacrifice carried to its utmost limit, in order to gain moral influence over men for their spiritual good."

(c) The redemption by sample theory. Here Bruce includes Schleiermacher's "mystical" theory. He thus describes the tendency generally:

"Common to all forms of this so-called mystical theory is the position, that what Christ did for men He did also for Himself, and that He did it for us by doing it for Himself, acting as the Head and representative of humanity before God."(2)

As modern instances of this tendency Bruce mentions Menken and Irving, whose theory he regards as the same in principle with that taught by many of the Fathers:

"The Sanctifier makes the lump of humanity holy, by taking a portion of the corrupt mass tainted with the vice of original sin and subject to sinful bias, and by a desperate lifelong struggle sanctifying it, subduing all temptations to sin arising out of its evil proclivities, and at last consuming the body of death as a sin-offering on the cross."(3)

In the hands of Maurice the theory assumes a kindred but somewhat modified form.(4)

(d) The confession of sin theory, associated with MoLeod Campbell. In brief the theory is this --

"that Christ imputed to Himself, as a partaker of humanity, the world's sin, to the extent of making a sorrowful confession of it, which was accepted by God as a confession by humanity, and therefore as a ground of forgiveness."(5)

As Bruce points out, the theory assumes that it is not necessary, in order to pardon, that the penalty of sin be endured, adequate confession of sin being an alternative method of satisfying the claims of Divine holiness. In his discussion of Campbell's teaching Bruce is perhaps just a shade contemptuous. He says, for example:

"The idea of a confession made by a perfectly holy being, involving all the elements of a perfect repentance, except the personal consciousness of sin, is certainly absurd enough."(6)

Again, he speaks of "this eccentric theory" and says that its sole value is that "it asserts with even extravagant emphasis, the subjective self-imputation of sin to Himself" by Christ as a thing inevitable to one minded as He was.\(^{(1)}\) We cannot but note here the great difference between the attitude to Campbell of the Cunningham Lectures for 1875 and that of the same Lectures for 1917, the former almost the earliest of Bruce's theological works, and the latter -- "The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation" -- the last contribution to theology of Bruce's successor, Dr James Denney. Speaking of the course of Christian thinking on reconciliation during the previous century and a quarter, Denney assures us:

"It does no injustice to other theologians, if we say that the original contributions which have been made to the subject are represented in Schleiermacher's "Der christliche Glaube"(1821), McLeod Campbell's "The Nature of the Atonement"(1856), and Ritschl's "Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung"(1870-74)."\(^{(2)}\)

\(^{(e)}\) The redemption by substitute theory, termed by Bruce the "catholic" view. In addition to the subjective imputation of sin to Himself by Christ, and to the imputation of sin to Him by believers "in their prayers and praises," this theory teaches:

"a corresponding objective imputation of sin to the Redeemer by the Supreme Ruler of the world, the ground at once of Christ's action in imputing human sin to Himself, of our action in imputing our sins to Him, and of God's action in imputing righteousness to us."\(^{(3)}\)

Bruce considers that two things must be borne in mind if this theory is to be understood aright. (1) At no time was the Saviour the object of His Father's personal displeasure. This must be held to be a necessary corollary from Christ's personal holiness. The true relation of the Saviour to the Divine anger is indicated in a

sentence of Calvin's:

"This we say, that He sustained the gravity of divine severity; since, being stricken and afflicted by the hand of God, He experienced all the signs of an angry and punishing God (omnia irati et punientis Dei signa expertus est)."{(i)}

(ii) Christ was under the anger of God, in the sense explained in Calvin's words, not only during His last sufferings, but "during the whole time of His humiliation."{(2)} Bruce is quite aware that theologians, for the most part, have treated Christ's experience of His Father's wrath as a special item in His humiliation, which He underwent in connection with the crucifixion. But he does not accept this view:

"We are not to suppose that, in these final experiences, new not in kind but in degree, the Father entered into a new relation to His Son, which was the cause and explanation of these peculiar experiences, and of them alone. The relation was the same throughout, and was in the same sense cause and explanation of Christ's whole state of humiliation."{(3)}

Here we see Bruce seeking to soften the impact on the modern Christian mind of the assertion of God's anger with Christ, by denying any special anger during the last hours of suffering.

We may note, in passing, that Bruce rejects scornfully Philippi's equational theory that "Christ suffered eternal death as fully and as really as the damned," with this difference, that He, being God, could suffer infinitely more in any given space of time, and that, therefore, the eternal penalty due in the case of man could be restricted to a few hours in the case of the Divine substitute.{(4)} He also objects to Dale's taking Christ's complaint of desertion on the Cross in the literal sense, and so making Him endure loss of communion with His Father's blessedness.{(5)}

Summing up the elements of value in our Lord's atoning death as:

inductively ascertained from Scripture, Bruce gives the following suggestive formula, expressed in mathematical language, though, as he points out, the thing to be estimated is a "moral quantity" not admitting of mathematical measurement:

"The value of Christ's sacrifice was equal to His divine dignity, multiplied by His perfect obedience, multiplied by His infinite love, multiplied by suffering in body and soul carried to the uttermost limit of what a sinless Being could experience."(1)

As God took all this into account, and was thereby satisfied, we also must take it all into consideration, in order to say "Amen" to the Divine view of the sacrifice of Christ.

While Bruce himself holds to the theory of redemption by substitute, he believes that the result of his historical survey is to show (i) that we can recognize an element of truth in all the various theories that have found any great amount of acceptance; (ii) that the error and danger of each of the false theories has been the exclusive assertion of one element, as if it were the whole; and (iii) that the catholic doctrine of redemption by substitute does not require us to deny what is positive in the other views, but can embrace all these elements of truth, each in its own place, as parts of a greater whole. This general conclusion may fittingly be stated in Bruce's own words as given in the final paragraph of his book:

"While advocating the last-named theory, still entitled by comparison to be called the Catholic, I have not found it necessary to repudiate as utterly false all those preceding. I have been able to recognise each in succession as a fragment of the truth, one aspect of the many-sided wisdom of God revealed in the earthly ministry of His eternal Son. In this fact I find great comfort, with reference both to my own theological position on this great theme, and to that of many who occupy a different position. For, on the one hand, it is a presumption in favour of the Catholic doctrine, that it does not require to negative rival theories, except in so far as they are exclusive and antagonistic; and, on the other hand, one may hope that theories which have even a partial truth will bless their advocates by the truth that is in them, connecting them in some way with Him who...

(1)H.C., pp.345f.
is the fountain of life, and initiating a process of spiritual development which will carry them on to higher things. It is not impossible, it is not even uncommon, to grow to Catholic orthodoxy from the meagre, even from Socinian, beginnings." (1)

The history of Bruce's views on the Atonement shows him, characteristically, as the intermediary between old and new, between the traditional and the advanced. It is clear from some words in the Preface to the first edition of "The Training of the Twelve" (1871) that, from the very beginning of his life as a writer, he felt a certain hesitancy and difficulty in dealing with this theme:

"On this last topic (the doctrine of the Atonement) I have given, in several chapters, as occasion offered, the results of much thought and laborious reading. Like the disciples, I have been slow to learn the meaning of Christ's death; and if any one think I have something to learn yet, I am not careful to deny it: for I am very sensible, in connection with that great glorious theme, of the truth of Paul's saying, "Now we see through a glass, ἐν διαθήκῃ", and "now I know in part."

As stated in his earlier writings Bruce's views on the Atonement are pronouncedly "orthodox." In "The Humiliation of Christ," for example, he clings to the word "penalty" and repeats it again and again as expressing the character of the suffering of Christ. Other words frequently appearing are "imputation" and "satisfaction," though, indeed, there is an endeavour to remove from the latter all the offensiveness in which it has not seldom been dressed up. It is Bruce's employment of such terms as these, and his support of the theory of redemption by substitute, which lie behind the following remarks of Dr R. Mackintosh:

"It is strange that an eminent theologian late in the nineteenth century should be found defending such views, and passing strange that the theologian doing so should be Alexander Balmain Bruce. This strain of teaching marks the extreme point towards orthodoxy, if not towards reaction, in a somewhat varied theological development." (3)

The gradual change in a "liberal" direction which came over Bruce's

mind is apparent when we turn to such a work as the "Apologetics." Here the terms we have mentioned -- "penalty," "imputation," "satisfaction" -- are absent. In fairness, of course, the aim of this particular book must be borne in mind. It is not so much a book for convinced believers as one for sympathizing doubters, and it therefore obtrudes as little as possible of the purely theological. Nevertheless, it reveals that distaste for over-definition which we have already noted in Bruce's later books on the Gospels, and which is apparent in his later writings generally.

D. BRUCE'S WORK AS APOLOGIST.

Introduction: the Aim and Method of His Apologetic Work.

(a) In his recent valuable book, "Christian Apologetics," Dr Alan Richardson has an interesting discussion of the difference between Apology and Apologetics. Apology, as he points out, implies the defence of Christian truth; and particular apologies are works written to repel a specific charge or line of attack upon Christianity. Outstanding examples of such writings are the Apologies of Justin Martyr, Origen's "Contra Celsum," Aquinas's "Summa Contra Gentiles," and Butler's "Analogy." Apologetics, as distinct from Apology, is, in Dr Richardson's view, the study of "the ways and means" of defending Christian truth. Accordingly, it is not the task of Apologetics, as a theological discipline, to meet a particular attack upon Christianity or to add one more volume to the library of Christian Apologies:

"Apologetics deals with the relationship of the Christian faith to the wider sphere of man's "secular" knowledge -- philosophy, science, history, sociology, and so on -- with a view to showing that faith is not at variance with the truth that these enquiries

have uncovered. In every age it is necessary that this task should be undertaken; in a period of rapid developments in scientific knowledge and of vast social change it becomes a matter of considerable urgency. Thus, apologetics as a theological discipline is a kind of intellectual stock-taking on the part of Christian thinkers, who may be described as attempting to reckon up their assets in the light of contemporary philosophical thought and scientific knowledge."(1)

As expounded by Dr Richardson, Apologetics is primarily a study undertaken by Christians for Christians. Only as a "secondary function" does he admit the service it may render to honest inquirers, who would gladly acknowledge themselves Christians if only their doubts could be removed, and who might well be helped by overhearing the discussion of Apologetics among Christian thinkers.(2)

Bruce understands the primary aim of Apologetics to be what Dr Richardson has described as its secondary aspect. Again and again, in one form of words or another, he tells us that the aim he set before himself was to succour distressed faith. The apologist, in his view, has nothing to do with undisturbed faith; nor has he anything to do with wilful unbelief. But there is a middle class, great or small, -- the class of those who more or less fully sympathize with the ethical and spiritual ideals of Christianity, but who are intellectually troubled as to its grounds and proofs. These the apologist may help. Honest doubt is a lonely thing, and every tempted soul (doubter or other) is inclined to think that no one else ever passed through his dark valley. Sympathy may come as a surprise to the heart; and in the spirit of sympathy explanations may be offered which will bring relief, and hard or unwelcome truths may be vindicated with some hope of success.

To this conception of the apologist's vocation Bruce has given at least three notable expressions. (1) The first is in the Preface to

the second edition (1886) of "The Chief End of Revelation":

"Some in our day seem to imagine that an apologist should be a sort of prize-fighter for the faith. By believers of this type a man is applauded according as he deals in hard blows at opponents, asserts his opinions with serene self-confidence, and professes to prove all things great or small with mathematical certainty. My idea of the apologist's function is different. His vocation is neither to confound infidels nor to gratify the passions of coarse dogmatists, but to help men of an ingenuous spirit, troubled with doubts bred of philosophy or science, while morally in sympathy with believers."

(ii) The second statement appears in the Preface to "Apologetics," where Bruce says of the book:

"It is an apologetic presentation of the Christian faith with reference to whatever in our intellectual environment makes faith difficult at the present time. The constituency to which it addresses itself consists neither of dogmatic believers for whose satisfaction it seeks to show how triumphantly their faith can at all possible points of assault be defended, nor of dogmatic unbelievers whom it strives to convince or confound, but of men whose sympathies are with Christianity, but whose faith is "stifled or weakened by anti-Christian prejudices of varied nature and origin."

(iii) The third and fullest expression of Bruce's aim as apologist is found in the second introductory chapter of the same volume:

"Apologetic, as I conceive it, is a preparer of the way of faith, an aid to faith against doubts whencesoever arising, especially such as are engendered by philosophy and science. Its specific aim is to help men of ingenuous spirit who, while assailed by such doubts, are morally in sympathy with believers. It addresses itself to such as are drawn in two directions, towards and away from Christ, as distinct from those with whom it is confirmed either in unbelief or in faith. Defence presupposes a foe, but the foe is not the dogmatic infidel who has finally made up his mind that Christianity is a delusion, but anti-Christian thought in the believing man's own heart. "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." The wise apologist instinctively shuns conflict with dogmatic unbelief as futile. He desiderates and assumes in those for whom he writes a certain fairness and openness of mind, a generous spirit under hostile bias which he seeks to remove, a bias due to no ignoble cause, animated even in its hostility by worthy motives. But, on the other hand, with equal decision he avoids partisanship with dogmatic belief. He regards himself as a defender of the catholic faith, not as a hired advocate or special pleader for a particular theological system." (i)
Such is Bruce's conception of the primary aim of Apologetics. It has to be noted, however, that he by no means overlooks what Dr Richardson takes to be the primary aim. In the very nature of the case his work was bound to have a strengthening and clarifying effect upon faith itself. This he recognizes when, in the last of these quotations, he speaks of the foe as "anti-Christian thought in the believing man's own heart." Elsewhere he has given a definition of the function of Apologetic which approximates closely to that of Dr Richardson:

"Speaking generally, the function of apologetic is to adjust faith to its intellectual environment. There may be no real antagonism between faith and its environment, but till the adjustment has been made there may seem to be, and the impression that there is, even though ill founded, may be as prejudicial as if it were well founded." (1)

We may say, then, that Bruce's aim was to succour distressed faith, and that he set about doing this by endeavouring to adjust faith to its intellectual environment. Here we come to the question of method.

(b) Regarding the method of his Apologetics Bruce states:

"The aim dictates the method. It leads to the selection of topics of pressing concern, burning questions; leaving on one side, or throwing into the background, subjects which formerly occupied the foreground in apologetic treatises." (2)

Here Bruce is referring to the fact that formerly Apologetics was treated by Protestant theologians as an introduction to Dogmatics. Before beginning to set forth in order the doctrines revealed in Scripture, the dogmatic theologian had to prove that the Bible is, or contains, a Divine revelation, duly authenticated by miracles and prophecies attached to it as evidential adjuncts; that it is throughout so inspired as to be absolutely infallible, so that every statement it contains can be confidently appealed to in proof of doctrines; and that we have in the collection of sacred writings a fixed, certain

(2)Apol., Preface, pp.vf.
canon, on no account to be added to, or subtracted from. To make the service of Apologetics, as the handmaid of Dogmatics, more complete, these evidences of "revealed religion" were generally prefaced by some lectures on the evidences of "natural religion" in the form of proofs of the Being and the attributes of the God specially revealed in the Bible. (1)

Personal experience as much as intellectual insight had taught Bruce that this apologetic method was entirely antiquated. There had been a revolutionary change in the intellectual environment. (2) Seldom, indeed, has there been a greater change than that which took place in Bruce's own lifetime. So far as theology is concerned, the change may be said to have had three aspects. (i) Men got a new way of viewing the universe as the product of evolution. (ii) They got a new view of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament, as the result of the modern science of Biblical Criticism. (iii) They got a new view of the religious history of mankind as the result of the equally modern science of Comparative Religion. In all three respects faith had to adjust itself to the new situation. As Bruce understood that situation, the questions which faith was asking and which an up-to-date Apologetic had to answer were such as these: Is Christ's idea of God as a Father, and of man as His son, contradicted or confirmed by the evolutionary theory? Can the critical view of the Old Testament literature be held compatibly with the recognition of Israel as a people having a special vocation within the sphere of religion, and of the Hebrew Scriptures as giving us a reliable account of that people's history and its religious significance? Can the idea of Israel as an elect people be held compatibly with a just view of the religions of other peoples, her contemporaries, and of the

character of God as One who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all His works? Finally, as Jesus Christ is for every Christian the central object of trust and reverence and the ultimate authority in religion, all questions relating to the Christian origins had become of supreme concern for the apologist. Can Jesus be known? Was He the Christ? Did He rise from the dead? With what right did the primitive Church worship Him as Lord? Here, as also in connection with the election of Israel, faith had to reckon with something besides criticism or impartial historical investigation, viz., with a naturalistic philosophy which assumed that there can be no breach of continuity in any sphere, no miracle, physical or moral, not even a sinless man, that all religions alike are naturally evolved, and that all men, Jesus not excepted, are the product of their time, — possibly greater than all who went before, but not unsurpassable by those who come after.

Such was the new intellectual environment of faith; and such were the "burning questions" arising therefrom with which Bruce as apologist felt called upon to deal. In order of publication his apologetic writings are these: (1) "The Chief End of Revelation", (1881); (2) "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels", (1886); (3) "Apologetics; or, Christianity Defensively Stated," (1892); (4) "The Providential Order of the World," (1897); and (5) "The Moral Order of the World in Ancient and Modern Thought," (1899). To these has to be added the apologetic essay entitled "Ferdinand Christian Baur and his Theory of the Origin of Christianity and of the New Testament Writings," (1885).

(c) In our study of Bruce's work as apologist we do not propose to treat these writings chronologically. They all fit easily and naturally into a framework provided by the "Apologetics," which is not
only the most comprehensive and the most important of the series, but, in our judgment, the best single volume for getting at Bruce's thought in its maturity and completeness. His method in this book is as follows. He first of all lays down, as clearly and concisely as he can, those facts concerning Christ, as a historical personage, in regard to which, among men of practically all schools of thought, there is general concurrence. These facts are taken as provisionally allowed. When looked into, they are found to imply a certain theory of the Universe, a theory which requires to be expounded, first of all in itself, and then in contrast with certain antichristian theories of the Universe. But further, the Christian facts are known to be connected with a history of the Jewish people stretching back into the past, and also with certain historical persons and events of the first century of our era. The treatment of the subject can only be complete, therefore, when these "historical presuppositions" are discussed in their bearing on the significance of the Christian facts, and when the Hebrew and Christian records are properly estimated. In developing this method Bruce found that his material fell naturally into three Books. (i) The first deals with the Christian facts that may be taken as provisionally admitted by all parties, and with the Christian and other theories of the Universe around which speculative thought has gravitated. Here we have what Bruce terms the "philosophical presuppositions" of Christianity. (ii) The second Book is devoted to the "historical presuppositions" of Christianity, and embraces the important questions connected with Hebrew History, Religion, and Literature in their relation to Christ. (iii) The third Book, on the Christian Origins, covers the main controversies bearing on the historical rise of Christianity. When we turn to Bruce’s other apologetic writings, we find that the two volumes of
Gifford Lectures can very suitably be considered in connection with the "philosophical presuppositions" of Christianity, that "The Chief End of Revelation" can be taken into account in connection with the "historical presuppositions," and that "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels" and the essay on Baur fall naturally into the section on the Christian Origins. Such is the plan we propose to adopt in our study.

I. THE PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

One of the fundamental questions facing Bruce was how to deal with those whose prejudices against Christianity were of a philosophical character. He has given us his answer in Book I of the "Apologetics," entitled "Theories of the Universe, Christian and Anti-Christian," and in the two volumes of his Gifford Lectures. In these writings he is not concerned with those who deny the existence of God. Nor is he concerned with those who might wish merely to take for granted the being of God and pass on at once to consider the positive evidences of the Christian Faith. His message is for those who are questioning as to what God is:

"Taking for granted the being of God will not do much for us. The great matter is not that God is, but what He is. All men, in one fashion or another, admit the existence of somewhat that may be called God. Where they differ widely is in their conceptions of God's nature and character. And what the Christian apologist is concerned to show is not that a God of some sort exists, but that the Christian idea of God is worthier to be received than that of the pantheist or the deist, or of any rival theory of the universe."(1)

Bruce, accordingly, shows first of all what the Christian idea of God is. Christ taught that God is a Father, and that man is His son, and that therefore there is a close affinity of nature between God and man. Bruce then takes up the task of showing that this idea of

(1)Apol., p.44.
God is more worthy of being received than that of any noteworthy rival system. In the first volume of his Gifford Lectures he shows that the Christian theory is amply verified in the Providential Order of the World. The most recent science makes man the consummation of the world-process and the key to the meaning of the whole. Bruce, accordingly, makes man the basis of his theistic argument. In man and in human history the God who is at the heart of things is revealed as a Being of intellect, purpose, and will; a Being also of moral personality, whose vital principles are justice and love. The second volume of the Gifford Lectures is of a historical character, consisting of a survey and examination of the idea of a Moral or Providential Order in ancient and modern thought.


(a) The Christian Facts. True to his purpose, Bruce begins on common ground with the honest doubter and works out from that beginning. He takes as true those representations of Jesus in which the Synoptics agree and which, apart from the minutiae of criticism, impress everyone as real. If his statement of the Christian Facts appears somewhat meagre, it must be borne in mind that the class of persons whom he wishes to instruct might be repelled by a stronger presentation.

(1) The fundamental fact Bruce considers to be Christ's love to the sinful. It was not primarily a new doctrine. Revelation does not necessarily consist in the communication of instruction. Jesus was, indeed, a great original Teacher, but He was greater in His love:

"His love was the great novelty, the primary revelation He had to make -- a revelation made, as all God's greatest revelations have been made, by deeds rather than by words."(1)

(1)Apol., p.48.
By His beneficent love Christ proclaimed the fact that His religion was a "religion of redemption, a religion which announces and applies a new divine power of love to cure moral evil." (1)

(2) Christ's works of healing are the second great fact:

"Some of the best authenticated narratives in the Gospels are accounts of cures wrought instantaneously on the bodies of sick persons." (2)

These works of healing show the comprehensiveness of Christ's conception of salvation:

"Nothing lay out of His way which in any respect concerned the wellbeing of man." (3)

(3) Next comes Christ's idea of God and of man. (1) His "doctrine of God was not elaborate." He taught it "by a single word," viz., "Father." (4) (ii) He thought of men as of infinite value, even the most degraded of them, and freely associated with them to the scandal of respectable people. But His moral standard for men was high, as was fitting for those who were sons of God. "God's sons must be God-like." (5) Christ's marvellous optimistic humanitarianism combines with this ethical ideal to elevate man to a high position in the universe.

(4) The facts stated up to this point give rise to the question: Who was Jesus? All will subscribe to the creed that He was at least an extraordinary man, a religious genius." (6) The Church, however, believes Him to be God; and if this be true, His appearance as man was an Incarnation:

"[It was] God entering into the world in human form and under the limited conditions of humanity, as a redemptive force, to battle with the moral evil that afflicts mankind. If we form the highest idea possible of divine love and grace, the amazing thing will not appear utterly incredible. On the physical and metaphysical side the doctrine may seem to present a difficulty bordering on impossibility, but on the moral side it is worthy of

(1) Apol., p. 49. (2) Ibid. (3) Ibid., p. 49. (4) Ibid. (5) Ibid., p. 51. (6) Ibid.
all acceptation. The world has a religious interest in the faith that Jesus is divine; for what can be more welcome than the idea that God is like Him, loves men as He loved them — nay, is Himself personally present and active in that Good Friend of publicans and sinners?"(1)

Speaking of the title "Son of God" as used by Jesus, Bruce remarks that it "expresses the consciousness of intimate relations to God;" but adds, "not necessarily exclusive, possibly common to Jesus with other men, but certainly implying affinity of nature between God and man, and great possibilities of loving fellowship."(2) Here we observe Bruce's characteristic ethical interest combining with the interest of practical compromise and dominating the speculative and philosophical. In a footnote he even candidly quotes Martineau, to the effect that the use of the definite article by Jesus before "Son" and "Father" is a feature due to the influence of a later time, "when the Logos theory had need to distinguish two constituents or participants in the Godhead."(3) In the text, however, Bruce's own view is that the article "seems to express an absolute antithesis and suggest a unique relation."(4)

But did Jesus think and call Himself the Christ? Bruce mentions Martineau and others who have declined to admit that He identified Himself with the Messiah or allowed His disciples so to identify Him. Martineau thought that the title was given to Him by the Primitive Church, and was the earliest attempt of the Church at a theory of His Person. He considered that the adoption of the Messianic title by Jesus would have been inconsistent with His modesty and with the unity and harmony of His spiritual nature.(5) In his reply Bruce points out that there is here no valid ground for hesitation in thinking that Jesus regarded Himself as the Christ. The office of Messiah, as our

Lord understood it, involved submission and renunciation rather than self-advancement. But even if it should appear that Jesus did not call Himself Christ, He was the Christ. "He did Messiah's work, and that is another of the essential Christian facts."\(^{(1)}\)

(5) Jesus proclaimed and inaugurated a new order known as the Kingdom of God. "That kingdom is a chief end for God as well as for men."\(^{(2)}\) In His sayings regarding the Divine providence Christ taught in effect "that the universe has a moral end, and that the creation is an instrument in God's hands for the advancement of that end -- the establishment of His kingdom of love."\(^{(3)}\)

(6) Bruce concludes his enumeration of the Christian facts by an account of Christ's high doctrine of sin and of holiness, revealed in conflict with Pharisaism and exemplified in His own Person.\(^{(4)}\)

(b) Out of the Christian facts so stated Bruce gets the Christian Theory of the Universe, which in turn is to serve as a norm for comparison with other philosophies. It consists of the following points.

(1) God is a Personal Being, the term "personal" being used in essentially the same sense as when we apply it to man. The ground assigned for this is that the relations asserted by Jesus to exist between God and man imply an essential likeness between the Divine and the human natures. Hence, since man is a being who reasons and wills, and distinguishes between right and wrong, God also possesses reason and will and a moral nature. "He is a rational, ethical personality, self-conscious and self-determining."\(^{(5)}\)

(2) Man, taught by Jesus to address God as "Father", occupies a very exalted place:

\(^{(1)}\) Apol., p.55. \(^{(2)}\) Ibid. \(^{(3)}\) Ibid. \(^{(4)}\) Cf. Ibid., pp.56f 
\(^{(5)}\) Ibid., p.59.
"Nothing is more characteristic of any theory of the universe than the place it assigns to man."(1)

Pantheism and Materialism degrade man. Christian philosophy, on the other hand, exalts him. Here Bruce would have had the support of St Augustine, whose favourite exclamation, "O homo, agnosce dignitatem tuam," passed as a principle into mediaeval theology.(2) We can see how this elevation of man is inwoven in the very substance of the ethical teaching of Jesus. It must also have been a moving principle of His self-sacrifice, as it is of the self-sacrifice of His followers. Bruce claims the Christian doctrine of man as the great practical foundation of the hope of a future life. If God is our Father, He cannot be the Father of the dead, but of the living.

"The only true convincing ground of faith in eternal life is the dignity of human nature, and the fact that a man at his worst is a son of God."(3)

In our New Testament section on the "Christianity of Christ" we had occasion to criticize Bruce at this point on the ground that it was Christian disciples rather than men in general whom our Lord taught to address God as Father.(4) In other words, "Father" implies not only a paternal attitude on God's part, but a filial attitude on man's part. Where this filial attitude is lacking, man may well be regarded as only potentially a son of God; for the latter term must surely be given its highest spiritual connotation. The fact that man is even potentially a son of God would, however, still give him a uniquely exalted place in creation; but it could hardly support a stronger inference than that he is potentially an heir of eternal life. However this may be, it is not in man's inherent sonship, as Bruce would appear to hold, but in his experience of sonship that the roots of Christian hope lie. As Dr H. R. Mackintosh has put it, "The

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(3) Apol., p.60. (4) Vide supra, pp.112-116.
true basis of exohatological certainty lies in positive religion."(1)

(3) The fact of sin must be included in the Christian philosophy. Bruce's statement on the matter appears to us sound and balanced. (i) Sin is a reality. All minimizing views which treat sin as a triviality, an infirmity, a necessity, or as the negative side of good, are characterized as insulting to human nature:

"They virtually represent man as a being so weak that it is idle to expect virtue from him; as a victim of necessity, who only deludes himself when he imagines that he is free; as a thing not a person, as a human animal not a rational and responsible creature. Christianity commits no such offence against man's dignity."(2)

(ii) Sin does not originate with God. This is proved by the attitude of Christ, who came into the world to wage war with it. This attitude Christ could not have taken up if sin had not been eternally contrary to the Divine will. The same thing comes out also in His beautiful saying, "There shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."(3) (iii) Sin is not to be conceived of as a necessity, a fatal, incurable vice of nature, inevitable for all men. Rather, from the fact that Jesus represented Himself as a moral physician, we are to regard it as a disease "foreign to the normal condition of human nature,"(4) and capable of both prevention and cure. The attitude of Christian philosophy is that sin might not have been, and that, existing as it does, it does not do so necessarily. How it ever came to be is a mystery:

"The best and wisest solution, with whatever difficulties it may be beset, is to conceive of sin as the result of a wrong choice on the part of primitive man. This is the view quaintly embodied in the story of the temptation and fall of Adam in the book of Genesis. In its essential features that product of ancient wisdom still approves itself to our minds as the best that can be said on the subject."(5)

Sin being the outcome of a free moral personality, the guilt it

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entails is consonant with the dignity of the nature that commits it. (iv) What of the relationship between sin and physical evil, disease, pain, sorrow, calamity, death? Bruce inclines to the view of Schleiermacher that the collective evil in the world is to be regarded as the penalty of sin, social evil directly, physical evil indirectly. He sums up thus:

"Christianity sees in the world both evil and good; evil because man hath sinned, and God desired that man sinning should find sin to be a bitter thing; good because God is gracious and dealeth not with men according to their deserts; the evil and the good serving the opposite purposes of judgment and mercy, and forming together one redemptive economy, working in different ways towards the fulfilment of God's gracious purpose in Christ, to which the whole constitution of nature and the whole course of history are subservient."(1)

(4) God stands to the world in the relation of Creator. In stating the doctrine of creation Bruce refers to the fact that some Christian theists of modern times have held it possible that the universe might be the creature and the abode of God, even though it never came into being, but was, like God, eternal. On this position he has an interesting comment:

"Possibly it might guard all Christian interests to say that the world might have had a beginning, and that if eternal it was so by God's will. It may not be contrary to Christian theism to say that the world did always exist, but only to say that it must have existed from eternity, and that God could no more exist without a world than the world could exist without God. But it must be admitted that a creation implying a historical beginning most effectually guards the supremacy of God, and the dependence of the world upon Him."(2)

The idea of a world eternally existing leads, in truth, to one of two antichristian conceptions. The one is the Greek idea of ὁ ἄόν, the raw material of the world, which is supposed to have existed first as chaos, and at a subsequent time to have been shaped by God into cosmos. Here we are brought to an incurable dualism. The other conception is the pantheistic one of the world as eternally flowing out of God.

(1)Apol., pp.64f. (2)Ibid., p.65.
Under this latter view creation becomes a necessary emanation, excluding from God freedom if not consciousness, and God becomes identified with the universe, differing from it only in name. The Christian doctrine is that of Divine creation. But this doctrine, as Dr Whale has pointed out, "is not a cosmological theory, but an expression of our adoring sense of the transcendent majesty of God," an affirmation that "all things, though definitely distinct from Him, are utterly dependent on Him." (1)

(5) God is Sustainer as well as Creator. Here we have the Christian doctrine of Providence. The world was not only brought into being by God but is guided and ruled by Him in its onward progress. In stating this doctrine Bruce refers to the "intensely religious" Biblical mode of contemplating the world, "in which nature and second causes are virtually blotted out, and God becomes all in all," — a kind of "biblical pantheism." (2) We doubt if Bruce has quite caught the Biblical idea, which is eminently theistic, not pantheistic. God is thought of, not as a living soul within nature, but as One who is above nature and to whom nature in all its details is subject. Ideas of cause and purpose are everywhere present, but it is taken for granted that such cause and purpose are personal and reveal everywhere God. As Dr A. B. Davidson put it:

"Two beliefs characterize the Hebrew mind from the beginning: first, the strong belief in causation — every change on the face of nature, or in the life of men or nations, must be due to a cause; and, secondly, the only conceivable causality is a personal agent." (3)

The dominion of God over nature, although held to be absolute, is not thought of as arbitrary or capricious; it is orderly. A good example of the Biblical conception is the annual cycle of the seasons. (4)

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(2) Apol., p. 66.
The last point in the Christian philosophy, as expounded by Bruce, is its hope for the future. It is the hope of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The hope is grounded on the redemptive work of Christ and on the idea of the Kingdom of God which He came to establish. That work and that Kingdom must be perfected, and the essence of Christian hope lies in looking forward to, and believing in, this perfection.

2. Examination of Theories Antagonistic to the Christian.

By drawing out and emphasizing the salient points of the Christian theory of the universe Bruce has constructed a standard by which he is enabled to measure theories that are antichristian. Accordingly, in the five remaining chapters (III to VII) of Book I of his "Apologetics" he proceeds to deal with the main opposing philosophies, viz., Pantheism, Materialism, Deism, Modern Speculative Theism, and Agnosticism. As a critic he shows himself tolerant, widely read, and thoroughly abreast of contemporary speculation and research. At the same time, he is not afraid to carry the war into the enemy's camp and point out the thinly veiled impotencies and contradictions inhering in the various systems. The discussion as a whole is fair and in good perspective. It is obvious, however, that it is not in the sphere of pure philosophy that Bruce has turned out his best work. He does not reveal that delight in abstract thought which is a mark of the born philosopher. These studies of the various philosophical explanations of the universe have not been a "spiritual necessity" to him in the sense in which there was a personal need for returning to the "evangelic fountainhead" in the Gospels. Hence his criticisms occasionally appear somewhat external and incidental. When he is dealing with the Person and teaching of Christ, there is a deeper

insight accompanied by a noticeable intellectual and spiritual glow.

(a) Pantheism, mainly as developed by Spinoza and Hegel, is expounded with a fairness and candour that give all the more weight to considerations subsequently adduced to show the untenableness of the theory. It is an airy, intangible system, protean in its varying forms, and difficult to define. Unlike Materialism, it speaks much of a God and even appears to make him all in all -- the universal substance, as in Spinoza’s system; the absolute all-pervading spirit, as in more modern systems such as Hegel’s. But the God of Pantheism is no being in particular, distinct from the world, and existing before a world was. God is simply the ideality of the world, and the world is the reality of God. It is therefore absurd, from the pantheistic point of view, to speak of the personality of God. There is neither personality, consciousness, nor will in God, except in so far as God attains to these in man in the course of the great world process.

There is, indeed, an objective reason in the world, manifest in all those adaptations of organism to environment and of the various parts of an organism to each other, from which old-fashioned theists drew those evidences of design which constituted their staple argument for the being of God. There is also -- as Fichte, for example, recognized -- a moral order observable in the world which presents the appearance, on a large view of history, of a moral government bent upon bringing about a correspondence between character and lot in the experience of nations and, to a certain extent, of individuals. But though there is an aspect of design, there is no Designer; though there is a moral order, there is no Orderer. The reason in the world is unconscious; the moral order of the world is blind.

(1) Cf. Apol, pp. 77f. As Bruce points out, Hegel’s disciples and interpreters have not been agreed as to the religious tendency of his doctrines.
Before proceeding to criticize the pantheistic theory, Bruce very fairly points out that its strength lies in the fact that it has attractions for all parts of our spiritual nature. (1) "Its fascination for the intellect lies in its imposing conception of the universe as a unity." (2) All existence is traced to one fountain-head, and all mysteries are reduced to a single all-comprehending one, that of God's eternal being. (2) "Its fascination for the religious feeling lies in its doctrine of divine immanence." (2) The God of Pantheism is not, like that of Deism, outside the world, but within it, its life and soul, present in everything that is or that lives. (3) "Its fascination for the heart lies in its doctrines of necessity and of the perishableness of all individual life." (3) These tenets supply an opiate to deaden the feeling of pity awakened by the contemplation of the world's sin and misery.

Bruce criticizes Pantheism from three points of view -- intellectual, moral, and religious.

(1) From the intellectual point of view Pantheism must be judged as conspicuously unsatisfactory in its treatment of the personality of God and the creation of the world. (1) It meets the theistic assertion of Divine personality with the counter-assertion that personality is not compatible with the idea of the Absolute. By way of reply to this, Bruce avails himself of Lotze's idea that the human or finite personality is less complete than the infinite or Divine, and that so far from personality not being predicable of God, it is only of Him, in the most perfect sense, it can be predicated. (4)

(ii) The creation of the world, viewed as involving a beginning in time, is admittedly a very difficult conception. Such puzzling questions as these can be asked: How was God occupied before He

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(1) Apol., p.79. (2) Ibid. (3) Ibid., p.80. (4) Cf. Ibid., p.84.
created the world? Why did God make a world, if He could do without one throughout eternal ages? Does not creation violate the absoluteness of God? Pantheism gets rid of these troublesome questions by adopting as its doctrine "that God by necessity produces eternally all things possible." But it escapes difficulties in one direction, only to encounter others in another direction. Bruce discusses two in particular. First, Pantheism gives really no account of the existence of the universe. It has no answer to the question as to what there is in the idea of the Absolute that would lead us to expect the existence of this world, or of any world. Second, it seems to leave no place for the existence of a world in which there is progress, development, evolution. Change, however, is involved in the very idea of a world, and the actual world is undeniably a world full of change. With reference to God's relation to the world, we must, says Bruce, choose between two alternatives:

"Either to save His absoluteness we must assert that He stands in no relation whatever to the world, whether as creator or as preserver; or we must admit that His eternal being is somehow reconcilable with change, that without prejudice to His absoluteness He can, as Hebrew prophets teach, create new things -- living beings, thinking men -- at a given time, in a given part of the world. The admission covers the theistic idea of creation in time, at least in detail; and there seems to be no cogent reason why it should not cover the idea of a historical commencement of the world as a whole."

In other words, if life or man may begin to be, why not a universe?

(2) Bruce considers that it is on the moral side that the weakness of Pantheism is most easily discerned. Here we have a highly characteristic judgment. While he reveals a notable power of intellectual sympathy with the positions of opponents, Bruce has no moral affinities except for that which is morally true. Hence his real horror of Pantheism. At three points pantheistic anthropology

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is shown to be hostile to Christian thought. (1) In its general conception of man's place in the world, Pantheism degrades man. This holds good even of that fascinating type of theory which makes man the medium through which the absolute Being attains to self-consciousness. Individual men are degraded into the position of mere temporary instruments. (ii) Spinoza makes it clear that for him "human freedom is a dream, moral distinctions purely relative, and good and bad men alike entitled to recognition as constituent parts of a universe in which all that is real is perfect." (2) Human actions of whatever nature are subject to the inexorable law of causality. (iii) Pantheism looks on the hope of individual immortality as a delusion. (3)

(3) From the religious point of view the deity of Pantheism is too vague and intangible to be a satisfactory object of worship. The human heart craves something or someone more comprehensible, definite, and congenial than Spinoza's universal substance, or Hegel's Urgeist, or Fichte's moral order. Hence, as Bruce says:

"Wherever the pantheistic theory is accepted, polytheism, in a more or less refined form, prevails. The One in All for practical religious purposes breaks up into the Many; the modes of the Absolute take the place of the Absolute itself as objects of worship." (4)

(b) While minds of metaphysical bent may tend towards Pantheism, it is those of more matter-of-fact nature that are drawn to Materialism. Bruce's chapter on this subject is specially good. Materialism is judged to be the most formidable opponent of the Christian theory of the universe and is pronounced the foe which, at the time of writing, was in the ascendant. (5) Now, half a century after Bruce's death, this philosophy can hardly be said to occupy so

prominent a position.

Bruce's exposition is prefaced by some discussion of Materialism and modern science. (1) The successes achieved in the physical sciences tended in a materialistic direction. Not that science is, or was, in itself atheistic in spirit or tendency, though Jacobi said that it was the interest of science that there should be no God. (2) This latter statement is true only in the sense that science cannot allow the idea of a God or a Creator to be interposed as a barrier in the way of its pursuit of natural causes. Science has certainly no interest in proving the existence of a God; it leaves the Divine existence to look after itself and confines itself to its proper work, the investigation of the laws of nature. But neither, on the other hand, is science as such impelled by any atheistic animus. It does not propose to itself as its chief end, or even as a subordinate end, to expel God from the universe, but simply takes the liberty of pursuing its own proper end without inquiring at every turn how its findings square with existing theological opinions. But it is nevertheless true that science, prosecuting its investigations in this spirit, has made discoveries and, still more, has put forward hypotheses, which have been welcomed by materialists as enabling them to make out an extremely plausible case for their theory of the universe which, excluding creation and providence, leaves nothing for God to do, and therefore dispenses with His existence altogether. (3)

The materialistic theory, briefly and roughly stated, is that no God is needed to account for the universe, nothing but the primary elements of matter, atoms with their essential properties:

"Matter and force have built up the universe, the former being the stuff out of which the structure has been raised, the latter the

architect by whose unconscious skill it has been shaped into a cosmos. The world-process is throughout an affair of mechanism.\(^{(1)}\)

Out of the eternal atoms, accordingly, sprang at a given time, amid favouring circumstances, not by creation or the supernatural act of some fancied Deity, but by natural law, the primordial forms of life; and out of life once given in the rudest germ, sprang by a slow, insensibly progressive development, all higher forms of animated existence, till the process of evolution terminated in man\(^{(2)}\). Thus does Materialism, monopolizing the results of modern science, undertake the construction of the Cosmos without a God. In his more detailed exposition Bruce notices two forms of this philosophy --- the crude, and the qualified or "prudent"\(^{(3)}\). Büchner and Vogt are taken as representatives of the former, seeing that for them thought stands in much the same relation to the brain as bile does to the liver. The "prudent" form embraces two types, one represented by Bain, who regarded matter and mind as the two sides of a "double-faced unity"\(^{(4)}\); and the other by Clifford, who suggested a "mind-stuff" in all matter, thus advocating something similar to the beseelt matter of Haeckel and the perceptive monads of Leibnitz\(^{(5)}\).

Materialism is subjected by Bruce to a careful criticism. It would be difficult to better his exposure of the element of pure dogmatism in it. With regard to Clifford's theory of "mind-stuff", he points out very pertinently that it is "easy to bring out of matter what you have once put into it," but that to ascribe to matter feeling and thought "is to abandon rather than to defend materialism."\(^{(6)}\)

On the question of Life and Consciousness there is condensed within a few pages the result of a large amount of close and fruitful

\(^{(1)}\)Apol., pp.93f. \(^{(2)}\)Cf. ibid. \(^{(3)}\)Cf. ibid., p.96. \\(^{(4)}\)Cf. ibid., p.98. \(^{(5)}\)Cf. ibid. \(^{(6)}\)Ibid., pp.98f.
thinking. We are disposed to agree with Bruce's statement that, in maintaining the belief that with God is the fountain of life, "it is not necessary to regard the first emergence of life as due to the immediate and absolute causality of God apart from all natural conditions." Certainly not, because inorganic preparation preceded organic life. When, however, he adds that "this view may eliminate miracle, or the purely supernatural, but not the divine activity which underlies the whole," we feel that he is on much less sure ground. Inorganic preparation for the first life by natural causes is not identical with the production of the first life by natural causes. We shall revert to this matter at a later point. Bruce completes his criticism of Materialism by exposing the crudity of its ethics. It fails to find any objective basis of morality. By its negation of freedom, and consequently of responsibility, it robs life of its real worth. For religion it substitutes a worship of ideals.

(c) Into Bruce's treatment of eighteenth century Deism it is unnecessary to enter. This philosophy has had its day and is not likely to rise from the dead. In Bruce's own lifetime, however, the same tendency was represented by what went by the name of Modern Speculative Theism. This system of thought concerning God, the world, and their relations was better known on the Continent than in this country, though Theodore Parker, of America, and Miss Cobbe and F. W. Newman among ourselves, were among its most prominent expositors. The similarities between the two philosophies Bruce summarizes thus:

"In the more recent system there is the same rejection of revelation, the same reduction of religion to a few elementary beliefs made accessible to all by the light of nature, the same

optimistic view of the world, the same naturalistic conception
of God's relation to the world, the same sceptical attitude
towards the miraculous in every shape and sphere." (1)

Yet the leading expositors of the modern system were very anxious not
to be confounded with deists. Hence the choice of the title theists.
The difference between the two, however, was to a considerable extent
"one of tone rather than of principle." (2) By the presence of a warm,
emotional temperament what is really a cold, hard system was made to
appear better than it is seen to be when laid bare as to its essential
contents. The chief distinction between Speculative Theism and the
old Deism lies in the fact that, broadly speaking, "the former
conceives of God's relation to the world as one of immanence, and the
latter as one of transcendence." (3) In a characteristic judgment Bruce
says that a modern Christian can have no hesitation in preferring the
former of the two contrasted views. (4) We shall argue below that the
Christian conception is rather that of the immanence of a transcendent
God. (5)

When we look into the matter, we soon discover that the Christian
theory of the universe and that of Speculative Theism part company.
In the latter God, while not to be confounded with the world, as in
Pantheism, "is still so far one with the world that His activity is
rigidly confined within the course of nature." (6) Without a world there
would be no God, and outside the unbroken, adamantine chain of natural
causality there is no Divine action. The continuity of the natural
order cannot be broken through by interference of the supernatural.
There never was, never will be, never can be a miracle in the strict
sense of the word -- no miracle of creation, or of providence, or of
grace, or of virtue. Even the ideal humanity ascribed by Schleier-

to Christ is inadmissible in this system, because it is a breach of the continuity of the natural order, a perforation of the system of the universe by a moral miracle. The resulting conception of God Bruce has elsewhere expressed in these terms:

"God, in this system, is a prisoner in the world, has been a prisoner from all eternity, and to all eternity must remain in His prison. He is a shell-fish, with the universe for His shell; only that there is no opening for Him to get out, and how He got into the shell, or how the shell came to be there, no man can tell." Bruce points out that certain theists, notably Parker, have attempted to combine the two conceptions of immanence and transcendence, but that the result has been dangerously near to Pantheism. It is no surprise, accordingly, that Parker should hesitate to ascribe personality to God. On the whole, however, Speculative Theists affirm with more or less emphasis the personality of Deity and, along with it, His absolutely paternal goodness.

Three main criticisms are passed by Bruce on Speculative Theism. (i) It is a theology "in a state of very unstable equilibrium, tending to topple over into pantheism." The system is essentially an eclectic one, with elements borrowed from Pantheism and from Christianity, -- on the emotional side Christian, on the philosophical side pantheistic. (ii) It fails to meet the religious needs of human nature. In answer to the heart's craving, it gives us a personal God. But it only half yields to the craving; for we desire a God not only personal but free. This immanent Deity, immured within the prison walls of the universe, is after all as far off as the transcendent God of Deism. There is no great difference between such a Deity and the natura naturans of Spinoza. (iii) This theory utterly

fails to satisfy the craving of our minds for religious certainty. (1)
While some of its supporters plead for the right to pray, others consider all prayer absurd. The main difference between Miss Cobbe, Greg, Parker, and the others is in the degree of uncertainty:

"Take the goodness of God. The moral consciousness of Mr Parker enables him to trace throughout human history the constant action of an infinitely benignant Providence. Mr Greg's consciousness tells him a less flattering tale, bearing witness indeed to divine goodness, but finding it impossible to save that goodness from suspicion, except by a limitation of divine power, which makes it impossible to prevent many evils overtaking man. Or, take the great question of a future life, and what it will bring. Mr Parker believes in a life to come; in a heaven for man, beast, and bird; in an absolutely universal salvation from sin and misery. This comfortable creed Mr Greg is not able to accept. The future for him is "the great enigma." .... Take one other instance, the utility of prayer, a vital question in practical religion. Here, too, the prophets of the soul are at variance. Miss Cobbe declares prayer to be both legitimate and useful within the spiritual sphere, and neither legitimate nor useful within the physical. Mr Greg pronounces prayer theoretically indefensible in all spheres, therefore impossible for those who possess insight into the truth of things, but permissible and harmless for the weak and ignorant." (2)

(d) Agnosticism is the last of the antichristian philosophies to be considered by Bruce. This is a type of thought "fatal, or at least most hostile, to all earnest Christian faith;" (3) for it means that neither from nature, nor from history, nor from the human soul, can any hints of truth concerning God be derived. Bruce takes pains to point out that the agnostics, of whom in his day Spencer in Britain and Fiske in America were prominent representatives, do not call in question the existence of a great unknown Something to which may be given the name of God. What they doubt is the possibility of ascribing attributes to God on any valid, verifiable grounds. We may know that a God of some sort exists; but we may not know what He is, whether, for example, He is good, or just, or "a rewarder of them that seek after Him." (4) This is an attitude of mind to which the

apologist has to adapt himself, and Bruce proposes to do so in the following way:

"It would seem as if the way of wisdom were to abstain from all attempts at proving the divine existence, and, assuming as a datum that God is, to restrict our inquiries to what He is. Without pronouncing dogmatically as to the incompetency of any other method of procedure, I shall here adopt this policy, and confine myself to a few hints in answer to the question, How far is the Christian idea of God a hypothesis which all we know tends to verify?"(1)

The phrase "assuming as a datum that God is" is, perhaps, not a very happy one. But Bruce's meaning is clear. He will take common ground with such an agnostic as Spencer in assuming that there is, at the origin and base of all things, One Eternal Reality, and he will seek by argument to prove that this Reality is knowable and possesses the qualities which enter into the Christian idea of God.

What, then, can be adduced in support of the Christian theory? Bruce, on the whole, does not think highly of the historic "theistic proofs." Flint and Martineau, he says, "have at least tried well, whatever may be thought of their success."(2) His chief reason for passing over this line of argument is the absence of agreement among theists themselves as to the value of the various proofs, and their depreciation of one another's arguments.(3) He considers, moreover, that the conflicting views of the advocates of Theism were among the causes of the prevalence of Agnosticism in his day. The objections brought, now against the cosmological, now the teleological, and now the ontological argument, were apt to suggest to some minds that the theistic foundation is most uncertain and that the knowledge sought is unattainable.(4) Over against this Bruce places the significant fact that all theists agree as to the thing to be proved; and he considers that this harmony in belief ought to weigh more in our

judgment than variation in evidence. Not only so:

"It suggests the thought that the belief in God is antecedent to evidence, and that in our theistic reasonings we formulate proof of a foregone conclusion innate and inevitable."(1)

In our view Bruce has put the case against the theistic proofs too strongly. With reference to the cosmological proof, he states that "Kant maintained that the principle of causality cannot take us beyond the limits of the sensible world."(2) But Kant's disparagement of the cosmological argument was the outgrowth of his system, and is not identical with a complete rejection of that argument when properly stated. Anselm's peculiar ontological argument was not devised because he rejected the other lines of proof.(3) Both the ontological and the cosmological are consistent with the use of Kant's moral argument based on the Categorical Imperative, as is the ontological with the teleological argument as adjusted to the modern conception of evolution. The various arguments, indeed, have been used as converging lines of proof by the best theistic writers. As Dr Whale has said, "Their value lies in their cumulative testimony that God is."(4) With regard to the argument from order, Bruce might have made it plainer that it is not necessary to forfeit, but only to revise, the teleological principle, which many modern scientists have been willing to concede. In connection with his suggestive reference to unconscious belief "antecedent to evidence," he quotes with evident approval a saying of Lipsius that the various "proofs" for the being of God have their root, not in a priori thought, but in religious experience, and goes on to state:

"In our formal argumentation we feebly and blunderingly try to assign reasons for a belief that is rooted in our being."(7)

(6) Ibid., p.157.  (7) Ibid., p.158.
In such words we see something of Bruce's deep religious insight. They strike a peculiarly modern note and might be paralleled in the writings of prominent theologians of our own day. (1)

Having more or less turned aside the theistic proofs as inadequate, Bruce has still to show that the Christian idea of God is a hypothesis which all we know of the universe tends to verify. It will be recalled that one of the major difficulties with which, as an apologist, he had to deal, was presented by the scientific theory of evolution. His line of procedure — and here we have one of his notable contributions to Apologetics — is to show that the evolutionary view of the universe, far from frustrating faith at this point, is really a powerful ally. The Bible makes much of man, representing him as having a close affinity of nature with God. But evolution also exalts man, representing him as "the crown and consummation" of the great process of the ages. (2) What then? If man occupies so important a place in the universe, is it not reasonable, asks Bruce, to regard him as "a key to the meaning of the whole?" (3) — in other words, as a revelation of the nature of the great Being who is the ultimate ground and the real cause of all that is? On its very first page Scripture teaches that man was made in God's image, and, therefore, is like God. Bruce's great contention is that modern science justifies us in making, as against Agnosticism, the correlative assertion that God is like man. Agnostic men of science might not admit this, might even protest against the very notion as anthropomorphic. In spite of their protestations, however, many of the men whom they had taught to look on the universe as an organism, found in man — the latest and highest product of creation — the key which unlocks the mystery of the Creator. Bruce held that what the

(2) Cf. Apol., p.158.
(3) Ibid., p.159.
apologist had to do was to lead the way in this line of thought and view man in his intellectual and moral nature as, in a real sense, a manifestation of God.

In his "Apologetics" Bruce merely sketches his argument in verification of the Christian theory. It has four steps: (i) If the Creator be like man in nature, He is revealed as a Being possessing intellect and guided by purpose. (ii) If the Creator had man in view from the first as the end of creation, we should expect to find traces of a purposeful guidance of the evolutionary process towards that end. Such traces are not wanting. Here, again, the Creator is seen as a Being possessing intellect and purpose. (iii) Verification of the Christian idea of God may be found in "the latest teaching of science regarding the nature of force;" for the force, or power, that is behind the universe may very well be that of a will. (iv) If God be like man, He possesses not only intellect, purpose, and will, but moral character. The human sense of right and wrong shows not merely that God is, but what He is. Furthermore, "history confirms the inference to morality in God suggested by an inspection of man's moral nature;" for "a moral order is revealed in the story of the human race." Bruce sums up the sketch of his argument thus:

"In the foregoing observations, man, his nature and position in the universe, is made the basis of the theistic argument. And this is as it ought to be. Science aims at explaining man from the world, but religion explains the world, in its first Cause and last End, from man." (4)

The verification of the Christian theory in the Providential or Moral Order of the World is the great theme of Bruce's "Gifford Lectures," to which we now turn.


In the First Series of his "Gifford Lectures" Bruce's aim is to justify the theistic conception of the world by vindicating a Providential Order in the evolution of nature and history. In pursuing this purpose he willingly accepts one of the main requirements of Lord Gifford's Deed of Trust, that lecturers should adhere to the "scientific method"; in other words, restrict the argument to the sphere of Natural Theology. By the scientific method the witness of Scripture is allowed, but not the authority of Scripture. (1) Lord Gifford's requirement, as Bruce points out, does not mean "that one must prove the Being of God as you prove a proposition in Euclid." Of such an attempt he says categorically, "The thing cannot be done, and, if it could, it would not be worth doing." (2) What is to be said about God is to rest on "observation of the world we live in -- of nature, of man, of human history." (3) Bruce's approach to the whole subject is strikingly revealed in a sentence in his "Apologetics" in which, referring to Ritschilians who would be "agnostics but for Christ," he says:

"With the stress laid on Christ one can cordially sympathise, but surely if Christ's idea of God be true there should be something in the world to verify it!" (4)

The desired verification he finds in man, "the crown of creation, the key to its meaning and to the nature of the Creator." (5)

Of the Providential Order Bruce does not attempt a formal definition, but the propositions to be established are stated in a broad way thus:

"That God cares for man individually and collectively; that His nature is such, and that He sustains such a relation to man, as makes that care natural and credible; that His care covers all

human interests, but especially the higher, ethical interests -- righteousness, goodness -- in the individual and in society; that He is a moral Governor, and a benignant Father, a Power making for righteousness, and a Power overcoming evil with good; that He ruleth over all things with a view to a kingdom of the good."(1)

Bruce's method is to assume a Providential Order as a preliminary, guiding hypothesis, and then by an investigation into the circumstances of man's position, nature and history, to show how far, especially in the light of modern knowledge and modern theories, the hypothesis is justified by a fair view of the facts. The chief theory to be taken into account is that of evolution, and the extent to which Bruce has utilized it may be seen in the comment of a reviewer:

"Dr Bruce's book will doubtless appear to many as an elaborate attempt to make friends of the mammon of evolution as the only refuge for the bewildered in the search for everlasting intellectual habitations."(2)

It is only fair to note, however, that Bruce does not hold a brief for evolution. On many points he expressly avoids dogmatizing. Frequently he disclaims the right or the competence to judge authoritatively. His position is that, even if the claims of evolution be granted, even if it be regarded as a theory universally applicable, it is still possible to maintain that God is, and that He is such as Theism represents Him to be. Indeed, the evolutionary interpretation of the world and of life may actually give a new support to the theistic position. The old teleology, it is true, is no longer tenable, for in the light of modern science final causes must be judged to be in reality effects, and the earth to be suited to its inhabitants because it has produced them. Nevertheless, there is now possible a wider teleology grounded upon the world-order as a whole:

"The providential view of the creative process does not supersede the physical or mechanical view, but is simply a different way of contemplating the same thing. The universe is evolved according to ascertained or ascertainable natural laws. But all the time there is an ultimate Cause at work within the evolutionary process, who has an aim in view, and who directs the process so that that aim shall be realised. The aim is man, and all that goes before has its reason of existence in him, and its value through him."

Evolution is a modal not a causal theory of the universe. It is not concerned with origins; it sets forth methods. It does not exclude God; it only claims to be the mode of the Divine action, if such there be. Even by its unbroken continuities the theory cannot be held as confirming the atheistic hypothesis. This was shrewdly pointed out by Romanes in a passage thus summarized by Bruce:

"If there be a personal God, no reason can be assigned why all causation should not be the immediate expression of His will. But if His will is self-consistent, all natural causation must needs appear to be "mechanical." Therefore it is no argument against the divine origin of a thing, event, etc., to prove it due to natural causation." (2)

In other words, teleology and mechanism are not by any necessity mutually exclusive. "All may be mechanism, yet all may also be teleology." (3)

We proceed now to an analysis and exposition of Bruce's argument, reserving some comments and criticisms until the end. The first lecture is introductory. The remaining eleven fall naturally into four divisions. (a) II and III are concerned with certain philosophical presuppositions of a Providential Order. (b) IV, V, and VI deal with hindrances to faith, or sources of unbelief in a Providential Order. (c) VII, VIII, and IX set forth the traces of Providential action within the sphere of human history. (d) X, XI, and XII discuss the various methods by which Providence acts.

(a) The two lectures in the first section deal with "Man's Place:

(1) P.O.W., p. 358. (2) Ibid., p. 15. (3) Ibid.
in the Universe" and with "Theistic Inferences" therefrom.

(1) Evolution confirms the idea of our pious forefathers as to man's place in the universe. In Bruce's day, however, it was a point of keen debate whether man as to his intellectual and moral being, no less than as to his body, is the product of evolution. It is evidence of his open-mindedness and breadth of vision that he believed that the view of man as wholly the child of evolution was to be preferred even in a theistic interest. As he says, if we conceive of God as immanent in the world and as the ultimate cause of all things, the question of the evolution of man's psychical nature can hardly be a vital one, for God will be in the evolution of intellect and conscience as truly as in the development of the body. In any case, the evolutionary theory need not disturb our belief in God as man's Creator, nor lower our view of man's dignity as the highest of God's creatures. It is simply a question of Divine procedure, between two modes of which we are to choose. The alternatives are: man, a special act of creation; or, man by a natural process of evolution. But just as the universe is not less God's handiwork because it took millions of years to produce it, so man is not less God's creature and creation's flower because the product of an evolutionary process of Divine initiation and direction. Whichever view is taken, God remains Creator. The prejudice entertained by some devout people against the evolutionary theory on the ground of its frequent association with religious Agnosticism, Bruce answers by the assurance that such association is only accidental; and also by the reminder that faith should be made independent of the truth or falsehood of scientific theories and hypotheses. The evidence in favour of the view that man, in his bodily, intellectual, and moral

(1) Cf. P. O. W., p. 26. (2) Cf. ibid., p. 45. (3) Cf. ibid., p. 27. (4) Cf. ibid., p. 44.
nature, is the product of an evolutionary process having been dispassionately stated, the lecture concludes thus:

"So we return to the position: Evolution simply God's method of communicating to men the light of reason and the sense of duty. Surely a worthy ending of the long process of world-genesis! The process, however rude or even brutal, does not disgrace the result. The result rather invests the whole process with dignity and moral significance, and helps us to understand how Deity could have to do with it. The lower stages of evolution seem unworthy of the Creator, but when we think of man with his reason and conscience as latent therein, it becomes conceivable how the Divine Spirit might brood yearningly over chaos, starting the mighty movement by which it was to be slowly turned into a cosmos with man for its crown of glory. Evolution does not degrade man, man confers honour on evolution. Man, considered as in his whole being the child of evolution, instead of being a stumbling-block to faith, is rather the key to all mysteries, revealing at once the meaning of the universe, the nature of God, and his own destiny."(1)

(2) From the position that man, a moral being, holds as the crown of the natural world, four important "theistic inferences" are drawn. By way of preface to his argument, Bruce questions the propriety of recognizing in a theistic interest crises or exceptional stages in the process of evolution -- such as the initiation of the process itself, the origin of life, and the origin of consciousness -- as those in which the finger of God can be most clearly seen at work. He considers that those who "plant the foot of faith on what seem crises in the history of world-genesis," and who "lay an excessive emphasis on the occasional preternatural action of God upon the world" run the risk of lapsing into the deistic conception of God as found nowhere save in the unusual and exceptional, thus sacrificing His immanence to His transcendence. The "safe and wise" theistic position he states thus:

"Instead of looking out for open points in the process of world-making at which to bring in the supernatural power of a transcendent Deity, let us rather believe in the incessant activity, all along the line, of an immanent Deity."(4)

(1)P.O.W., pp.47f. (2)Ibid., p.50. (3)Ibid., p.60. (4)Ibid., p.57.
Our criticism of this standpoint we reserve until later. (1)

The four "theistic inferences" from man's place in the universe are these: (1) "The process of world-making is instinct with purpose -- man in view throughout." (2) A purposeless universe is an irrational and incredible conception. In man all other parts of creation, whether animate or inanimate, find their rationale. Without him the long process of creation would have been much ado about nothing.

"Here, at the end of the aeons, is man. It was worth God's while to make him, and in the light of this latest creation we can see at least a glimmering of meaning even in chaos, in the apparently useless, the irrational, the monstrous. All these were natural steps in a gradual process that was to have a worthy ending, in which the whole creative movement should find its justification. Man makes the world-process rational. With man at the head, every member of the lower creation has its appropriate place, and helps to make a cosmos. Lower forms of life are not to be considered abortions because they fall short of the human. It is enough that the human comes at last along at least one line of evolution. In order that the world may be rational it is not necessary that there shall be in it nothing but men. It suffices that there be in it also men." (3)

(ii) "Purpose guided the evolutionary process so as to ensure that it should reach its foreordained consummation." (4) There was no "absolute mechanical guarantee" for advancement, nothing to make improvement, as distinct from deterioration, a matter of course. But Providence was there to give things the necessary direction and be a protection against the "risks of miscarriage." (5) (iii) "The object of the purpose being man, the Being who purposes must be manlike." (6) That is to say, from the rational and moral nature of the ultimate end of the creative process, we infer the character of the Creator Himself. It has been suggested by some that, according to this reasoning, God must resemble all other things whose cause He is. Bruce points out, however, that the inference of God's spirituality from man's nature

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(1) Vide infra, pp. 323 ff. (2) P. O. W., p. 62. (3) Ibid., pp. 89 ff. (4) Ibid., p. 82. (5) Ibid., p. 70. (6) Ibid., p. 82.
does not rest on the category of causality but is based on that of purpose:

"Man is not merely one of the infinite number of effects produced by Divine causality, but he is the effect which explains all the rest, the end in view of the Creator in all His creative work. If this be allowed, then it must be admitted that man's relation to God is unique. It is a relation of affinity, because God, ex hypothesi, supremely cares for what man distinctively is." (1)

(iv) "The purpose which aimed at bringing man on the scene will continue to work towards making the most of man." (2) In other words, we expect to find an evolution within the human analogous to the earlier one. The Maker of man will not stop when He has reached the human. He will be interested in the realizing of the possibilities of man's nature, and will work on, "cultivating to the utmost the humanities." (3) Indeed, says Bruce, we can go further and say that, if God was in the earlier evolution, "a fortiori He will be in the later": and that the rational and moral evolution will be "incomparably more interesting and momentous than the physical evolution foregoing." (4) He readily admits that it may be as impossible to find perfect rationality in history as it is to find perfect morality. Nevertheless, we shall expect to find in it traces of God, "working as a just and beneficent Providence on the great scale and on the small." (5)

The argument of these two chapters is: through man to God. Evolutionary science, like the Bible, claims man as the crowning result of creation; and from that result may be inferred the moral character, as well as the necessary existence and immanent activity, of the Creator.

(b) Instead of passing immediately to the consideration of traces of Providence in the several spheres of human experience, Bruce

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(1) P.O.W., pp. 73f. (2) Ibid., p. 62. (3) Ibid., p. 76. (4) Ibid., p. 18. (5) Ibid., p. 76. (6) Ibid.,
wisely prepares for this by discussing three sources of unbelief in a Providential Order. These are:

"Views of God incompatible with such an aim; facts of human life pessimistically interpreted which seem to give the hypothesis of a Divine care for man the lie; cynical estimates of human nature rendering belief in man being an end for God impossible." (1)

(1) In the fourth lecture, entitled "Non-Moral Deity, or The Gods of Modern Pessimism," the first class of difficulties is faced, viz., "conceptions of God as a non-moral deity below caring for man, and the interests man as a moral personality represents." (2) The conceptions referred to are chiefly those of Spinoza's absolute substance, Schopenhauer's irrational will, and Hartmann's "Unconscious" with both will and intelligence. Such views, being destructive of all faith in a moral order of the world, naturally lead those who cherish them into scepticism and pessimism. To those who imagine that such conceptions are limited to "the speculative Teutonic intellect that gave them birth," Bruce says:

"We are not so insulated in our spiritual situation as many wish. The new gods are already known to our younger thinkers, some of whom are devoting themselves with religious ardour to the propagation of belief in them. Besides, the pessimistic temper is infectious, and spreads like a spiritual influenza. An antidote is needed, and knowledge of what it all comes to may serve the purpose." (3)

(2) As the positions of the philosophers just considered largely depend upon the justice or otherwise of the verdict they pass upon human life as a whole, the pessimistic attitude is subjected by Bruce to a careful criticism in the fifth lecture, entitled "The Worth of Life." He honestly admits that a pessimistic interpretation of life is not without some justification. Certain facts of life make it more difficult to believe that God is good than some people imagine. "There is much in the world to foster a gloomy, hopeless temper." (4).

Of the Divine goodness the best, the noblest men have had their doubts. Bruce considers that the truth lies between two extremes. "Unqualified optimism is as false as unqualified pessimism." The vital question is: by what standard of judgment shall we estimate the worth of life? Is it to be hedonistic, or is it to be ethical? Bruce replies thus:

"I cannot hesitate as to the answer. In inquiring into the worth of human life, we must remember that it is the life of a man and not of a mere animal we are considering. This point of view is imposed on us by our hypothesis that man, as a rational and moral being, was an end for God in creation. It was only under that aspect of his nature that we found him worthy to be the aim and crown of the creative process, and it is only under the same aspect that we can fitly estimate the value of the life of this latest arrival. The bearing of experience on the moral interest must always be the dominant, if not the exclusive, consideration. ... The distinction of man as compared with the lower animals does not lie in this, that, in an equal space of time, he has a larger amount of pleasurable feeling than any of them. It might, with more truth, be said to consist in a far greater capacity for misery due to his endowment with reason and conscience."

It is Bruce's view, however, that even when life is judged by a hedonistic standard, pessimistic estimates are by no means criticism-proof. These are frequently but "plausible falsities, joint birth of a bad psychology and a jaundiced mind." Pain is not an unmitigated evil; it serves beneficent ends. It is a fact, moreover, that much of man's suffering is due to his own wrongdoing; and on this score there should be no complaint. Indeed, "the severer the penalty, the more certain it is that there is such a thing as a moral government of God in this world." But, as Bruce points out, this is only half the truth. Such punishments are not exclusively penal. They are tempered with mercy. They are redemptive in purpose and tendency, and not infrequently in effect. Even the sufferings of the righteous, which in all ages have perplexed men's minds, are not

an unrelieved mystery. Three truths regarding such sufferings were partly discerned by the author of Isaiah 53 and by Plato. (i) They come, not by accident, but rather by law. (ii) They have redemptive value. (iii) They are not without compensation to the righteous themselves; for with the outward unhappiness goes inward Blessedness. Even love needs pain for its highest self-manifestation. Bruce's conclusion is that, despite sin and suffering, life is good and the world is progressing. But the problem remains as to why the progress, though real, should be so slow. Indeed, is any delay whatever compatible with the idea of Providence? "Should not a good God, with adequate power, make the world what it ought to be, at once?" Bruce answers wisely that the moral ideal cannot be realized at once, "because process is essential to morality." (3)

(3) The third hindrance to faith, forming the subject of the sixth lecture, consists of cynical views of man as beneath God's notice. Bruce rightly insists that contempt for man, whatever its origin or manifestation, tends to breed scepticism in a Providential Order, and in the opinions of Celsus he finds the best historical illustration of this. (4) Three forms under which contempt for man may manifest itself are specified. (i) Even at his best man is regarded by some as an unworthy object of God's notice and care. Bruce considers that a true respect for man requires three things: "a lofty moral ideal, belief in its approximate realisableness in this world, and belief in the permanence of the moral universe." (5) A low-pitched ideal, such as that of the Deist, provokes scepticism and breeds contempt. If we pitch our ideal of man high, make him worth caring for, and "assign to God the supreme aim of helping man to reach that ideal," then faith

will not fail. Asceticism, the implied postulate of which is that man cannot be good under normal conditions as a member of society, strikes at the root of faith in a providential presence of God in human history:

"God is only in the monk's cell, the devil is everywhere else. By and by men begin to wonder if God be even in the monk's cell."(1)

(ii) There are those, however, who, whilst cherishing a high regard for ideal humanity, view the average man with contempt. In this respect Carlyle, whom the youthful Bruce idolized, is regarded as a conspicuous offender, his reverence for humanity having taken the form of hero-worship. Bruce admits that hero-worship, when compared with certain other cults, has its advantages. But he insists that Providence, if there be such at all, must include all, and not merely the intellectual and moral aristocracy of the race:

"The only hope of sure abiding faith in Providence is the abandonment of this figment of a far-off transcendent Deity, much concerned about His Majesty, and just deigning to recognise the few tall figures among the myriads of men; and the substitution for it of a God who by His providence and His grace is immanent in humanity, bearing its burdens, sympathising with its sorrows, grieving over its errors, and ever working towards a better time. Affirm the transcendency if you will, it has its relative truth; but do not forget the immanency."(3)

The sentiment of the last sentence is highly characteristic of Bruce's thought, particularly in these Gifford Lectures. It is open to criticism, however, as we shall point out later. (iii) There are those who reserve their contempt for man at his lowest and worst. primitive man, the savage, and the criminal. Bruce has a specially good word to say for primitive man. Because of his contributions to the foundations of art, language, morality, and religion, he deserves to be respectfully remembered by us. Clearly a watchful Providence was guiding his footsteps towards better and higher things:

(1) P.O.W., p.147. (2) Vide supra, pp.32f. (3) P.O.W., p.156. (4) Cf. ibid., pp.153ff.
"The Creative Spirit rejoiced in that dawn, albeit not ignorant what a tragic affair the long day of humanity might turn out to be. God said, "Better the human with all its possible tragedy than a world with man left out of it." And from the bright morning He looked forward to the far distant evening when the storms should be past and the sky serene, and man at last should have become a son of God indeed, perfected through suffering and even through sin."(1)

To these three sources, then, Bruce traces unbelief in a Divine Providence: to false views of God, and to distorted views of life and of man. God, life, and man must all be viewed in the light of a great ethical purpose if we would maintain faith in a Providential Order of the World.

(o) With Lecture VII Bruce returns to the main line of his argument. In this and in the following two lectures his object is to verify the Providential Order by tracing its operations within the sphere of human history and experience.

(1) In Lecture VII, entitled "The Power Making for Righteousness," we have a consideration of what is implied in the moral government of God. Bruce emphasizes that though we have here a partial truth, it is a truth and an important one:

"This truth -- God a moral Governor -- placed in the forefront, will help us to grasp firmly at the outset an ethical conception of Providence as concerned supremely, not for the happiness of sentient creatures, but for the reign of righteousness."(1)

Belief in a moral Governor of the world cannot be regarded as peculiar to Hebrew prophets and antiquated Christian apologists. Greek poets and Chinese sages have shared and proclaimed the same faith. Not only so:

"Leaders of nineteenth century thought, thoroughly imbued with the modern spirit, and free enough from theistic bias, have asserted the reality of a moral order of the world with a sincerity and intensity of conviction that entitle them to take their place by the side of Butler."(3)

Carlyle, Arnold, and even Strauss, are named in this connection.

(1)POW.,p.168. (2)Ibid.,p.172. (3)Ibid.,pp.172f.
Bruce finds a threefold witness to the "Power making for righteousness."

(i) In "the sense of right and wrong which every man has within his breast." (1)

(ii) In society. That society constitutes itself an instrument for enforcing fundamental moral laws, punishing vices inimical to its being and well-being, is strong evidence in favour of the reality of a Divine moral government. Experience teaches that a Decalogue is as necessary for men associated together as is a language. (2)

(iii) In the wider sphere of universal history there are clear traces of this Power, especially in its retributive aspect. The determining factor in the fate of nations is seen to be the presence or absence within them of morality or right conduct. (3) In the contest between good and evil the victory, though it may be long delayed, is on the side of good, of morality reinforced by religion. (4)

(2) But the "Power making for righteousness" is also a Power working beneficently in humanity and for humanity; and traces of its working are found in the life of nations (Lecture VIII), and in the life of the individual (Lecture IX). The Divine working in humanity, as Bruce points out, is the natural corollary from the hypothesis that man was the aim of the creative process:

"If God worked towards man in the lower stages of the creative process, we expect that He will work on in man, towards adequate realisation of the human ideal. Creation, evolution will go on, now in the human sphere. If there be no trace of onward movement in history, there will be reason to suspect that we were mistaken in our whole conception of man's place in the universe, and of its significance." (5)

Lecture VIII is divided into two sections, under the respective headings of "Historic Dawns" and "Historic Days." By "Historic Dawn" is meant the observation which it is possible to make of "a people just emerging out of the darkness of prehistoric night into the

daylight of history." (1) The Indians of the Vedio period, the ancient Persians, the early Israelites, the pre-Mohammedan Arabians, and the Germans as they are depicted in the pages of Tacitus, are successively passed under review. These people were prepared by Providence for the parts they were destined to play in history. The fact that some of them had to wait long before their opportunity came leads Bruce to utter some tender words on behalf of those who, like the races of Africa, have not yet had their chance (2), and those who, like the Jews and the Modern Greeks, live rather by memory than in hope. (3) The section entitled "Historic Days" brings before us the contributions to human advancement made by Israel, Greece and Rome -- "names recalling momentous memories" (4) -- and gives us a glance at the later post-Reformation period of the world's history. (5) No one can follow this lecture without feeling that history, on the great scale, bears convincing evidence of an overruling beneficence working for the good of the race.

(3) If not on so great a scale, yet with not less reality, does the Individual Life testify to the fact of a Providential Order. This is the theme of the ninth lecture. Bruce begins by maintaining that such a belief is at least reasonable:

"It is a natural inference from our doctrine of the value of man for God. It is also a corollary from the omnipresence of the providential order, by all means to be insisted on." (6)

This belief that Providence operates in the individual life holds good, not only in regard to the world's great men and their work, but in regard to "common men." (7) A natural subject of perplexity occurs in the old problem concerning the sufferings of the righteous, sufferings which seem great in proportion as those who endure them

are faithful and those who deserve them escape. It is in such experience, however, "when properly understood," that "the providential order of the world is seen to receive its most conspicuous verification." (1) The full justification of this statement Bruce does not attempt until the concluding lecture; but meanwhile some alleviation of the difficulty is sought in the bearing upon it of prayer and of the thought of a future life, both of which topics have a vital relation to our faith in the fact of a Providence in the individual life. Of Bruce's clear and incisive remarks on the former subject, we give the following examples:

"It is idle for a man who really believes in God to waste his time over scientific puzzles concerning the utility of prayer. The previous question, Is there a God? is the point on which all depends. "Between freedom and fate," it has been truly said, "between a personal God and blind chance, between faith in prayer and trust to luck, we must choose. It is only the shortsighted and superficial mind that can find a resting-place between these two opinions." (2)"

"As the devout wise man may disregard the cloud of speculative difficulties that has been raised around the subject of prayer, so he may treat as of secondary importance the distinction sometimes taken between two spheres -- the material and the spiritual -- in reference to the legitimacy of petitionary prayer. .... The two spheres cannot be kept apart, they will run together. Then, be the spheres two or twenty, they are parts or aspects of the one universe of God, the pliable instrument of His sovereign will. Therefore the prayers of the cultured saint, like the prayers of children, are simple, spontaneous, realistic, unembarrassed by subtle distinctions between natural and spiritual, foreordination and freedom, physical law and miracle." (3)

On the subject of a future life a number of inferences are stated which "naturally arise out of the general position: man a chief end for God." (4) Bruce's own standpoint is sufficiently indicated by the aphorism: "Live nobly, and it will begin to appear to you credible that you will live for ever." (5)

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(1)P.O.W., p. 265.  (2)Ibid., p. 270. (Quotation is from Hyde, "Outlines of Social Theology," p. 123).
(3)Ibid., pp. 271f.  (4)Ibid., p. 281.
(5)Ibid., p. 279.
(d) The fact of a Providential Order having thus, it is presumed, been established by an examination of history and personal experience, the last three lectures treat of "Providential Methods." It is shown that three principles have a wide range of application, viz., Election, Solidarity, and Progress by Sacrifice. Solidarity is regarded as the fundamental fact, demanding Election as its complement, and imposing Sacrifice on the elect.\(^{(1)}\) We consider that the lectures devoted to these themes are among the strongest and most instructive in the book.

(1) None of the lectures is more full of interest and originality, or more typical of Bruce, than that on Election. The principal points discussed are (i) the nature of the elective method; (ii) its rationale; (iii) its conditions; and (iv) its results.

(i) In our study of Bruce's work as Systematic Theologian we noted that he gives the term a wide interpretation, apprehending it as a general rule of which what is usually understood by it is only a special case.\(^{(2)}\) Here he develops this point of view more fully:

> "The general aim of election is service to mankind in some particular sphere within the wide range of human interests. It is a method whereby Providence uses the one -- one man or one people -- to bless the many. The purposed benefit does not centre in and terminate with the elect, but passes out beyond them in ever-widening spheres of benignant influence. Privilege, prerogative, may be involved in the method, but whatever element of this kind there may be is secondary in comparison with the universal service contemplated."\(^{(3)}\)

Such service implies a special fitness resulting from a variety of causes, such as heredity, environment, and experience. However they may have been produced, the peculiar qualifications possessed by men and peoples are utilized by Providence for the general advantage.

(ii) The elective method is not arbitrary, but has an intelligible rationale, viz., "that all important human interests demand for their

\(^{(1)}\text{Cf. P.O.W., p. 372.}\) \(^{(2)}\text{Vide supra, pp. 207f.}\) \(^{(3)}\text{P.O.W., p. 283.}\)
furtherance emphatic representation."(1) This principle is powerfully illustrated in the case of Israel:

"If the world is to be duly impressed with the supreme importance of righteousness, and with the value of a conception of God in which the divine and the ethical are intimately connected, there must be at least one people possessed with the passion for righteousness and cherishing a kindred idea of God, and able by its intensity and persistency to stamp its convictions indelibly on mankind."(2)

The epithet "elect" cannot, however, be exclusively applied to any one people, nor must it be exclusively confined to the subject of religion. The truth involved pervades the whole Providential Order of the world:

"More elect peoples than one are needed to do the work of Providence. .... A certain people may by race and training be supremely qualified for giving to the world the true religion, but it is not at all to be expected that the same people should be able to give the world lessons in science, philosophy, art, or government."(3)

If, therefore, other nations are possessed of the fitness and liking to be the instructors and benefactors of mankind in these latter respects, then they also must be numbered among the elect. Thus the range of the elective method is larger than some have imagined or have been willing to admit:

"Although we have been accustomed to apply the term specially to the people of Israel, and to associate it with the subject of religion, there is no reason in the nature of things why its use should be thus restricted. Signal fitness for an important special function constitutes election."(4)

Bruce notes the interesting fact that hitherto Providence has shown a preference for small nations as its instruments, and that within these it has worked mainly through chosen men.(5) The elective method thus exhibits its highest potency in the individual, and Bruce looks forward confidently to the continued appearance of elect men:

"We will continue to expect the appearance, at the appointed hour, of elect men, with great minds, great souls, great faith, hope, and devotion; men of forceful individuality, predestined, mightily impelled, under a Divine necessity to expend their stored-up energy in a manner that shall redeem their time from oppressive commonplace, and give humanity a new impetus onwards in its way towards its appointed goal." (1)

He insists, however, that such elect men always belong to an elect people. The two "are relative to each other, belong to each other, and each is to the other the instrument of usefulness." (2)

(iii) In the case of men and nations, but particularly in the latter, some degree of isolation has proved to be necessary. The seed is enclosed in the hard shell until it is matured, when it bursts its envelope and introduces a new element of living force into the world. The effective performance of its allotted function by an elect race is thus shown to depend on two main conditions — "original peculiarity and careful conservation of the distinctive feature." (3)

These two conditions in the Providential Order correspond to variation and heredity in the physical order.

(iv) In connection with the results of the elective method the interesting question arises as to why elect peoples perish. "Such peoples perish," says Bruce, "by their own fault." (4) That which fits them to perform their special function almost inevitably entails upon them the defect of their virtue. As a rule they are one-sided; while each does good service to the world by that in which it is strong, each suffers through lack of that in which it is weak. (5)

Again, nations may fail to realize their vocation; or, they may realize it simply as a privilege:

"The sense of a peculiar vocation may be perverted into food for a pride which, while very conscious of privilege, neglects duty.

This is the besetting sin of all privileged classes. They turn into a monopoly of favour what Providence meant to be an opportunity of universal service." (1)

Only Christ was entirely free from the sins and defects of the elect. He was the elect man par excellence in all human history -- "not characterised even by one-sidedness, not to speak of graver faults." (2)

And He founded the Church, the various branches of which -- as well as the Church as a whole -- have their special calls to service, in rendering which they save themselves as well as those that hear. (3)

(2) A second Providential method is Solidarity, the dependence of the many on the one and of the one on the many. Bruce considers it under two main forms, family solidarity and social solidarity. Only a passing reference is made to personal solidarity, i.e., identity with past self due to habit and revealing itself in permanence of character. (4)

(1) The alternative name for family solidarity is heredity; but it is the ethical rather than the scientific aspect of the law of heredity that Bruce discusses. The great question is: Does heredity operate in the moral sphere, or is its action confined to the physiological and psychological regions? Does it become a "propagandist of virtue," or is it merely a power predisposing us to vice? (5) Bruce believes there is no reason to doubt that in many cases it has also acted as a power predisposing to goodness, though he admits that it is much easier to find striking examples in the line of evil than in the line of good. Even a saintly father may have a profligate son. Shall we say that such saintliness is mere assumption and hypocrisy? By no means!

"The saint may once have been a great sinner himself, like Augustine, or his goodness may be a moral conquest in a fierce

fight with innate evil proclivities which have never been allowed to break forth into actual transgression. In that case his holy habit is an acquired characteristic which does not pass over from sire to son. .... It is always possible that bad proclivity in a son may not be an inheritance from his father, but from a remote ancestor, a case of reversional heredity, or atavism."(1)

Bruce very rightly emphasizes that, even when it is adverse to goodness, heredity is not to be regarded as an irresistible force or an inescapable doom. An evil bias is not a fate to be succumbed to. Inherited evil tendencies do not necessarily settle beforehand a man's moral career. By two potent forces at his command he can counteract and even modify them. These forces are his latent will-power and environment.\(^{(2)}\)

(ii) In the remaining part of the lecture Bruce deals with the wider theme of social solidarity.\(^{(3)}\) Here we see the dependence of the one on the many, just as in heredity we see the dependence of the many on the one. There are some interesting references to the exemplification of the law of solidarity within the Christian Church, and its importance in relation to the Church's future unity and progress is emphasized.\(^{(4)}\)

(3) The third Providential method, the theme of the last lecture, is Progress by Sacrifice. The reference is to the progress of the many by the vicarious suffering of the few. Holding that real progress is not otherwise attainable, Bruce is glad to note that in his day the fact was, in increasing measure, receiving intelligent recognition:

"The principle of vicarious suffering is lifted out of the region of pure theology, to which it has by many been supposed exclusively to belong, and translated into the sphere of ordinary providence, recognisable there as a permanent, universal law of the moral order."\(^{(5)}\)

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The victims of this law are ever the noblest and the best of men, a circumstance which, until it is explained, has appeared to many as "the greatest mystery of history." The key to the mystery was brought by Jesus Christ; for in His Cross we have the highest exemplification and the eternal symbol of this particular method of Providence:

"The cross made all the difference. The earthly career of Jesus was epoch-making, not merely in respect of the saving grace it brought to men, but also through the bright light it shed on the true theory of the providential order of the world at the point where light was most urgently needed."(2)

In accordance with this universal law wise and holy men, in advance of their time and rising high above the moral mediocrity of their day, have had to sacrifice themselves as the price of progress. Most people will agree with Bruce that by such sacrifices progress has been secured, but they will probably decline to follow him in the apology for war into which his argument somewhat inconsequently drifts. We must differentiate between admiration for the heroism which sacrifices itself in a noble cause, and an implied thankfulness for a state of things which, by making such heroism necessary, provides the opportunity for its display.

Bruce says it would "crown the apology of Providence" if we could conceive God, not merely as an onlooker, but as a participant in the vicarious suffering by which the world is redeemed and regenerated. Christians, believing that in Christ God was incarnate, are able directly and emphatically to affirm this very conception. Bruce, however, conducting his discussion at the level of Natural Theology, has to make the affirmation indirectly. This he is able to do by means of his favourite doctrine of the Divine immanence supported by

his favourite category of the ethical. With his noble words at this point we may fittingly conclude our analysis of his argument:

"If God's relation to human experience be one of immanence, then He is more than a spectator of the self-sacrifice by which progress is promoted: He is in it, a fellow-sufferer. Still more clearly is this true if in Christ God be incarnate. That conception may labour under metaphysical difficulties, but on the ethical side it is worthy of all acceptation. It makes God a moral hero, a burden-bearer for His own children, a sharer in the sorrow and pain that come on the good through the moral evil that is in the world. The noble army of martyrs have the comfort of knowing that the Eternal Spirit is at their head. Christ is the visible human embodiment of His leadership -- the Captain of the army of salvation -- exposed not less than every individual soldier to wounds and death; not indeed the only sufferer in the warfare, but the chief sufferer. Who would not be content to fight and die under His flag?"(1)

We complete our review of the First Series of Bruce's "Gifford Lectures" with some words of commendation and of criticism.

(1) He set out to justify the theistic and Christian conception of the world by vindicating a Providential Order in the evolution of nature and history. Has he proved his case? This raises the interesting question: When can anything be said to be proved? What is meant by proof? We cannot do better than quote the twofold answer given by Dr Daniel Lamont:

"First, the kind of proof required for anything depends upon the particular subject-matter in question. Mathematics calls for one kind of proof, physics for another, biology for another, philosophy for another, and so on through all the fields of knowledge. The nature of proof varies with the nature of that which is to be proved. And second, anything is proved true in the highest possible way when it shines in its own light and sheds light upon all else."(2)

It would be unreasonable, therefore, to demand proof of a Providential Order by methods inappropriate to the subject-matter. If the idea of a Providential Order of the World is seen to shine in its own light and to shed light upon the whole evolutionary process, it is proved in the only sense in which proof has any meaning for it. In our

view this is the kind of proof which Bruce has achieved. He has succeeded in vindicating the idea of a Providential Order in the evolution of nature and man, and has thereby shown that the theory of evolution, so far from weakening the theistic position, immeasurably strengthens it. Standing at the level of nature and looking at the world of things and events around us, we cannot doubt that there is purpose and Providence in all this marvellous complexity. The long story of organic evolution reveals no unmeaning chaos but a vast governing plan which can be explained only in terms of a creative mind, planning and influencing the process throughout. We know something of the natural history of this evolutionary process, stretching back through millions of years into the cosmic past; but, clearly, the most significant element in it is the evolution of a human mind able to think about and make sense of the whole. Bruce was therefore following a sound instinct when he took man, his nature and position in the universe, as the basis of his theistic argument. Just because it culminates in man, the process is seen to be purposive; that is to say, is seen to point beyond itself to a creative mind which is not only its source and ground but its goal.

As Dr A. E. Taylor has said, in a notable essay:

"It will always appear preposterous to regard the production of moral and intelligent masters of nature as a mere by-product or accident of evolution on this planet, or as anything but the end which has all along determined the process." (1)

The truth is that evolution is a description of the process, but not an ultimate explanation of it. Taking place within the universe, the process cannot explain itself. As Dr W. R. Matthews has pointed out, however, in his important book on the whole subject, the emergence of mind is unintelligible unless the course of evolution is

directed: "on any other view it is impossible to see how there can be any reliance on the power of the mind to know truth."(1) Naturalistic or materialistic theories of evolution deny the theistic and Christian view, namely, that creative mind must direct the process throughout; but in so doing they "lead to a negation of the possibility of knowledge, and therefore of the truth of the theory of evolution itself."(2)

(2) On two points we would offer some criticism. (i) Throughout his argument Bruce reveals a strong tendency to emphasize the Divine immanence at the expense of the Divine transcendence. As he bluntly puts it: "Affirm the transcendency if you will, it has its relative truth; but do not forget the immanency."(3) To our mind it is quite wrong to speak of the Divine transcendence as having only "relative truth." In an argument such as Bruce's, concerned with the evolution of nature and history, the Divine immanence is naturally the dominant conception. Only a transcendent God, however, can be immanent. The transcendence is the primary and fundamental reality. God is present in the world because He is first of all present beyond and above the world. He is immanent because He is transcendent. There is, therefore, no necessity that we should choose between transcendence and immanence. We must affirm both modes of the Divine being and activity.

(ii) On more than one occasion Bruce expresses disapproval of the attitude of those who "plant the foot of faith on what seem crises in the history of world-genesis."(4) His point of view is best stated in his own words:

"The man who clings eagerly to the primitive impulse that set evolution going, to the origination of life, and to the inspir-

(2) Ibid.  
(3) P.O.W., p. 156.  
(4) Ibid., p. 50.
ation of a living soul, as proofs that God exists, virtually declares that in all other parts of the history of the universe he finds no convincing evidence of God's being and power. And what, one may ask, is the good of such a Deity after you have verified His existence to your own satisfaction? He is a far-off, absentee, otiose Divinity."(1)

The warning should, doubtless, be heeded by anyone who clings to the old deistic conception of transcendence. But, again, Bruce is presenting us with a false choice. The evolutionary process as a whole reveals twin aspects -- Continuity and Change -- and we must affirm both. How changes take place in the continuous process is the great mystery. Science cannot yet "explain" the transition from the inorganic to the organic, from life to consciousness, from the animal to the human. How the qualitatively new fact emerges is not known. It is certain, however, that we cannot explain the higher by the lower, nor believe that mind should owe its origin to what is not mind. The matter has been well put by Dr Whale:

"The organic kinship between man and beast is not denied; yet the disparity remains. The continuity in the whole evolutionary process seems to be a fact; but it does not exclude another fact, the emergence of real differences within that process. When we pass from inorganic nature to living things, or from animal sentience to the self-consciousness of man, we pass from one order of facts to another which is different and new, and is inexplicable in terms of what has gone before."(2)

In his lectures Bruce has practically resolved the disparity by allowing the differences within the process to be swallowed up by the continuity. We can well understand his motive: in a theistic interest he wished to show above all things that God has been, and is, immanent in the continuity of evolution. To have made anything of the differences in the process might have appeared like introducing a "deus ex machina." In our judgment, however, he has failed to see clearly that alongside of evolution there has always been involution.

The involution must have been there first, else there would have been nothing to evolve; and it must also have been present throughout the whole time-process. To quote Dr Lamont again:

"Nothing has ever been evolved in nature or man which has not at the same time been involved in some power coming from beyond the time-series itself." (1)

Even should science one day prove continuity along the whole line of man's development from the inorganic, this will not prevent our hearing the Divine Word uttered every step of the way: "Behold, I do a new thing, saith the Lord."

4. Examination of the Idea of a Moral or Providential Order in Ancient and Modern Thought.

To the Second Series of his "Gifford Lectures" Bruce gave the title: "The Moral Order of the World in Ancient and Modern Thought." The general theme is still the Providential Order, but now it is to be treated historically; and since the term "providential" is felt to be inherently theistic, the title of the First Series has been slightly altered to make room in the historical survey for such a scheme of thought as that of Buddha. (2) The lectures belong essentially to the field of Comparative Ethics and Religion and are described by their author as an attempt to answer the question: "What have the wisest thought on the great theme of the Moral Order of the universe in its reality and essential nature?" (3) In so encyclopaedic a task we can hardly expect to find everywhere evidences of original research; but we can be grateful for a clear presentation, based on the study of the highest authorities available, of the varying degree in which leaders of thought throughout the ages have borne evidence to the existence in man of a strong moral consciousness. Certain topics and

(3) Cf. ibid., Preface, p.v.  
(4) Ibid., p.vi.
personalities discussed by Bruce may appear to have been somewhat arbitrarily chosen, and certain omissions may seem to be a little strange. Most students will agree, however, that the types are sufficiently diverse to be fairly representative of the whole range of human thought, both ancient and modern. There are, in all, twelve lectures; and they fall naturally into four sections. (a) The first two discuss the systems of Buddha and Zoroaster. (b) The next three deal with the Greek Tragedians, the Stoic philosophers, and those who professed to declare the purposes of God by Divination. (c) There follow three lectures concerned with the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, the titles being "The Hebrew Prophet", "The Book of Job", and "Christ's Teaching Concerning Divine Providence." (d) The closing lectures bring us to Browning, taken as the representative and exponent of modern optimism, and to modern dualism. To the latter two lectures are devoted, one to its scientific and philosophic aspects, and the other to its religious and social aspects. The volume concludes with a Retrospect and Prospect. Like all of Bruce's books, this one has its centre in Christ; for in Him is found the synthesis of the ethical instincts, desires and expectations of East and West, of Old and New.

(a) Bruce's exposition of the systems of Buddha and Zoroaster is professedly based upon second-hand authorities, and his treatment at certain points, especially in the case of Zoroaster, is now somewhat behind the best investigation.

(1) From the moment he arrived at the years of reflection, Buddha had an acute sense of the misery of man; and he did not attain peace till he discovered that the seat of evil was in the soul, and that the secret of tranquillity was to get rid of desire. (1) Having found the

(1) Cf. M. O. W., p. 5.
way of salvation for himself, he felt impelled to make it known to others. The essence of his doctrine is summed up in four propositions, known as the Four Noble Truths. These follow the lines of the medical science of the time which, as Dr Sydney Cave says, "dealt with disease under the categories of its symptom, its cause, its cure, and the way to obtain the cure." (1) Buddha, as the physician of souls, adopted these categories. (i) The symptom of disease in humanity is the Noble Truth of Suffering, which is the thing to be remedied. (ii) The Noble Truth of the Cause of suffering is desire. (iii) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering is the thorough extinction of desire. (iv) The Noble Truth of the Path which leads to the cessation of suffering is the Holy Eightfold Path, the essence of which is "self-mortification, renunciation of the world both outwardly and inwardly." (2)

The Moral Order is the fundamental fact in Buddha's system. It is the source of the physical order; and moral facts explain the facts of human experience. (3) A philosophy taking the Moral Order thus seriously requires that the evil consequences of desires should work themselves out fully. But experience, if limited to the individual life, shows that they are not so worked out. Belief in transmigration, therefore, is an ethical necessity for the coherence of the system. (4)

To the Buddhist, however, the Platonic conception of the soul is unknown: with him the soul is a sequence of mental states without any substratum. (5) Accordingly, what is transmitted is not the soul in our sense of the word, but the Karma or character resulting from the mental and bodily actions of the individual. The belief is that each man has his own Karma, which demands embodiment in an independent

life for the working out of its moral results.\(^1\) There is only one way in which the inexorable law of Karma can be annulled, and that is through extinction of desire. Here we come to the complementary doctrine of Nirvana. As Bruce says:

"Karma and Nirvana are the great key-words of Buddhism. They represent opposite, conflicting tendencies. Karma clamours for continuance of being, Nirvana craves and works for its cessation."\(^2\)

Nirvana, as Bruce rightly points out, is essentially a state of mind attainable in this life, the cessation of desire rather than of existence.\(^3\) But this inward condition reached by the perfect man, the Arahant, has an important objective result. It suspends the action of the law of Karma, breaks the chain of successive existence, prevents another life, bearing its predecessor's responsibilities, from coming into being.\(^4\) Logically Buddha's system would seem to lead to the view that at death there will be for the Arahant complete annihilation. On this point, however, as on not a few others, we are not justified in going behind his pragmatic agnosticism. His purpose was that of a physician, and "whether the saint would exist after death was a question which had nothing to do with deliverance."\(^5\)

Bruce's final summing up of the strong and weak points of Buddha's system is, on the whole, just and adequate:

"The strength of Buddhism lies in its gentle virtues and in its firm faith in the imperious demands of Karma for a retributive moral order under which moral actions shall receive their appropriate awards. Its weaknesses are numerous. There is, first of all, the lack of a religious ideal answering to its ethical ideal, what we may call its atheism. Then there is the extravagant form in which it applies the principle of retribution, viewing each good and evil act by itself and assigning to it its appropriate reward or penalty, instead of regarding the conduct or character of a moral agent as a whole. To these glaring defects must be added the pessimistic estimate of life characteristic of the system, the conception of the sumnum bonum as consisting in Nirvana or the extinction of desire, and the

\(^1\) Cf. M. O. W., p. 16.  \(^2\) Ibid., p. 18.  \(^3\) Ibid., p. 19.  \(^4\) Cf. Ibid.  \(^5\) Cave, op. cit., p. 126.
consequent conviction that the only way in which a wise man can
worthily spend his days on earth is by the practice of
asceticism within the walls of a monastery."(1)

Two minor criticisms may be made with regard to this statement.
(1) It would be more accurate to speak of Buddha's religious
agnosticism than of his atheism; for, as Gore has said, apart from the
Four Noble Truths "all other dogmas of the metaphysicians Buddha
insisted should be -- not denied or discussed but ignored. He was
the first thorough-going agnostic."(2) (ii) The purely selfish motive
in Buddha's ethics needs to be more strongly emphasized. The only
motive assigned for the pursuit of virtue and the eradication of vice
is escape from the chain of lives.

(2) It is evident from the title of his second lecture, viz.,
"Zoroaster: Dualism," that Bruce regarded dualism as the outstanding
feature of the Persian prophet's teaching. This judgment, as we
shall see, requires some modification in the light of more recent
investigation. Bruce rightly points out that dualism is far older
than Zoroaster, being, in crude forms, a characteristic of all
primitive religions. (3) It probably originated as the outcome of
nature-worship, in which there would be fostered the contemplation of
such contrasted conditions as light and darkness. In Egypt long
before the era of Zoroaster the gods of light and darkness, Set and
Horus, are found in conflict. (4) The fact of importance, however, is
that at some time before the Gathas -- the oldest part of the Zend-
avesta, and believed by experts to be from the mind if not from the
hand of Zoroaster -- were composed, the physical conflict had been
transformed into a moral one. (5) Ahura Mazda is an ethical divinity

(1) M.O.W., pp.384f. (2) C. Gore, "The Philosophy of the Good Life,"
loving righteousness and hating iniquity. His rival also is an
ethical being, but of a sinister order; a lover of falsehood and
patron of wrong. Their respective subjects, moreover, are like-
minded with the divinities they serve. The good are represented by
the prophet’s own people, Aryans in race and language, worshippers of
Mazdah and tillers of the soil. The evil are represented by
obnoxious neighbours of Turanian race, nomads, worshippers of demons,
ever ready to make incursions into the settlements of the Aryan
farmers. While it is true that Zoroaster conceives conversion of the
wicked to be possible, even in the case of the Turanians, experience
does not encourage "extravagant anticipations or universalistic dreams."

The theology of the Gathas, as interpreted by Bruce, is "practically
dualistic, if not in the strict sense ditheistic." We must give
him credit, however, for having seen that the really significant
element in Zoroaster’s thought is not the dualism, but the conception
of the Good Spirit. Of this conception he says:

"This is a permanently valuable contribution to the evolution of
religious thought. The character ascribed to Ahura is pure and
exalted. Among the epithets employed to describe him, one
specially strikes a thoughtful reader. Ahura is declared to be
"the Father of the toiling good mind," and piety or devotion
revealing itself in good deeds is called his daughter."

Clearly, it was a great day for ancient Persia and for the world, when
there dawned upon prophetic minds the idea of a Kingdom of the Good
under the dominion of a beneficent Spirit who required of men the
culture of righteousness and the practice of mercy. The Demon of the
Lie, as Bruce observes, evil as he is, only serves as a foil to show
forth by contrast the virtues of Ahura Mazdah.

But while he points out that the important and valuable element in

(1)Cf., M.O., p. 41. (2)Cf, ibid., p. 47. (3)Ibid., p. 51.
Zoroaster's teaching is his conception of the Good Spirit, Bruce nevertheless maintains that the prophet's system is essentially dualistic. Scholarly investigation since Bruce's day has shown, however, that Zoroaster's dualism has been misconceived, and that for all practical purposes he is a monotheist and a monotheist by profound conviction. Gore, for example, in a careful investigation, makes these three points: (i) The power of the Evil One is to destroy or spoil, not to create. Evil is, in this sense, negative, not positive. (ii) The conflict of good and evil is due to an original (and ever-repeated) choice of wills. The primeval spirits choose good or evil and must therefore have existed before they chose:

"It is fairly clear that evil throughout is attributed to an original bad choice made by beings already in existence endowed with free wills; and what lies behind (the really primal being) is left in obscurity. Practically, however, Zarathustra treats Mazdah as the only Creator and supreme God; thus the ultimate controlling will in the universe is only good." (2)

(iii) Though Mazdah is now in conflict with a kingdom of evil, and needs the help of men, his final victory in the whole universe of things at the great consummation is assured. He is ultimately omnipotent; and the forces of evil, higher and lower, are destined to utter defeat and woe. Gore concludes that Zoroaster "is to all intents and purposes a monotheist," and that his religion "remains in its lofty severity a momentous creation." (4)

(b) In the ancient Graeco-Roman world the poets in earlier times and the philosophers in later days gave fullest expression to the conception of a Moral Order. Bruce's third, fourth, and fifth lectures are concerned with this period.

(1) The lecture on the Greek Tragedians is one of the most interesting of the studies in the volume. By the aid of Plumptre,

D'Arcoy Thompson and Symonds, Bruce makes Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides speak for themselves in noble passages from their works. He points out that these poets, while using the mythical elements of their religious heritage as part of the machinery of their plays, for the most part discriminate the purer and more rational ethical element from the non-moral or immoral fable. (1)

The most notable aspect of Bruce's analysis of the work of the playwrights is the very definite progression which he finds as he moves from the earliest of the three to the latest. This progression he finds "in dramatic art, in the personal attitude towards mythology, and in the individual views concerning the providential order." (2)

(i) Aeschylus treats the myths reverentially as being in themselves productive of serious religious emotion. His ethical system is simple. For him the fundamental fact of the Moral Order is that retributive justice (nemesis) follows evil-doing. He takes no note of exceptions to this law, "either because he was unaware of them, or because he was not in the mood to recognise them." (3) (ii) By Sophocles the myths are treated poetically. Bruce considers that this artist has a high estimate of the power of his art but that he is less of a theologian than Aeschylus. (4) In his ethical system he does not question the foundation laid by his predecessor; but he recognizes the mysterious circumstance that not infrequently the innocent suffer and the guilty escape, and he makes artistic use of this inexplicable factor in the moral order of things. (5) (iii) Euripides treats the mythic element critically, even sceptically; but this fact, as Bruce points out, in no way impugns the sincerity and depth of his ethical and religious convictions. (6) More fully than his predecessors he recognizes the

power of his art to evoke lofty emotions. In his ethical system he does not gainsay the law enunciated by Aeschylus, and still less does he dispute the fact of exceptions insisted on by Sophocles. His special contribution is found in his interpretation of the sufferings of the innocent as containing an element of self-sacrifice for the benefit of others:

"He knows and notes that there is not merely such a thing as innocence involuntarily suffering unmerited evil, but also such a thing as innocence voluntarily enduring evil, at the prompting of love and in devotion to a good cause. Such self-sacrifice did not appear to him, I think, a violation of the moral order, but rather the manifestation of that order under a new form." (3)

with Euripides moral evil is thus no longer hereditary, as it is with Aeschylus. Nor is suffering necessarily either punitive or disciplinary; it might be voluntarily incurred from altruistic motives.

In this lecture Bruce has clearly shown that the assertion of a Moral Order in the life of nations and of individual men was a leading didactic aim of the three great Greek Tragedians. Taken together, they teach a very full doctrine on the subject. Yet each of the three, as Bruce points out, is one-sided as a teacher of the common doctrine:

"Aeschylus was, consciously or unconsciously, inobservant of instances in which the great law of Nemesis failed; Sophocles was too conscious of the exceptions; Euripides found in his heroes and heroines of self-sacrifice the one source of light and consolation in an otherwise dark, unintelligible world." (2)

Common to all three is this further defect, that behind the Moral Order they see the dark shadow of Fate (Μοίρα), or necessity (ἀνάγκη), a blind force exercising a morally indifferent sway over gods and men alike. (3)

(2) Passing in his next lecture to the Stoics, Bruce gives a qualified approval to the hypothesis of Lightfoot that in their idea

(1) M. O. W., pp. 71f. (2) Ibid., p. 367. (3) Cf. ibid., p. 102.
of Providence there are traces of Semitic influence affecting a Hellenic stock.\(^{(1)}\) The Stoics had a lofty conception of man's place in the universe, and maintained a firm, cheerful faith in the rationality of the cosmos.\(^{(2)}\) They argued that, after God, there is nothing in the world so important as man, and nothing in man so important as reason.\(^{(3)}\) The true theology, therefore, is that which offers to faith a rational Divinity, and the true life that which consists in following the dictates of reason as active in the individual and immanent in the universe.

An interesting comparison suggests itself between Stoicism and Buddhism. The Stoic idea of the Moral Order is, like the Buddhistic, ethical and individualistic, but differs in being optimistic in tendency.\(^{(4)}\) Both have the same essential features of inwardness; but the calm retreat of passionless peace is reached by different paths in the two systems. Life is full of misery, said the Buddhist; therefore extinguish desire and so escape finally from pain (Nirvana). The so-called ills of life, said the Stoic, do not deserve the name, nor do the so-called goods have any better title to the designation; therefore treat all alike with disdain and so possess your soul in serenity (Ameltheia). To the Buddhist birth and death were evils and penalties of sin. The Stoic could never think of them as such, since both belong to the natural order which was to be accepted loyally, without demur.\(^{(5)}\) In the case of some of the Stoics we find a pragmatic agnosticism comparable with that of Buddha. It was held, for example, that the wise man does not need a God, and that God, for His part, does not heed the fool.\(^{(6)}\) In the case of others, however, such as Epictetus, the general fatherhood of God over both good and evil was:

\[(1)\text{Cf. }M.O.W., \text{p. }104.\quad (2)\text{Cf. ibid., p. }111.\quad (3)\text{Cf. ibid., p. }125.\quad (4)\text{Cf. ibid., pp. }105,110.\quad (5)\text{Cf. ibid., p. }111.\quad (6)\text{Cf. ibid., p. }125.\]
an article of faith.\(^1\)

The errors and weaknesses of the Stoics are well summarized by Bruce thus:

"They starved and blighted human nature by finding no place or function for passion, and worshipping as their ethical ideal apathetic wisdom. They shut their eyes to patent facts of experience by pretending to regard outward events as insignificant and pain as no evil. They silenced the voice of humanity in their hearts by indulging in merciless contempt for the weak and the foolish; that is to say, for the great mass of mankind who have not mastered the art of treating pain as a trifle, and gained complete victory over passionate impulse."\(^2\)

(3) The Stoic philosophers took a prominent place among the defenders of the reality of Divination, belief in which was a common feature of all ancient ethnic religion.\(^3\) Cicero has given us in short compass the logic of their argument, which ran thus: if there are gods, we may presume that they care for men; and if they care for men, they will not refuse to give them signs of their will.\(^4\) Such an initial position is sound enough; but it is followed by two great mistakes which vitiate everything. (i) The signs were expected and supposed to be given with reference to outward and secondary matters. The questions to be answered were such as these: Will this enterprise be a success? Shall I marry that woman? Will somebody have good luck? Epictetus, among the Stoics, had little use for such an art, for he was aware of the dilemma, that it is impious to ask whether we ought to do our duty, since no sign can make that clearer than it is already; and demoralizing to ask what will be the worldly consequences of our doing it.\(^5\) (ii) The other mistake was in looking to unusual events for signs, as if the common order of the world was useless for the purpose.\(^6\) Men did not even choose for their signs

\(^{1}\) Cf. M.O.W., p.134. \(^{2}\) Ibid., p.388. \(^{3}\) Cf. ibid., pp.140,142. \(^{4}\) Cf. Cicero, "De Divinatione," lib.1., cap.xxxviii; quoted by Bruce, M.O.W., pp.141f.
\(^{5}\) Cf. M.O.W., p.145. \(^{6}\) Cf. ibid., pp.146ff.
moral facts to be interpreted by moral insight, but physical things like the cry of a bird or the state of a victim's entrails, which had to be deciphered by technical skill. The root of the mischief was the belief in fortune instead of character as the supreme good, and consequent unhealthy curiosity about the future. The distrust of the Moral Order implied in this kind of Divination hindered true religion by the low ideals it encouraged; and it hindered true knowledge by its arbitrary methods and contempt of common things. It was at once dishonouring to the gods and degrading to their worshippers. Thanks to Christianity Divination, broadly speaking, is a thing of the past. "Absolute trust in Providence," as Bruce says, "kills the curiosity out of which springs the diviner's art." (1)

(c) For his next three lectures Bruce turns to the Bible, selecting for his subjects the Hebrew Prophets, the Book of Job, and Christ's teaching concerning Divine Providence. On the first and third of these lectures it is unnecessary to dwell at length. Bruce's treatment of the Prophets and of the Old Testament generally will be discussed in our next main section, dealing with the Historical Presuppositions of Christianity. (2) His treatment of Christ's teaching on Providence has already been touched on. (3)

(1) The prophetic doctrine of Providence represents a great advance of religious thought when compared with that which underlies the practice of Divination. Its supreme merit is its profoundly ethical character; it is the doctrine of ethical monotheism:

"The fundamental fact about these seers of Israel is that they were men in whose breasts burned the passion for righteousness. .... This noble passion, which needs no apology, is the best apology for the creed which is congenial to it. It demands, and therefore justifies, faith in an ethical deity, and in a moral order revealing itself in the lives of men and nations." (4)

(1) M.O.W., p.171. (2)Vide infra, pp. 353-385. (3)Vide supra, pp. 113f. (4)M.O.W., p.185.
This prophetic passion for righteousness, when strongly emphasized, became the weakness of the system and resulted in three main defects, which Bruce summarizes thus:

"(i) A tendency to assert in an extreme form the connection between the physical order and the moral order, between particular events in national or individual history, and particular actions of which they are supposed to be the reward and punishment; (ii) a tendency to lay undue emphasis on the vindictive action of divine providence; and (iii) the tendency to attach too much value to outward good and ill as the divinely appointed rewards and penalties of conduct." (1)

In the first of these defects, the prophetic doctrine bears a certain resemblance to the atomistic way of applying the principle of Karma characteristic of Buddhism, according to which each separate act finds in some future time its own appropriate recompense. But there is no trace in prophetic literature of the extravagance with which Buddhism doles out the awards due to separate deeds. In the third of the defects mentioned by Bruce we can see a certain contrast between the Hebrew Prophet and the Greek Stoic. While the Stoic reckoned outward good and ill matters of indifference, the Prophet all but found in these things the chief good and the chief ill.

Bruce's judgment on the contrast is interesting:

"At this point the Stoic position represents an advance in ethical thought; but both positions are one-sided: the truth lies between them." (2)

We can agree with Bruce that both positions are one-sided and that the truth lies between them; but we cannot think that the Stoic position represents any real advance in ethical thought. The ethics implied in the doctrine of ἡμῶν Θεία are on a lower plane than those belonging to the ethical monotheism of the Prophets. Whatever their defects, we owe the Prophets a debt of gratitude for that moral intensity and insight which led them to affirm so strongly a

(1)M.O.W., p.389. (2)Ibid., p.390.
connection between conduct and lot in human history.

(2) The exposition of the ethical system underlying the story of Job shows Bruce at a congenial task. He has no doubt that the book's intrinsic merits give it a foremost place in the religious literature of the world:

"As a discussion of the question as to the reality of a Providential order it is unique. There is nothing like it either in the Hebrew Bible or outside of it; nothing so thorough, so searching, or so bold."(i)

(i) The three lines taken by Job's friends indicate three aspects of the moral problem. Eliphaz states at the outset the position held in common by them. This amounts to an assertion that there is a perfect moral government of God in the world rendering to every man according to his deserts here and now.(2) Eliphaz supports his belief by observation and experience, Bildad by the voice and testimony of antiquity, and Zophar by dogmatic assertion. The position of the first Job treats argumentatively, that of the second sceptically, and that of the third contemptuously.(3) Highly characteristic of Bruce is this comment:

"The three friends have but one or two ideas in their head, on which they tiresomely ring the changes. They have theoretic blinders on, that prevent them from seeing all round. Job, on the other hand, having no blinders on, sees in all directions, never repeats himself, as the debate advances becomes ever more fertile in ideas; not an uncommon experience in the case of all who keep their minds open, and do not imagine they have got to the bottom of everything."(4)

(ii) What, then, is the didactic significance of this solemn debate on Providence? Bruce considers that, while the writer of the book is as far as possible from being a dogmatist, his sympathies are decidedly with Job's position. That position is negative in form, but very significant in import. Job dares to maintain that the

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theory so confidently contended for by his friends is unfounded. Relying on his moral sense, he is perfectly sure that a good man may suffer as he is suffering, and that any theory which denies this is false. Why such a man suffers he does not profess to know. (i)

(iii) But what of the writer's view of the rationale of the sufferings of good men? Bruce does not favour the opinion of Karl Budde that the honour of being spokesman for the author belongs to Elihu. (2) This interlocutor, differing from the three others, regards Job as a sincere, pious, but faulty man; and he views his sufferings as a chastisement sent by a gracious God for his moral purification and spiritual improvement. Bruce considers that, if this be the view of the writer, it must be said that his grasp of the problem at issue is not so deep or so comprehensive as the power and boldness displayed in his work would lead us to expect:

"This view is true so far as it goes, but it does not go to the root of the matter or cover the whole ground of the inquiry. To what extent and why do the righteous suffer? It says: A man may suffer though righteous, because while righteous on the whole he is still sinful. But is there not such a thing as suffering for righteousness; the more righteous the more suffering, the perfectly righteous one presumably the greatest sufferer of all?" (3)

This deeper interpretation, drawing attention to a service of much greater importance to the Moral Order, is suggested in the Prologue; and Bruce would have the support of not a few modern scholars in thinking that in this interpretation the author of "Job" recognized at least one point of view from which the sufferings of the righteous might be contemplated. (4) The rationale of such sufferings would then be, as Bruce puts it, "to satisfy a sceptical world that there is such a thing as disinterested goodness." (5) This view is supported by Dr H. Wheeler Robinson, who writes:

"If the author has made himself responsible for the prologue, then we are justified in saying that the veil of mystery which hangs over God's purpose for Job is here lifted. Job suffered to prove that disinterested religion is a reality; he unconsciously bore witness to the reality of such religion. This forms a distinct interpretation of innocent suffering, beyond the theory of discipline or chastening which is found elsewhere in the book."(1)

(3) The last voice from the ancient world is that of Christ, and the fundamental contention of these lectures is that His teaching concerning Divine Providence is the one ethical system which fits in with all the phenomena of the moral world. Of Christ's doctrine concerning outward good and evil Bruce writes:

"It may be summed up, in so far as it is peculiar, in three propositions: (i) that external good and evil are to a large extent common to men irrespective of character; (ii) that there are sufferings which inevitably overtake all who devote themselves to the highest interests of human life; (iii) that those who so suffer are not to be pitied, either by themselves or by others; that, on the contrary, they have good cause, as also capacity, for joy."(2)

Emphasizing that the main thing to be said about such teaching is that it presupposes a new idea of God, Bruce outlines Christ's doctrine of Providence under three heads. (1) It is eminently genial. "The sun of Divine Fatherhood," says Bruce, "rose on the world when Jesus began to teach."(3) The Providence of the Heavenly Father is conspicuously benignant, and it is exercised over all His creatures.(4) (ii) Christ's doctrine is distinguished by reasonableness. Providence, in accomplishing its purposes, works through the course of nature. "The providential order and the natural order," as Bruce puts it, "are not mutually exclusive spheres; they are the same thing under different aspects."(5) (iii) Christ's doctrine is of an optimistic character. His conception of the benign Father-God is optimistic; and Bruce considers that His idea of the world is not less optimistic,

(2)M.O.W., pp.245f.  
(3)Ibid., p.251.  
(4)Cf. Ibid.  
(5)Ibid., p.254.
since He looks on the course of nature as lending itself "as a pliant instrument for the working out of the Divine Father's beneficent purposes." (1)

In the childlike trust in a paternal Providence inculcated by Christ Bruce finds one of the chief contrasts between Christianity and Paganism. Paganism, in his view, has three characteristics. (2)

(i) It cherishes low ideals; material good is its sumnum bonum: "after all these things do the Gentiles seek." (3)

(ii) It is not a religion of trust: it is not sure that God cares for man.

(iii) It seeks after diviners to reveal a future which is dark, and whose uncertainty appeals at once to hope and to fear. Christ's teaching cuts the roots of all three defects:

"It lifts the heart up to higher things than food and raiment. It tells us that God is a Father who loves and cares for men as His children. It promises good, whatever betide, to those who live for the highest." (4)

Bruce concludes his review of Christ's teaching on Providence by saying that it is acceptable from every point of view. It satisfies the demands alike of heart, conscience, and reason:

"It satisfies the heart by offering to faith a God whose nature is paternal, and whose providential action has for its supreme characteristic benignancy. It satisfies the conscience by ignoring no dark facts in the world's history; by looking moral evil straight in the face; and by recognising frankly the punitive action of the moral order. It satisfies the reason by avoiding abstract antitheses between providential action and natural law, by viewing that action as immanent and constant rather than transcendent and occasional -- pervading the course of nature and working through it, rather than interrupting it by supernatural incursions. Its rationality is further revealed by its unreserved acceptance of growth, progress, as the law of the spiritual, not less than of the natural, world. In this respect modern evolutionary philosophy, far from superseding the teaching of Christ, only tends to illustrate its wisdom, and helps us to a better understanding of its meaning." (5)

This paragraph is highly typical of Bruce's thought and provides a

useful summary of his exposition of Christ's teaching on Providence.

Four characteristics stand out. (i) Bruce's emphasis upon the Fatherhood of God and its benignancy. (ii) His strong sense of the ethical. (iii) His view of providential action as "immanent and constant" within natural law. (iv) His view that "modern evolutionary philosophy" illustrates the wisdom of Christ's teaching in its "unreserved acceptance" of growth and progress as the law of both the spiritual and the natural world.

(d) The remaining lectures are concerned with conceptions of the Moral Order entertained within modern times. In Bruce's view two broadly contrasted tendencies -- one optimistic, the other dualistic -- have characterized those who were anxious to abide as far as possible by the Christian idea of God. (1)

(1) After so noteworthy and comprehensive a presentation of the pre-Christian ages, it is somewhat startling to find the entire Christian era represented, on the positive or optimistic side, by the solitary figure of Robert Browning. Taken on its own merits, however, the lecture puts Browning very pleasantly before us as illustrating the spirit of "modern optimism," which, in contrast with the too easy optimism of the eighteenth century and with such belated exponents of that type as Theodore Parker and Emerson, recognizes the evils of life, but holds that they can be overcome by the godlike power of love.

It will be sufficient to indicate briefly the salient features in Browning's creed. Foremost stands his doctrine of God which is that "God is love and love is God." (2) Love is the greatest, mightiest, most pervasive thing in the world. Browning's doctrine of man accords

with his genial idea of God:

"He accepts the view, confirmed by modern science, of man's place in the universe as the crown of the creative process; and in man's history he sees the continuation of the evolutionary movement, carrying him upwards ever nearer to the moral ideal." (1)

Browning's optimism reveals itself conspicuously in his mode of dealing with the problem of evil. (2) Not merely alongside of evil, but even in evil itself, this poet-philosopher can discern good, or the promise and potency of good. With regard to physical evil, his main contention is that pain elevates by eliciting sympathy. (3) His solution of the problem of moral evil is summed up by Bruce in these six propositions. (i) Morality, the realization of the moral ideal, is the highest good. The moral development of the soul is the one thing in human life of supreme interest. All else is to be valued by its bearing upon the *sumnum bonum*. (4) (ii) The moral ideal is a far-off goal, to be reached only by arduous effort. Process -- progress by conflict -- is necessary to morality. (5) (iii) Evil is the foe with which man has to fight. The struggle gives zest, value, tragic significance to life. (6) (iv) Does not this amount to saying that evil is in its own way good, or at least that it is a necessary means to good as its end? "It does," replies Bruce, "and Browning does not shrink from this daring conception." (7) The doctrine seems to come perilously near to confounding moral distinctions and making evil good in disguise. Browning is, in fact, in the position of a man divided against himself. As Bruce puts it:

"His robust moral sense constrains him to view moral evil as a great tremendous reality which might conceivably assert its power in the universe victoriously and permanently. On the other hand, his assured conviction that, under the reign of a God of love, this cannot be, tempts him to think of sin as part of the divine
plan: no detail, not even the vice of a Fifine, but, in place allotted to it, "prime and perfect."(1)

How, then, does he get out of the dilemma? (v) He takes refuge in ignorance, and asserts that it is impossible for us to know whether sin be a grim reality or only a shadowy appearance. Not only so: ignorance of the true nature of evil is necessary to give strenuousness and even reality to the struggle. Bruce's criticism of Browning at this point will appear to most students as most apposite:

"This doctrine is plausible but sophistical; one wonders how so robust and healthy a mind as Browning's could have anything to do with it. Certainty as to the deep radical distinction between good and evil is not paralysing to the moral energies; it is uncertainty that paralyses. ..... On the whole, this doctrine of uncertainty has no proper place in a truly optimistic theory. Its metaphysical presupposition is an agnostic theory of knowledge; it introduces a dualism between thought and conduct which cannot fail to be a source of moral weakness; it suggests a view of the illusoriness of life whose true affinities are with pessimism."(2)

(vi) The last article in Browning's creed is that the struggle with evil will in all cases have a happy issue:

"There will be no final irretrievable failure. ..... The unchangeable gracious purpose of God is assumed to have for its aim the realisation in all human souls of all moral possibilities."(3)

The scene of the unmaking and remaking of souls is the world beyond the grave. It is the poet's firm conviction that there, in general, the problem of evil finds its adequate solution; and we may agree with Bruce that in this belief he is "true to the spirit of optimism."(4)

(2) Dualism is the other of the two broadly contrasted modern tendencies considered by Bruce. Unable to take an optimistic view of the past, present, or future of the world, dualism introduces in some form a rival to the beneficent Deity of Christian faith. Bruce distinguishes two types. One type, in which the scientific and philosophic aspects are most conspicuous, "discovers in the world of

(1)M.O.W.,pp.238f. (2)Ibid.,pp.300f. (3)Ibid.,pp.301f. (4)Ibid.
nature traces of a personal rival to the Good Being, counterworking His beneficent purpose." (1) The other type, in which the religious and social aspects prevail, "finds a foe of the Divine even in the reason of man." (2)

In the lecture on the scientific and philosophic aspects of dualism Bruce deals with three writers in particular -- Huxley, Mill, and the author of "Evil and Evolution." (i) The rationale of theistic dualism is "zeal for the goodness of God, the wish to relieve the Divine Being of responsibility for whatever evil may be in the world." (3) There is, however, an agnostic dualism, represented prominently by Huxley. In his theory of the universe the conflict is not between personal powers of good and evil, but between Evolution and Ethics, between a physical nature characterized by "a brutal indifference to morality" and man "in so far as earnestly-minded to realise an ethical ideal." (4) This pessimistic view of nature "made the hypothesis of a divine Creator hard of credence." (5) (ii) In Mill's "Three Essays on Religion" Bruce sees the rudiments of dualism proper. Here the view of nature is not so dark as with Huxley. In the cosmic process some good is discovered whereon an argument may be founded for goodness as an attribute of the Great First Cause. But there is discovered also so much that is not good that faith in the Divine goodness can be retained only on the hypothesis that its beneficent purpose has been thwarted by some counterworking power. (6) (iii) The author of "Evil and Evolution" is even less pessimistic than Mill in his view of Nature. But while he believes the good to be the stronger force in the world, he considers the evil to be sufficiently real to require belief in a personal Satan. Bruce frankly recognizes

"The modern Satan is skilfully constructed. The construction proceeds on the inductive method of modern science. First, all the good elements and beneficent aspects of the universe are picked out, and from these are formed the idea of the Being to whom is assigned the honourable position and name of the Creator. Then the remaining features, forming the dark side of nature, are collected and examined. From their wholly diverse character it is inferred, in the first place, that they must owe their existence to a Being whose spirit is absolutely antagonistic to that of the Creator. From the proportion which the evil element bears to the good, and from the relation in which the former stands to the latter, the status, attributes, and modus operandi of the evil Spirit are determined."

Bruce offers the following criticisms of this last type of dualism.

(i) It affirms, in effect, that in a divinely ordered universe moral evil would be impossible. But the actual universe is preferable to the imaginary one from which wrong is excluded by Divine omnipotence.

(ii) There are only two alternatives: either the evil Spirit is unoriginated, eternal; or he owes his being to the good Spirit. The former alternative means that good and evil are both alike Divine—a position which involves at once the cancelling of moral distinctions and the destruction of Deity. With the other alternative we make God responsible for the existence of the malign being by whom all the mischief has been wrought.

(iii) This dualistic scheme, while making pretensions to scientific method, is unscientific in so far as it destroys the unity of the universe, which becomes "the heterogeneous effect of two processes counterworking each other."

(iv) The dualists as a whole may justly be charged with morbid views of the evil that is in the world. In a characteristic judgment Bruce says of them:

"They look on some things as evil that are not, they exaggerate the evils that do exist, and they largely overlook the fact that evil is good in the making, or a possible good not understood."
In his final summing up Bruce freely admits that dualism as a philosophical theory testifies to the presence in the physical and moral universe of a perplexing mystery which speculative reason finds it hard to clear up.\(^1\) He considers, however, that the habit of referring moral lapses to Satanic temptation is full of danger, and that it is even more productive of havoc to ascribe to Satanic agency the whole moral evil of mankind.\(^2\) The latter position, to his mind, carries two fatal consequences. It convicts God of impotence, and it relieves men of responsibility. Satan turns out to be at once the one mighty being and the one sinner in the world. Bruce's words at this point are highly characteristic of his thought and worthy of quotation:

"The story of our race is dark enough, but it is not so dark as that. It is the story of a race of free moral agents who are not the puppets of either Deity or devil. The sin of man is not a witness to a frustrated God, but to a God who would rather have sin in the world than have a world without sin because tenanted by beings physically incapacitated to commit it. The very transgression of a free responsible being is in God's sight of more value than the involuntary rectitude of beings who are forcibly protected from going wrong. If there is to be goodness in the world, it must be the personal achievement of the good. Not indeed of the good unaided. The Divine Being is more than an onlooker. He co-operates in every way compatible with due respect for our moral personality. .... Let us throw off the incubus of an omnipotent devil conjured up by modern dualism, and go on our way with good hope, and full faith that God is with us, and that He is stronger than all the powers, visible or invisible, that may be arrayed against us."\(^3\)

In this lecture we cannot but admire Bruce's healthy Christian optimism, as expressed in his confidence that God is sovereign Ruler in the world and that He gives His Divine support to the man who seeks to do the right. We recognize, too, his strong moral sense, especially in his refusal to allow man to escape from personal responsibility for his sin. Two criticisms, however, must be made.

(1) While we reject an ultimate dualism, the dualists must be given

\(^{(1)}\) Cf. M.O.W., pp. 333f. \(^{(2)}\) Cf. ibid., pp. 343f. \(^{(3)}\) Cf. ibid., pp. 344f.
credit for having insisted that beyond the mystery of human sin there
is the mystery of natural evil as seen in such facts as suffering and
death. While it is true that human sin has added a new poison to
suffering and a new sting to death, natural evil cannot be conceived
as other than evil. This is not to deny that God can bring good out
of evil; but it will not do to say, without qualification, that "evil
is good in the making, or a possible good not understood." (1) The
mystery of evil, of course, remains. (ii) Bruce has failed to see
that the idea of "Satan" stands for a real fact of the moral world,
viz., man's solidarity in evil. While sin is always a conscious and
responsible act of will on the part of an individual, it is never
merely a man's private affair. It is also a state or condition of
sinfulness mysteriously constitutive of our empirical make-up. As
Dr Whale has put it:

"The personification of evil as Satan, difficult though it is for
our thought, stands for the fact of spiritual solidarity in evil
which will not be evaded or ignored. An enemy hath done this —
our common Enemy! Whatever images of thought we may employ,
there is in the world of our experience a kingdom of evil by which
the evil acts of each individual are inspired, sustained and
reinforced." (2)

(3) In his lecture on the religious and social aspects of dualism
Bruce is concerned with the view that finds in human reason the
antagonist of the Deity. (i) "The first step in the vilification of
reason," he says, "is the assertion that it cannot find God." (3) This
position, in itself, does not necessarily involve a depreciatory
estimate of reason's capacity. Inability to find may be attributable
to lack of clues to God in nature. This view has been held by men
of different schools, notably by the Ritschlian theologians in
support of the thesis that Jesus Christ is the sole source of know-
ledge of God. In his criticism of Ritschlian agnosticism we have a

"If Christ's doctrine of God be true, there ought to be something in the world to verify it. There can hardly be a real Divine Father in the Gospels if there be no traces of that Father outside the Gospels, in the universe. If God can be known by any means, it is presumable that He can be known by many means. It is intrinsically probable that some knowledge of God can be reached by more than one road. Why should we be so slow to believe that the Divine can be known? The bankruptcy of natural theology is a gratuitous proposition. The Apostle Paul expresses only the judgment of good sense when he indicates that there is "that which may be known of God" even by Pagans, and charges the heathen world, not with incapacity to know God, but with unwillingness to retain God in their knowledge. (1) This is the reasonable view still for men who walk in the light of modern science. In view of man's place in the cosmos, it is a priori credible that there is a revelation of God in nature, and that man in the exercise of his cognitive faculties is capable of deciphering it. Man being rational, the presumption is that God is rational, and that Divine Reason is immanent in the world. Man being moral, the presumption is that God is moral, and that traces of a moral order of the world will discover themselves to a discerning eye. These two positions being conceded, it results that we men are God's sons, and that God is our Father. Christ's doctrine is confirmed. The new light is the true light. By intuition Jesus saw and said what modern science seals." (2)

(ii) The next step in the disparagement of reason is the assertion that it is unable or unwilling to receive a revelation of God coming to it from without. In discussing this alleged antagonism between reason and faith, Bruce notes three charges brought against reason -- its pride, its aversion to mystery, and its reluctance to receive as truth whatever exceeds its comprehension. (3) The last-named charge opens up the way for the enthronement of authority -- "the authority of the past or of custom, or the authority of the Church." (4) In a notable passage Bruce shows how those who lean mainly on authority in religion would have been with the Pharisees in Christ's time in their rejection of the Great Teacher. (5) The claims of authority must not be upheld to the prejudice of reason. By reason Bruce does not mean

the mere faculty of reasoning, which seeks to convince by argument. This he characterizes as "a hopelessly inadequate view." (1) Reason is "a faculty of seeing with the spiritual eye of an enlightened understanding." (2) The Bible, being the literary product and monument of this rare and precious gift, is a Divine protest against the domination of custom and authority in religion:

"Prophets and apostles were all in a state of revolt, in the interest of personal inspiration, against the brute force of a traditional belief at whose hands they all more or less suffered. Defences of Biblical religion by idolaters of authority are simply tombs built in honour of men whom kindred spirits in their lifetime persecuted and killed." (3)

(iii) The third charge against reason is that it is antagonistic to God's will conceived as having for its aim the moral and social progress of mankind. One enjoys immensely the clear dry heat with which Bruce discusses and assails this odd theory as powerfully worked out in Benjamin Kidd's "Social Evolution." Kidd argues that reason is the most profoundly individualistic, anti-social, and anti-evolutionary of all human qualities, and that the secret of social progress is to be found in a non-rational religious sanction. (4) Bruce regards such a position as at once revolting and incredible, and he quotes from Hobertly's "Reason and Religion" in support of his conviction that reason and morality are inseparable, and that the antithesis between them is unknown to Scripture. He rightly insists that, however mediaevalism and sacerdotalism may be opposed to reason, the Christianity of the Gospels, when fairly set forth, is not so. (5) He makes this excellent point, moreover, that modern thinkers have often overlooked the fact that the moral and spiritual renewal which, in New Testament Christianity, accompanies the acceptance of Christ's salvation, brings with it "a new heart delighting to do God's will.

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and a clarified reason in sympathy with the true and the good."(1) He concludes the lecture with these words:

"As a theorist Mr Kidd is chargeable with great inconsistency. He has made it his chief business to exhibit human reason to all who desire social well-being as an object of deadly distrust, and in performing this ungenial task he has put unlimited confidence in his own individual reason and its powers of argumentation. It would have been well if he had had a little less faith in his own logic, and a little more faith in the social instincts of average humanity."(2)

(4) In his last lecture, entitled "Retrospect and Prospect," Bruce notices the new Ethical Movement of his day. He recognizes the value of its aim, and gives it as his view that ethics can stand alone without theistic or theological buttresses:

"The dilapidation of the buttresses would not, I acknowledge, involve the tumbling into ruin of the moral edifice. I do not believe that the decay of religious faith would necessarily lead to the withering of moral sentiment and the demoralisation of conduct. So far from thinking that religion creates conscience, I rather incline to the view that conscience creates religion."(3)

With the sentiment contained in the first two of these sentences we strongly disagree. It seems to us as plain as reason and facts can make it that if morality has not its sanction in the Living God, it has no adequate sanction at all. Both theory and practice prove that it is a vain wish to preserve morality while dispensing with religion.

As Dr Lamont has well said:

"Morality may linger on for a while when faith has ceased, but it is the lingering of the evening twilight, "and after that the dark." .... The essential condition of the preservation and enhancement of morality in the world is belief in a God who rules and cares. We are cast upon God for our ultimate sanction of morality."(4)

In the last sentence of our quotation from Bruce, concerning the relation between conscience and religion, we feel he is presenting us with a false choice. Conscience implies in its very structure a reference to God, and is, in the words of Dr James Stalker, "the

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common centre of both the ethical and the religious life." (1) Bruce, it should be noted, believing that morality and religion are related as cause and effect, as reality and ideal, (2) is persuaded that the Ethical Movement "will not long remain merely ethical. .... It will blossom out into a religious creed of some kind." (3) He clearly perceives, however, that any kind of creed will not do. If the movement is to realize its ambition to be a new reformation, "it will have to recognise more unreservedly the Mastership of Jesus." (4)

**Conclusion.** Bruce's object in setting out upon the Second Course of his "Gifford Lectures" was to show that "the common faith in an eternal august moral order may be regarded as the fundamental certainty, the vital element in the religion of humanity." (5) Having passed in review the conceptions of the Moral Order held by some of the world's greatest teachers, he ends by a noble vindication of Christ's teaching as proclaiming the true "moral order" of the universe:

"One does not need to be a clergyman or a professed apologist, but only a candid student of comparative religion, to satisfy himself that the teaching of Christ combines the merits and avoids the defects specified in the foregoing review. On all subjects that teaching shuns absolute antitheses, onesidedness, the falsehood of extremes." (6)

Thus the volume, like all of Bruce's books, has its centre in Christ.

From the argument as a whole one practical conclusion is drawn:

"From all this it would seem to follow that the path of progress for the future must lie along the line of Christ's teaching; that the least thing men who seek the good of our race can do is to serve themselves heir to the thoughts of Jesus concerning God, man, the world, and their relations, and work these out under modern conditions." (7)

For all friends of moral and social progress this short Christian creed is added as a summary of faith and practice:

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"One supreme Will at the heart of the universe, good and ever working for good; man's chief end to serve this supreme Will in filial freedom, and in loyal devotion to righteousness; life on earth on these terms worth living, full of joy if not without tribulation, to be spent in cheerfulness and without ascetic austerities; life beyond the tomb an object of rational hope, if not of undoubting certainty."(1)

We may listen to Bruce once more as he repeats the main message of his life:

"It is natural that we who stand on the margin between two centuries should wistfully inquire, What is before us? What is our prospect for the future? ....... For all the higher interests of life the best thing that could happen would be the revival of the simple Christianity of Christ and the working out of his great thoughts."(2)

II. THE HISTORICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. Old Testament Criticism and Apologetics: Bruce's Point of View.

In Book I of his "Apologetics" and in his Gifford Lectures Bruce has dealt very fully with the philosophical presuppositions of Christianity. Christianity, however, has also its historical presuppositions. Jesus belonged to a peculiar nation, which thought of itself as an elect race, had a singular religious history, cherished extraordinary ideas of its destiny, and possessed a remarkable literature. These historical presuppositions Bruce summarizes as (i) an Elect People; (ii) a Messianic Hope; and (iii) a Sacred Literature.(3) They are treated by him in a general way in "The Chief End of Revelation," and more fully and systematically in Book II of "Apologetics", which is entitled, "The Historical Preparation for Christianity."

The traditional views of the development of Hebrew history, religion and literature had, in various important respects, been upset by the historical criticism of the Old Testament, and Bruce,

(1)W.O.
(2)Ibid.
(3)Cf.
(4)Vide supra, pp. 18-24.
as an apologist, had a duty to help those who were perplexed by the results of the new science. It is obvious that the nature of the help given would depend largely on the attitude he himself adopted to the new critical views. In "The Chief End of Revelation", as far back as 1881, when Scotland was stirred by the Robertson Smith controversy, he kept his head and spoke sane words, refusing to ally himself with either extreme. In that book he is careful to point out that the order of revelation may be one thing, and the order of the books holding its record quite another: he accepts the dual Isaiah; and on the question whether the doctrinal and religious standpoint of Abraham represents an actual experience or an idealization of the later prophets he will not dogmatize. After urging against the newer view various considerations, he yet concedes:

"For the purposes of our argument we can afford to admit that the prophets, or whoever wrote the patriarchal history, give in their narrative the Divine significance of the events in Abraham's life, as it lay revealed to their view by the course of Israel's history, rather than the meaning which these bore to Abraham's own mind....... It might have to be admitted that his life, as narrated in Genesis, has undergone considerable colouring in the hands of the historian. Still the residuum of fact would form a sufficient basis for the revelation of a Divine intention."(3)

His treatment, in the same book, of the question of Abraham's "temptation" to offer Isaac may be commended still as a courageous example of the temper in which such a story ought to be approached.(4)

Book II of the "Apologetics", which appeared eleven years later, provides a more mature as well as a more systematic statement of Bruce's views with regard to the evolution of Old Testament religion. It is not too much to say that at the time of its appearance, and for some time thereafter, it was almost unique. Dr J.E.McFadyen, writing in 1900, says of it: "There is nowhere within the same compass so trenchant and convincing an exposition of the nature and development of the results of the new science. It is obvious that the nature of the help given would depend largely on the attitude he himself adopted to the new critical views. In "The Chief End of Revelation", as far back as 1881, when Scotland was stirred by the Robertson Smith controversy, he kept his head and spoke sane words, refusing to ally himself with either extreme. In that book he is careful to point out that the order of revelation may be one thing, and the order of the books holding its record quite another: he accepts the dual Isaiah; and on the question whether the doctrinal and religious standpoint of Abraham represents an actual experience or an idealization of the later prophets he will not dogmatize. After urging against the newer view various considerations, he yet concedes:

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of Old Testament religion."(1) As an introduction to a general view of the subject, it may still be warmly commended.

In the first chapter, entitled "The Sources", Bruce outlines the main critical positions and summarizes the results thus:

"It will be seen that the effect of modern criticism on the mode of viewing the religious history of Israel is serious. It amounts to an inversion of the order subsisting between law and prophecy. Instead of saying, the law and the prophets, we must say, the prophets and the law. The law, in the comprehensive sense, was not given by Moses; it came not till the great prophets Micah, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah had delivered their message. .... If we are to take a critically well-founded view of the religious development of Israel, we must recognize three great periods or stages in its onward march: Mosaic, having for its salient feature the Decalogue; Prophetic, true to Mosaic, and carrying it on to higher issues; Jewish, not without valuable characteristics, but inaugurating an era in which the prophetic motto, "to obey is better than sacrifice," might be said to have been finally transformed into "sacrifice the sum of obedience."(2)

A very important question now arises for the apologist: What is to be his attitude towards these critical views respecting the authorship and dates of the component parts of the Old Testament literature? Bruce's reply is twofold; and it is important in that it enables us to understand better his treatment of the whole subject. He points out, in the first place, that the apologist is not called upon to accept the results of modern criticism, or to constitute himself an advocate of its claims to scientific certainty. He is entitled to hold himself aloof from critical dogmatism, and to keep his personal opinions in a state of suspense. On at least three grounds he may reasonably excuse himself from coming to a final decision on the questions raised.(3) (i) He may without shame plead the lack of an expert's knowledge. (ii) He may plead that the discussion and solution of critical problems do not fall within the scope of general Apologetics, but belong to the distinct theological discipline of Biblical Introduction. (iii) He may plead the unsettled state of

critical opinion. As Bruce puts it:

"It will be time enough for the apologist to dogmatise when criticism has arrived at the stage of finality. It is far enough from having reached that stage as yet." (1)

In these circumstances he considers that the attitude of the apologist must be that of one who refuses to be deeply committed on critical questions.

But now we have the second part of Bruce's answer. While the apologist must not commit himself deeply or blindly, "he cannot go on his way as if nothing had happened, or as if he had never heard of modern higher criticism." (2) In other words, he must adjust himself to the new situation. He must consider how far the opinions confidently advanced by the critics are compatible, or the reverse, with the faith he is concerned to defend. Avoiding dogmatism in favour of criticism, he must with equal care avoid dogmatism against it. Above all, he must not conclude hastily that, if the critics are right, it is all over with revelation, or with the claim of the Scriptures to be in any sense a Divine book, or with the claim of Israel to be an elect people, and that therefore the Christian believer must renounce the critics and all their works. Bruce considers the proper apologetic attitude towards criticism to be essentially the same as that towards the evolutionary theory of the origin of the universe:

"Modern criticism yields what may be called an evolutionary theory of the origin of Old Testament literature and religion; and the two evolutions should be faced with the same spirit of fearless trust. The business of the apologist is, in both cases alike, to recognise the legitimacy of the inquiry, while not dogmatising as to the truth of its results, to acquire such an acquaintance with the main lines of thought as shall enable him to grasp their drift, and to show if he can that the old faith can live with the new science or hypothesis." (3)

Proceeding in this spirit, Bruce allows his method to be controlled by criticism, so far as to make his starting-point "what critics of

greatest weight and authority regard as certain."(1) Accordingly, the new critical theory, in its general outline, is made the basis of his exposition of Old Testament history and religion. What he is anxious to show above all is that, even if the theory should be finally established, faith in revelation has nothing to fear:

"Let us not be afraid. Revelation will stand after criticism has done its utmost, and to propagate this conviction and to deliver the Church from unreasoning panic is one of the urgent tasks of present-day apologetic."(2)

In accordance with the principle just enunciated, Bruce begins with the religion of the Prophets as providing a firm foundation on which the student of Israel's religious history may safely plant his foot. From this sure ground he can work back to Moses and then downwards again through Judaism towards the Christian era. The chapter on "The Religion of the Prophets" presents an excellent general sketch of "their conception of God and of His relations to the world, to the nations, to Israel, and to man."(3) "Ethical monotheism" is rightly taken to be the briefest designation of their theological position. (4) Bruce does full justice to the originality and grandeur of the prophetic conception:

"It is admittedly a unique phenomenon in the religious history of the human race, rising above all other ancient thoughts of deity in solitary grandeur. Whence came it, how is it to be accounted for? This is a question not easy to answer on naturalistic principles."(5)

Bruce cannot think that the ethical monotheism of the prophets had its source, as Renan, supposed, merely in a monotheistic tendency inherent in the Semitic races, nor that its universality was merely the consequence of the widening of Israel's political horizon on the rise of the great Assyrian power. While these may be allowed as contributory

factors, the heart of the matter for Bruce is clear and definite:

"The prophets themselves had no doubt as to whence their knowledge of God came. It was, they felt, a revelation direct from heaven." (1)

One of the necessary presuppositions of the ethical monotheism of Hebrew prophecy was, of course, the intense ethicalism of the prophets themselves. (2)

We may now give a brief preliminary sketch of the further course of Bruce's argument. In the next chapter, entitled "The Prophetic Idea of Israel's Vocation and History," he discusses the beliefs cherished by the prophets concerning the nation to which they belonged. This is followed by a chapter on "Moses and Mosaicism." From that topic Bruce reverts to "Prophetism", now to be regarded as a stage in the onward progress of revelation. Thence he proceeds to the study of "Judaism," or the religion of Israel in the period subsequent to the Exile; and from the twilight of Judaism he passes to "The Night of Legalism." Having thus considered the various stages of Israel's history from Moses to the Christian era, he concludes with two chapters on the Hebrew Scriptures as a literature of revelation, "treating of their origin and value, and also of their defects arising out of their being the literature of the preparatory stage of revelation." (3)

We propose now to discuss Bruce's treatment of these subjects under the three heads of what he has called the "historical presuppositions of Christianity," viz., (1) An Elect People; or, the Divine Purpose in the Vocation and History of Israel. (ii) A Messianic Hope; or, the Progress of Revelation in the Religion of Israel. (iii) A Sacred Literature; or, the Function of Scripture in Revelation.

(1) Apol., p. 191. (2) Cf. ibid., p. 192. (3) Ibid., p. 175.
2. An Elect People; or, the Divine Purpose in the Vocation and History of Israel.

Bruce takes the fact of an Elect People to be the first of the historical presuppositions of Christianity, and he treats the matter admirably in his chapter on "the Prophetic Idea of Israel's Vocation and History." His views were undoubtedly a real contribution to theological thought on election. As we have already discussed them in our section on his work as Systematic Theologian, and also in connection with his first course of Gifford Lectures, it is not necessary here to enter into great detail.

There can be no doubt that the prophets held tenaciously to the Divine election of Israel as a means to the accomplishment of a far-reaching purpose; and the very circumstance that the nation produced the prophets proves that election was no mere idea but a real fact. While Bruce considers it is conceivable that Israel first attained to clear consciousness of her vocation through the prophets, he nevertheless states that he is "far from thinking that the generation of the Exodus was as completely in the dark as some modern critics imagine."(3) The particular apologetic problem which opens up concerns the condition of other nations outside the election. In Bruce's day men were conscious of the growth of a more kindly and hopeful view of heathen religions, and the question arose as to whether there is anything in the Old Testament to favour this view. Bruce was fully aware that in the books of Esther, Ruth, Jonah, and elsewhere, there are numerous indications that the heathen world was not left entirely outside the Divine regard; but it is not to such facts that he turns in connection with his apologetic problem. He finds the light he seeks in a careful consideration of the nature of election itself.

The essence of election is that the elect are chosen, not for their own sakes, but to serve others:

"The elect race is not the exclusive sphere of salvation. The elect are themselves saviours. To save is their very vocation. And the God of the elect is caring for others in the very act of electing them." (1)

What Bruce insists on, therefore, is that election implies universalism. It means "the universal Lord pursuing a universally beneficent end by a temporary religious particularism." (2) This interpretation of election is admirably expounded in a paragraph of the previous chapter:

"The very idea of election, or of a special relation sustained by God to a particular people, constituted by an act of choice, is incompatible with the notion of Jehovah being merely the national God of Israel. . . . A God who becomes related to a particular people by choice or covenant is a God who, before the choice, stood in the same relations to all, and might have made no choice or a different one. He is further a God who, after making a choice, does not feel bound by it to partiality in favour of the elected people, or to permanence in His relations thereto. He chooses from a purpose in harmony with His absolute character, and He will be guided by that purpose in all His relations to the chosen. Thus the electing God of Hebrew prophecy is in all respects the very antithesis of the national gods of heathen Semitic peoples." (3)

Bruce now goes on to show in some detail that it is possible to hold that there was such an election without doing injustice to other nations, and without refusing to see the elements of good that were in them. If the choice of one was for the good of all, three things should follow. (i) The other nations should all along have had "at least the starlight of religious knowledge." (4) (ii) The pagan religions, on examination, should exhibit "traces of marked inferiority," as compared with the religion of the elect people. (5) (iii) We should discover traces of a twofold line of preparation — on the one hand, of the chosen people for communicating to the pagan nations the benefit of the true religion; on the other, of these nations, "even . . .

(1) Apol., p. 207. (2) Ibid., p. 204. (3) Ibid., pp. 182f. (4) Ibid., p. 205. (5) Ibid.,
by their very errors and failures," for receiving the benefit. Bruce has no doubt that these three a priori inferences suggested by the method of election are verified by the facts of history and comparative religion. The separation of the Jewish nation was only a temporary provision for the training of the agents of a universal mission of salvation; and as the Jewish nation was prepared for this missionary work, so heathen nations were prepared to receive the Gospel at the hands of the Jews.

Bruce concludes his illuminating discussion of Israel's election with a notable paragraph in which he points out how clearly the whole course of the nation's history shows that the supreme care of Providence was for the interests of the true religion, and not merely for the well-being of a pet people:

"If the supreme divine aim in calling Israel was to found a national theocratic kingdom, it was a failure; if it was to give to the world the true religion, it succeeded. God took little pains to preserve the unity and peace of the people He called His own. He suffered it to be broken up into two rival kingdoms. He permitted the larger kingdom to be blotted out of existence, and the smaller, a century afterwards, to be carried captive to Babylon, to return after a season to its own land no longer a nation, but a petty church. The church in turn resolved itself into rival sects, presenting a ridiculous caricature of the ideal kingdom of priests and holy nation. And how fared it with the true religion throughout these sad centuries? Amid national disasters the light of prophecy shone. The post-exilian Church produced the Psalter. And when at length the Jewish State was on the brink of final ruin, He appeared who was to be the Light of the world. The elect nation was replaced by the Elect Man."

3. A Messianic Hope; or, the Progress of Revelation in the Religion of Israel.

Bruce devotes five highly interesting chapters to a discussion of the evolution of Israel's religion. In these he fixes upon two crowning evidences that the religion of the Old Testament is the religion of revelation, viz., (1) the spiritual idea of God and the

(1) Apol., pp. 206f. (2) Ibid., pp. 207f.
moral ideal of religion found in the Mosaic Decalogue, and (ii) the unearthly passion for righteousness together with the transcendent Messianic optimism of the Prophetic religion. Even the two tragic failures of the chosen people are seen to be of the nature of providential preparations for Christianity. Their failure in the earlier period to create a really righteous nation on the basis of an ideal moral law, and their failure in the Judaistic period to produce a truly holy Church on the basis of a holy, splendid ritual, were needful to prepare for Him who is the author of a new era of grace and life. The discussion falls naturally into three sections—

(a) Mosaism; (b) Prophetism; and (c) Judaism. "Legalism" is treated as a degenerate appendage of Judaism.

(a) Mosaism. The chapter on Mosaism brings out distinctly Bruce's relation to some of the more extreme critical views held in his day. Wellhausen, for example, had minimized the significance for Israel of the Exodus from Egypt. Bruce regards this event as one of the three great crises in the national life which gave occasion for a special revelation to the chosen people:

"Each of the three great stages in the evolution of Israel's religion was connected with a providential crisis in Israel's history: Mosaism with the escape from Egyptian bondage, Prophetism with the rise of the great Eastern monarchies, and Judaism with the Babylonish exile. None of these crises was greater than the first."(1)

This is well said. No combination of circumstances can be conceived more fitted to produce an intense national self-consciousness, to awaken new religious thought, and to make a deep and indelible impression on character. Bruce distinctly, and rightly as we think, severs himself from the naturalistic school which refuses to allow such an important new departure in revelation at so early a period

(1) Apol., p. 208.
of the national history:

"It is a violation of all historical probability to minimise the significance of Mosaicism in deference to a naturalistic theory of evolution, which demands that the early stage in a religious development shall be sufficiently rudimentary to allow the whole subsequent course of things to present the appearance of steady onward progress."(1)

Bruce's treatment of Mosaicism falls naturally into two sections. On the one hand, he specially vindicates for Moses the authorship of the Decalogue in its original form. On the other hand, he strongly maintains that the Levitical law did not originate with Moses but was largely a post-exilic product. We shall outline his views under these two heads before commenting upon them.

(1) The Decalogue is "the grand, outstanding, imperishable monument" of Moses and his prophetic work:

"What at once arrests attention is the universal character of the code of morals it contains. There is nothing in the sum of duty local or national; all is human and valid for all mankind."(2)

As against Wellhausen, who referred the Decalogue to the age of Manasseh, Bruce contends, soundly as we think, that the low morality of succeeding ages provides no reason why the lofty morality of the Ten Words or its implied monotheism should not be Mosaic. In his insistence on "moral fidelity" Moses may well have been ages in advance of his time. In his monotheism we should probably see, not a theoretically new idea of God, but rather a fresh emphasis upon the nature and character of the God of Israel arising out of the new circumstances of the Exodus.(3) Wellhausen's argument is characterized as "not very formidable":

"We are asked to doubt the lofty morality of Moses on account of the low morality of later personalities. The assumption is, that the moral growth of a nation must show a steady advance; there must be no lapping from a higher level, no tide-like

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movement; the earlier stage must always be the ruder. As if the moral ideal of Christ did not tower above the actual morality of Christendom, as an Alpine range of mountains rises above the plains! Then we are told that a monotheism as old as Moses could not form the foundation of a national religion. Why not, if the national religion happened to have for its peculiarity among the religions of the world, monotheism, the belief that there is only one true God? (1)

(2) In Bruce’s view the purely ethical character of the Decalogue is a determining factor in the question as to the relation of Moses to the ritual legislation recorded in the Pentateuch. He cannot think that the moral teaching of the Decalogue and the rigid forms of the priestly system both came from Moses; and as the first was his work, the other cannot be. It should be noted, however, that Bruce does freely admit that the priestly ritual must have been, in the main, of great antiquity, and that "probably the rules of worship were to a large extent old customs going back into the dim centuries before Moses." (2) Accordingly, the question as to the relation of Moses to ritual is not one which concerns the existence of ritual in the time of Moses, but only the place to be assigned to it in the Mosaic system:

"The hypothesis that the Deuteronomistic and priestly codes are post-Mosaic, does not necessarily mean that their true authors invented their contents and imputed them to Moses. It only means that religious customs, mostly ancient, though in some particulars new, were then reduced to written form and ascribed to Moses not so much as author, but rather as authority." (3)

But the question, though thus restricted in scope, is regarded by Bruce as one of great importance for the right understanding of the place of Moses in the history of Israel’s religion. The conclusion come to is stated with characteristic vigour:

"We must on no account conceive of that great man as a person of priestly spirit, or even as belonging to the genus scribe, whereof Ezra is the most respectable representative. We must ever think of him as in vocation and spirit the Prophet. And to vindicate for him that character we must strenuously insist that the Decalogue, not the ritual law, is his characteristic contribution." (4)

In a footnote Bruce more explicitly defines his position as follows:

"The ground on which I lay stress is the ethical or prophetic character of the work of Moses. Just because I agree with those who (like Professor Robertson in his Baird Lectures) argue against the naturalistic school for the ethical character of the Mosaic idea of God, I find it difficult to believe that Moses was the author of the elaborate system of ritual in the middle books of the Pentateuch. Modern criticism helps us here by enabling us to form a thoroughly consistent conception of the character of Moses as a prophet, and to assign to his work as an originator a simplicity analogous to the simplicity of Christ. Professor Robertson's reasoning from the ethicalism of the prophets to the ethicalism of Moses seems to me conclusive. When he applies his argument to ritual I cannot follow him."(1)

Moses is thus presented to us as essentially in harmony with the prophets of later days in their elevation of morality above ritual, in their passion for personal and national righteousness, and in their unique grasp of the difficulties and the grandeur incident to belief in a Divine government of the world.

Before we pass from Mosaism, two points call for some discussion.

(1) We think Bruce is right in attributing the Decalogue, in its original form, to Moses. There are, however, strong reasons against that opinion as well as strong reasons favouring it. The general attitude of modern scholarship is thus stated by Dr H. Wheeler Robinson:

"Some scholars still argue for a Mosaic original, however amplified, as by the "Words" relating to graven images and the Sabbath. But the general view is that this short code epitomizes the prophetic teaching of the eighth century." (2)

In its present form, it is true, the Decalogue reflects settled life in Canaan, for there are references to houses, cattle and servants. But may not these details be later expansions? Of the arguments in favour of Mosaic authorship, that put forward by Dr A. C. Welch is of special interest. He urges that the long sojourn of the Hebrews at Kadesh gave them experience of semi-agricultural life, and holds that

to this period we should date the first form of the Decalogue, measuring through that dating its immense significance and its specific purpose. Drawing a contrast between the contents of the codes which presuppose life in Canaan and the injunctions of the Decalogue, he continues:

"The ten words were intended for Israel under all conditions and in all periods of its life. . . . They could not supply the positive regulations which were to guide Israel's worship and to regulate the details of its life. . . . What they supplied was the norm or the necessary conditions to which that religion in all its further development must conform."(1)

The chief difficulty in the way of accepting Mosaic authorship turns on the commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image."(2) Loyal Hebrews did so in Canaan during the period of the Judges, and also during the Monarchy -- apparently without any consciousness that they were violating a fundamental commandment. There is, as Welch has pointed out, a narrow way through this difficulty. It is arguable that the Ten Commandments were known, but that the prohibition of images was construed as forbidding the making of them to honour other gods than Jehovah. (3)

(2) We consider that in his treatment of Mosaism Bruce has drawn too sharply a line between the ethical and the ritual. So strong is his dislike of ritual, and so great his desire to show that Moses, as "prophet", could not have had anything to do with matters of this kind, that we cannot but suspect that his mind was not quite free from bias on the subject. Moses was legislator as well as prophet, and was necessarily compelled by circumstances to organize the people just free from serfdom and the deteriorating religious influences of Egypt. (4) His careful legislative temper might surely have led to the

introduction of, at least, some fundamental regulations for the
discharge of religious duties. The instinct which, later on, and
especially after the Exile, led men to prescribe rules for the
preservation of what is good in worship, could hardly have been
wanting in one who was so wise as Moses, and who, we may believe,
must have seen that moral obedience is not unconnected with the
proper maintenance of fellowship with God in acts of worship.

(b) **Prophetism.** To the prophets Bruce devotes two chapters.
In the first, entitled "Prophetism", he is concerned principally with
their stern assertion of the moral order of the world; in the second,
entitled "Prophetic Optimism," with their bright, inspiring
proclamation of the Messianic hope. Towards the end of the former
chapter there is an important brief discussion of the apologetic
value of Hebrew prophecy.

(1) The prophets were essentially "reaffirmers of the hereditary
faith of Israel." (1) But they were reaffirmers with new emphasis, with
an intensity of conviction, and with a width of comprehension, which
made the old faith practically a new revelation:

"Their thoughts were always subjectively original, even when
objectively familiar. Compared with Mosaism their doctrine was,
to a considerable extent, even objectively distinctive." (2)

Bruce points out two distinct advances on Mosaism. (1) There is a
contrast in reference to the idea of God. Moses, standing at the
beginning of Israel's history, naturally laid emphasis, not on
Jehovah's universal relations to the world, but rather on His special
relation to the chosen race. (3) The prophets, on the other hand, in
their situation, quite as naturally gave prominence to the universal
aspect:

(1)Apol.,p.231. (2)Ibid. (3)Cf.Ibid.
"The whole known world was astir with movements of which Israel was the centre. In the political life of the nations they saw one Mind and Will at work." (1)

(ii) There is also a contrast in their respective relations to ethical interests. Moses in his position was naturally "a prophetic legislator," setting before an infant nation the moral ideal. The prophets, coming on the scene some six centuries later, "had to perform the part of moral critics," telling the nation "how far short she came of realising the ideal." (2)

It is with the latter aspect of the prophetic vocation that Bruce particularly deals. The subject was highly congenial to him, as may be seen from the following fine passage:

"The first grand fundamental feature to be noted in this connection is the passion for righteousness with which all the prophets were consumed as if by a divine fire burning in their hearts. In most men the moral sense is so feeble that it is difficult for them to understand or sympathise with this feature of the prophetic character. Hence prophetic men, since the world began, have never been understood or appreciated in their own time. They have been deemed fools, madmen, revolutionists, impious miscreants; anything but what they were: the wisest, the noblest, the truest in their generation. Against such there has ever been a law of convention and moral mediocrity, which condemns the unusually good with not less severity and confidence than the unusually evil. Happily the world slowly awakens up to the fact that a few unusually good, wise, and earnest men now and then appear, and recognises them as such after they are dead, though it cannot endure them when living. To this "goodly fellowship" belonged the Hebrew prophets; and that they were of this type and temper is the first fact to be laid to heart concerning them if we would understand their character, vocation, and life-work." (3)

Bruce adds the important point that along with the prophets' subjective passion for righteousness there went a congruous faith in an objective moral order, "in a living God who was at least as earnest as themselves in loving right and hating wrong," and who "exercised a just benign rule over all peoples." (4)

(2) An important feature of Bruce's treatment of the prophets is

his insistence that the apologetic value of Hebrew prophecy does not lie in predictions of future events capable of being used as miraculous buttresses to the Christian faith. He deals with the subject very fully in the fifth chapter of "The Chief End of Revelation," entitled "The Function of Prophecy in Revelation." In the "Apologetics" we have a much briefer, but fairly adequate statement along the same lines. In the older Apologetic prophecy took rank with miracles as an evidential sign attached to a doctrinal revelation. The prophets were regarded as foretellers of things to come, and their prophecies as miracles of foreknowledge. The great business of the apologist was not to find out the prophet's place and function in the history of revelation, and with reference to his own time, but simply to discover as many specific predictions as possible which could be shown to have been accomplished in subsequent history. Bruce was among the first in this country to give the weight of his authority to the modern view that prophecy is not so much a marvel of prediction as a revelation of the eternal principles and righteous purposes of God. Prediction, he readily admits, is an element in prophecy; for the prophets believed in a moral order of the world and were bound to declare that sin persisted in would be followed by punishment. But prediction is a minor element. The prophets were before all things "inspired witnesses to the reality of a divine kingdom." They were witnesses to their own time; and they did not speak before their message was needed, or before their heart "was made to burn by the moral situation to which they addressed themselves." Bruce's point of view is well illustrated in his treatment of the question of Deutero-Isaiah:

"We have no interest in taking the conservative side on such a question as that relating to the date and authorship of the second part of the book of Isaiah. Our interest lies rather in the opposite direction. These marvellous utterances have far more value when viewed as proceeding from an unknown prophet of the exile speaking to his fellow-captives by the rivers of Babylon of the mercies of God in store for Israel. We lose, doubtless, a miracle of foresight in the form of a prediction of deliverance through Cyrus, but we gain a moral miracle of faith and hope amid circumstances tempting to despair." (1)

For a prophet to predict the advent of Cyrus two hundred years beforehand would be wonderful; but to Bruce's mind it is an even more convincing proof of Jehovah's care, that an unknown prophet in exile, some great moral hero in the midst of disheartening scenes, should speak comfortably to the people of God.

(3) In his chapter on "Prophetic Optimism" Bruce deals with the basic thought underlying all "Messianic" prophecy, viz., that a great good is coming. He justly contends that, if there was any reality in the election of Israel, two things should follow. (1) It ought to be true that the prophets were not mistaken in their optimism; and (ii) since Israel was elect for the world's good as well as for her own, the prophets should have something to say concerning the nature of the good to men of all time. (2) The question therefore is: What general outlines of the coming good can be extracted from their writings? Bruce finds three legitimate inferences. (1) Vast importance may attach to a single individual as an instrument for the realization of God's purpose in the vocation of Israel. (3) It is characteristic of the prophets to attach importance to the influence of the individual; and this prominence given to the principle of individuality suggests the inference that the sumnum bonum, the ultimate fulfilment of the Divine purpose, will come through one man. The inference is fully upheld by the stress laid by the prophets,

particularly by Isaiah, upon the ideal king. (1) (ii) The ethical ideal of Jeremiah suggests an inference as to the nature of the coming good. His conception of a regenerated nation contains an element which goes beyond the limits of the ideal as he conceived it. The moral law written on the heart leads to "the great idea of a kingdom of God independent of nationality, including among its citizens all the pure in heart." (2) (iii) The Prophet of the Exile tells us how the Royal Man and the Divine kingdom are to be connected. The ideal man will make himself the king of human hearts by wisdom and by suffering. Bruce's summary of his argument is worthy of quotation:

"These three things, the highest boons of God to men: a moral Hero, a kingdom of the good, and the moral Hero making Himself the king of that kingdom by spiritual insight and self-sacrifice, as the suffering servant of God, are the chief fruitage of that remarkable group of prophecies usually called Messianic, which embody the optimistic ideals of Hebrew seers. They are not extracted from stray texts, or based on remarkable special predictions like that of the virgin conceiving, but represent the main drift of Messianic oracles. "The rod out of the stem of Jesse," the law written on the heart, and the "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," are the foreground of the prophetic delineation of the future, the kernel of the summum bonum as conceived by the prophetic imagination, as the prophecies containing them are among the highest products of prophetic genius. They follow each other in the natural order of succession: first the king sketched by Isaiah of Jerusalem, then the regenerate people the lovely dream of Jeremiah, then the suffering servant of Jehovah presented to our view in all his tragic dignity by the prophet of the exile; prophetic insight becoming clearer and deeper with the course of time and the progress of events." (3)

In Jesus Christ the three ideals of the Messianic Hope meet. He is the Royal Man. He brings in the kingdom of grace. He is the man of sorrow who conquers human hearts by suffering love. Bruce leaves us with a question: "Is this historic realisation of prophetic ideals an accident or a God-appointed fulfilment?" (4)

(c) Judaism. Bruce devotes a chapter to Judaism as introduced:

by Ezra, and another to the Legalism that grew out of it. His
general estimate of each is indicated by two phrases he employs, viz.,
the "twilight of Judaism" and the "night of Legalism." (1)

(1) In passing from Prophetism to Judaism we seem to be making a
great descent, — "a sudden plunge from poetry to prose, from
inspiration to legalism, from a religion of faith to a religion of
self-righteousness." (2) The distinguishing feature of Mosaicism is that
it asserted the supremacy of the moral, as compared with ritual.
This fundamental principle the prophets reasserted with new emphasis
and widened range of application. The distinctive characteristic
of Judaism Bruce expresses thus:

"It put ritual on a level with morality, treated Levitical rules
as of equal importance with the Decalogue, making no distinction
between one part of the law and another, but demanding compli­
ance with the prescribed ceremonial of worship as not less
necessary to good relations with God than a righteous life." (3)

This descent from liberty to bondage, from the spirit to the letter,
creates for Bruce a real apologetic problem. "The difficulty," he
says, "is to see how God could have any hand in it." (4) The solution
which he seeks he finds in regarding Judaism as a "husk to protect
the kernel of ethical monotheism." (5) In other words, while he cannot
but treat it as a decidedly inferior thing, he cannot be blind to its
advantages for the times in which it flourished:

"The promoters of the new movement did not really put ritual on a
level with morality, as of equal importance in the sight of God.
They simply regarded it as a very important means towards the
great end of keeping the people of Israel faithful in heart and
life to God." (6)

He is satisfied that there is much in the Priestly Code that must
have tended to subserve this purpose. (7)

The danger inherent in Judaism was that scrupulous care in the

(1) Apol., p. 175.  (2) Ibid., p. 262.  (3) Ibid.  (4) Ibid., p. 263.
regulation of worship and the guarding of life from impurity would end in formalism, in that righteousness of the scribes which was so mercilessly condemned by Jesus. It was a danger which actually materialized:

"Freedom had ended in moral religious licence. Judaism cured that by hedging the people in on every side by positive law, and the evil now to be apprehended was that the cure would breed a new and worse disease — dead, rotten-hearted legalism. It might even be affirmed with a measure of truth that the sinister reign of legalism began the day that Ezra appeared on Jewish soil with the law in his hand."(1)

But while Bruce does not hesitate to point out the great defects of Judaism, he points out also the good that was mingled with the evil. He lays special stress on the Psalter as proving how much real vital religion there was in it. The view that the post-exilic Church produced the Psalter, or a large part of it, is not stated dogmatically, but as a "critical hypothesis which an apologist has no reason to fear."(2) When the critics tell us that the Priestly Code is post-exilic, and we tend to see in it, so viewed, simply a religious declension, their other doctrine concerning the post-exilic origin of the Psalter comes in "as the needful antidote to this sceptical mood."(3) We ought, therefore, to be thankful that God did not altogether forsake His people during the dreary night of Legalism, but gave them "the twinkling starlight of sacred poetry to keep them in good heart."(4) But even the Psalms present a problem. Not a few of them breathe the spirit of universalism. But what of the "cursing" Psalms? These are apologized for — and not without strong sense — as impersonal, the writer being regarded "as personating the chosen people, and as complaining of wrongs done to her by pagan oppressors."(5)

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the tone of such Psalms is "one
of the dark shadows cast on the sacred page by the legal dispensation.\(^{(1)}\)

One other point which Bruce makes in an apologetic interest is worthy of note. He holds that acceptance of the late origin of the Levitical law as a written code strengthens the validity of New Testament verdicts on the legal economy. These verdicts are two: (i) that the law was subordinate to the promise, and came in after it to prepare men for the reception of the promise;\(^{(2)}\) and (ii) that it was a failure as a way to righteousness.\(^{(3)}\) Bruce argues that if these verdicts hold good as against a law emanating from Moses, a fortiori they hold good against a law which came into force hundreds of years later. Indeed, he urges that under the critical hypothesis Paul's principle that the law was subordinate and secondary to the promise receives a double exemplification:

"The Mosaic legislation came in after the call of Abraham, and the Levitical legislation came in after the promise of a new covenant with its law written on the heart. And there were two experiments to be made. One was to try whether a model state could not be built up on the foundation of the Decalogue. That experiment went on till the time of Jeremiah, when it had become clear to his prophetic eye that it had ended in failure. On the footing of a law written on stone-tablets a righteous nation he saw was not to be looked for; what was wanted was a law written on the heart. But this was not to come all at once. Jeremiah was six centuries in advance of his time. Men were not going to accept his conclusion without a convincing proof that there was no other way of it. And so the exiles returned from Babylon not with a simple spiritual law written on their hearts, but with an elaborate sacrificial and ceremonial law written in a book... On the basis of that Torah a new experiment was to be made. The first experiment aimed at a righteous nation, the second at a holy Church. The second experiment was a more ghastly failure than even the first. The result was Rabbinism and Pharisaism."\(^{(4)}\)

Till the hope of the originators of the new experiment had been demonstrated to be vain, the new era of grace could not come. The argument would seem to be as valid as it is ingenious. Taking Bruce's chapter as a whole, we can agree with him that the

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considerations he has advanced enable us to see that, whatever its defects, Judaism was a legitimate phase of the religion of revelation. (1)

(2) The chapter entitled, "The Night of Legalism", describes the state of religion during the four centuries which preceded the Christian era. The period was marked by a strong tendency to conceive of God as transcendent and far-off. (2) It produced the scribes and the apocalyptists. It saw the struggle of the Maccabees. (3) It witnessed the appearance of the books of Daniel, Ecclesiastes and Esther, and also the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament for the use of the Hellenized Jews of the Diaspora. (4) Only two matters need be specially referred to -- the work of the scribes and that of the apocalyptists.

(1) The scribes, assuming the role of interpreters, made new laws under cover of explaining the old. Their work came to be known as the "oral law," and for it not less than for the written law Mosaic origin and authority were claimed. (5) It was viewed as a "hedge" to the written law, that is, a means of protecting it from the possibility of transgression. As Bruce points out, however, the process of hedging, once begun, was a serious affair:

"The law itself, as reconstructed by Ezra, was a hedge to the religion of Israel, as a people in covenant with God. And now in turn it was discovered that it too needed a hedge. And the second hedge needed a third, and the third a fourth, and so on ad infinitum, till there was nothing but a vast expanse of hedges, and the thing for which all the hedging had taken place, the true worship and service of God, had somehow disappeared. The immense development of concentric hedge-work found its historic monument in the Talmud, that vast pyramid in which Judaism lies entombed. It was that pyramid the scribes, without knowing it, were busy building, stone upon stone, during the night of legalism." (7)

(ii) While Bruce characterizes the apocalyptic literature of the

time as "much inferior to the collection of oracles uttered by the
great prophets," he recognizes that we are indebted to it in so far
as it revived after a fashion the Messianic hope. In some respects
it seems to represent an advance, for the horizon is extended from
the nation to the world, and the individual comes more to the front
as the recipient of blessing, "the boon promised being resurrection
to everlasting life." Our sense of indebtedness, however, is
limited. For one thing, we realize that the sumnum bonum is now
conceived as transcendent, having been transferred to the world to
come; for another, in the new presentation of the Messianic hope we
are conscious of passing "from the poetry of the prophets to the dull,
dogmatic prose of the scribes." Bruce sums up his attitude to
Apocalyptic thus:

"Scholars may revive a professional interest in apocalyptic, and
it is not to be denied that the exegete of the New Testament may
learn something from their labours; but the great heart of
humanity has only one duty to perform towards it, and that is to
consign it to oblivion."(4)

In view of the better appreciation which scholars now have of the
nature and purpose of Apocalyptic, and in view also of the fuller aid
which that appreciation has given in the study of the New Testament
and its times, Bruce's judgment stands in need of some modification.

4. A Sacred Literature; or, the Function of Scripture in Revelation.

God's special revelation to Israel was communicated to succeeding
generations by means of a written record, and this fact raises the
important question of the function of Scripture in revelation. A
complete answer demands that, first of all, we be quite clear as to
the nature of revelation. Bruce has dealt with this subject very
fully in his earlier book, "The Chief End of Revelation." There he

removes two misconceptions. The first of these is "that Revelation is to be identified with the Bible, and that the Bible was given by God to men for the purpose of communicating doctrinal instruction on certain topics of importance." (1) This doctrinaire conception of revelation, Bruce shows, plays into the hands of the enemies of the faith, and especially carries the false implication that the primary matter in salvation is doctrinal knowledge. The second misconception is that the chief end of revelation is practical and ethical, and not at all doctrinal. Those holding this view say that the Bible is not designed to teach us about God and the future but to emphasize the supreme value of right conduct. The representative of this class who engages Bruce's special attention is Matthew Arnold, in his claim that the Bible simply presents God as "a Power, not ourselves, making for righteousness." (2) Over against these views Bruce places his own conception of revelation:

"It signifies God manifesting Himself in the history of the world in a supernatural manner and for a special purpose. .... The revelation recorded in the Scriptures is before all things a self-manifestation of God, as the God of grace. .... When we speak of God as the God of grace, we mean to represent Him as a Power, not ourselves, making for mercy; a Power that dealeth not with men after their sins, but overcometh evil with good; a Power acting as a redeeming, healing influence on the moral and spiritual disease of the world." (3)

In the "Apologetics" Bruce maintains the views expressed in the earlier volume, presenting certain aspects of them in revised and expanded form. On the subject of revelation and the Bible he says:

"To say that God gave a special revelation to Israel is not the same thing as to say that He gave to Israel a collection of sacred books. Revelation and the Bible are not synonyms. There was a revelation long before there was a Bible. .... It is nevertheless true that given a revelation such as God communicated to Israel, a literature of revelation, though not a matter of a priori necessity, was a highly probable consequence. Record of some sort might be pronounced, in a broad sense, indispensable." (4)

what gives its peculiar value to the Old Testament literature, therefore, is the fact that it "providentially grew up around a historical revelation of God in Israel" and is, indeed, "a record and interpretation" of that Divine self-revelation. While this function involves perfection and infallibility of a kind, it does not involve verbal infallibility, or absolute accuracy in particular statements. Those who demand these latter qualities are asked by Bruce to remember that the Hebrew autographs were written without vowels, the result being that only the writer could be perfectly sure what he intended to say, and not even he, in every case, "after the lapse of time long enough to allow partial forgetfulness of his thought to occur." The only wise attitude is to cherish the hope that the Hebrew Bible can be "useful, supremely useful, for the end for which it was given;" and, accordingly, the aim of the apologist must be "to ascertain the minimum requirements necessary to accomplish that end." These "minimum requirements" needed for the defence of the authority of the Bible are thus stated by Bruce:

"The Hebrew Scriptures would need to be a reliable record of Israel's history in its main outlines, and a trustworthy interpretation of the meaning of that history. The hypothesis of faith is that in the history of Israel God revealed Himself as the God of a gracious purpose, and from the literature of revelation, if it deserve the name, it ought to be possible to learn enough of that history to see the purpose unfolding itself, and to get guidance in the interpretation of the essential facts from men to whom has been fully opened up the secret of the Lord. It is not necessary that every particular historical statement should be correct, but the general impression made by the whole story of Israel, as that of a people in a peculiar manner related to God, ought to be true, and the religious conception of Israel's vocation, and of God's character in connection therewith, formed by the prophets and embodied in their writings, ought to be objectively valid. If we cannot rely on the history in its main outlines, as the history of an elect people, and on the prophetic reading of the history, then there is no evidence that a special revelation took place. If, on the other hand, we can rely on both these, the Hebrew Scriptures are sufficient for this end;"

perfect for the purpose for which they were given, and a sure
guide to faith, no matter how many defects there may be in the
historical record, whether in the form of lacunae, or of
individual facts not quite accurately represented."(1)

In this and the following chapter three matters come up for
discussion in the light of the considerations just presented.
(1) The religious value of the Old Testament as affected by criticism.
(2) The test of canonicity. (3) The defects of the Old Testament
religion and literature. We shall take these in turn.

(1) The correctness of the main critical positions being assumed,
the first of these topics resolves itself into two questions: (1)
what value have the Old Testament writings for men ignorant of the
results of criticism? and (ii) What for those who accept such results?
(2)

(i) Bruce's answer to the first question is exceedingly sane and
balanced. The unlearned reader is not seriously misled. The
general religious impression which he gets from his reading is true.(3) He cannot help learning the two essential truths of Israel's being an
elect people and of God's covenant with her made through Moses.
Still, it cannot be denied that he loses something through his
ignorance of criticism. He is occasionally misled as to matters of
historical fact. The critic, for example, says the law grew out of
Mosaicism, while "the plain man" says the law was given by Moses.
Thus the latter does not understand the real course of Israel's
religious history and "misses all the edification which an intelligent
view of that history is fitted to yield."(5) Furthermore, through lack
of such insight many things in the historical records remain
unexplained puzzles for him. The conclusion to which Bruce comes is
that the temporary and comparatively harmless errors of the unlearned
reader must be removed by the popularization of the results of

(4) Cf. ibid., p. 307. (5) Ibid.
critical study:

"The process indeed involves peril. There is a risk that old reverence may be lost while new knowledge is being acquired. But that risk, to which faith is exposed in all times of transition, must be run. It will not do to say: leave the plain man alone to enjoy his Bible in his own fashion; surely he can get all the benefit the Bible was intended to convey to devout souls without being dependent on scholars. The fact is not so. The plain man can get some good from the Bible, enough to save his soul, without the aid of critics; but not all the good that is possible. .... It is now the turn of the critics to do their best for the people. This is the task of the future."(6)

Since these words were penned the task of popularization has been faithfully performed by a host of Biblical scholars. The words themselves, and the spirit shining through them, help to explain how Bruce became one of the most persuasive and successful of the apologists of his day. He divided so cleanly between essence and accidents, and kept his mind always so accurately in poise.

(ii) The question as to the religious value of the Scriptures for those who accept the results of criticism is not so easily answered. It may be thought that to ascribe to Moses laws which, in their Pentateuchal form, were of much later date was a "pia fraus", making it hard for us to believe in the inspiration of those who were parties to it. To this Bruce very properly replies that ancient notions of literary morality were not the same as ours:

"If the critics are right, Hebrew editors could do without hesitation what we should think hardly compatible with literary honesty: mix up things old and new, ancient laws with recent additions; report sayings of the wise, with editorial comments not distinguished as such; collect utterances of different sages and prophets under one name; weave different versions of one and the same event into one continuous though not always harmonious narrative, without giving the slightest hint of what they were doing. But what then? This may be crude morality, but it is not immorality."(2)

The difference between crude morality and immorality is stated to be that between "conforming to a low moral standard" and "breaking a

recognised moral law." Ethically the distinction would appear to be valid; and we consider that Bruce has made a helpful apologetic use of it. Urging that "crude morality" is quite compatible with true inspiration, he rightly emphasizes the need to beware of laying down hard and fast abstract rules as to the conditions under which inspiration is possible:

"To say that God could not inspire, or employ as His agents, men capable of what we now might feel tempted to call a pia fraus is a sample of the mischievous apriorism which it is so difficult to get rid of in connection with this class of questions. It is, it may be added, an instance of the common tendency of religious people to patronise God, that is to say, to be more solicitous for His honour and dignity than He is Himself." (2)

The proper answer to all such a priori theorizing, Bruce wisely remarks, is an appeal to fact. That God may inspire men who commit what we deem literary sins seems clear, since books of the Bible in which these so-called literary sins are committed bear all the marks of inspiration -- "the divine in us bearing witness to the divine in them." (3)

(2) The function of Scripture as the literature of revelation demands a canon of Scripture; and hence arises the question of the test of canonicity. (4) Before dealing with the matter directly, Bruce points out that the facts concerning the history of the canon reveal two things. (1) It was clearly not God's will, by a miraculous providence, to provide for the formation of a canon about which there could be no dispute. From this, however, it does not follow that over the production of the Scriptures God exercised no care whatever. What kind of providence did God exercise? Bruce's answer appears to us to be hardly adequate:

"We ought surely to apply to the Bible Origen's maxim that no good and useful thing comes to men without the providence of God." (5)

A miraculous providence, admittedly, is ruled out. But can we not still believe in a special providence and not merely a general one? (ii) The facts concerning the history of the canon show further that orthodoxy and piety are compatible with doubts respecting particular books of Scripture. The question therefore arises as to how this compatibility can be made evident as a matter of theory. Bruce's answer seems very satisfactory:

"We may employ for this purpose the idea of an organism. The Bible may be conceived as an organic body of writings, in which every particular book has its proper place and function. But in every living organism some organs are vital and some are not. There are parts of the body which to lose is to die; there are others which we may lose without dying, or even materially suffering in health."(1)

Turning now to the question of the test of canonicity, Bruce rejects as inadequate the views that that is canonical which the Church has declared to be such, and that that is canonical which had a prophet or an apostle for its author.(2) Calvin's test of the testimonium Spiritus Sanuti internum fails us, he considers, just when help is most needed, viz., "in reference to certain books whose canonicity has been disputed or seems intrinsically disputable."(3) To Bruce's mind the best test is that which was virtually Luther's, viz., that of organic function:

"A useful test of canonicity, if not the one test, is organic function. Does the particular book serve any purpose in the literature of revelation, is it in harmony with its design and outstanding doctrine?"(4)

Because Luther had too narrow a conception of the scope of the Bible, the test in his hands yielded some unsatisfactory conclusions. Bruce contends that, if we set out with a conception of the raison d'être of Scripture that is sufficiently comprehensive, the test of organic function will help us through most canonical problems. By way of

example, he takes "Ruth" and "Jonah":

"Ruth is a witness for the universality of God's gracious purpose, and an antidote to the tendency of the elect people to hate foreigners. The same may be said of Jonah, whether taken as a history or as a parable."(i)

Many of his orthodox contemporaries felt that, by the views just outlined, Bruce had given over his case to the enemies of a theory of inspiration in any sense the successor of that of most symbols. Such an impression, however, is illegitimate. The position taken by Bruce is practically the core of all theories of inspiration, and it remains intact in the presence of critical views even more radical than those which prevailed in his day. We have, however, two criticisms to make.

(i) Bruce's well-known bias against anything savouring of ecclesiasticism has surely blinded him to the fact that in a very real sense it was the Church which determined the canon of Scripture. He objects that this view "simply raises a previous question, What guided the Church in her judgment?"(2) The obvious answer, as well as the essential truth of the matter, has been well stated by Dr Alan Richardson:

"The Church and the Bible belong together, and either is meaningless without the other. The same Spirit which enlightened the eyes of the apostles to perceive the significance of those matters which had been fulfilled among them also guided the "inspired Fathers" who drew up the canon of the New Testament, not without much anxious thought and eager debate. .... The Church authorizes those books as canonical in which she finds the witness of the prophets and apostles who, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, foretell and tell forth the truth concerning Christ. In thus recognizing the authority of the biblical witness to Christ the Church believes that she herself is inspired and guided by that same Spirit who spoke by the prophets and gave bold utterance to the apostles."(3)

(ii) A second criticism relates to Bruce's silence in regard to the testimony from modern archaeological discoveries tending to strengthen confidence in the historical reliability of the Old Testament. Since

he has himself insisted that the question of inspiration must be
taken out of the realm of "a priori theorising" into that of fact, we
look for some knowledge on his part of the results of archaeological
and historical science which were already accumulating in his day.
A treatise on Apologetics should not be content with establishing a
point of view, however admirably this may be done.

(3) Bruce concludes his consideration of the historical pre­
suppositions of Christianity with a chapter in which the defects of
the Old Testament religion and its literature are candidly pointed
out. He insists that it is only the man who is filled with the
spirit of the New Testament who can rightly use the Old Testament and
judge all that is written in it. The defects to which he draws
attention are these. (i) Querulousness. Even in the case of the
prophets "the spirit of sonship is not perfected." (3) There is often
bitter complaint in face of the dark mysteries of life and the trials
of righteous men. (ii) Vindictiveness. But the spirit of
vengeance found in the prophetic literature and in the Psalter is
largely explained by the fact that prophets and psalmists "placed the
good which marks God's favour too much in outward condition." (4) "The
theory was that God rewarded every man according to his works." (5)
That an enemy or an evil-doer should not be punished was considered
contrary to the moral order of the world. Again, in many cases
private feelings are out of the question, the prayer for vengeance
being pronounced in the name of the whole community of Israel. (6) The
next three defects are characteristic of the post-exilic period. (7)
(iii) Philo-Leviticalism, that is, excessive regard for Levitical
ritual. (iv) An exclusive, hostile attitude towards foreigners.

(7)Cf.ibid.,pp.331ff.
(v) A tendency to morbid self-consciousness, or self-righteousness. Bruce is confident that these defects of Old Testament piety present no stumbling-block to intelligent Christian faith. They only make it evident that prophets and psalmists had not yet uttered God's final word:

"They show that the Hebrew Scriptures, while a true light from heaven, were but a light shining in a dark place until the dawn of day." (1)

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III. THE CHRISTIAN ORIGINS AND SOME APOLOGETIC PROBLEMS.

In Book II of the "Apologetics" Bruce was concerned with the question, How to help those who were perplexed over the historical and literary criticism of the Old Testament. In Book III, entitled "The Christian Origins", the question with which he deals is, How to relieve those who are troubled over the historical and critical problems of the New Testament. The chapters -- apart from the last, which sums up the volume as a whole -- fall naturally into three sections. I-V treat of the Christian faith concerning Jesus; VI and VII deal with Paul and Primitive Christianity; and VIII and IX are concerned with the historicity of the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel. Under "Christian Origins" we have to take into consideration also the separate volume on "the Miraculous Element in the Gospels" and the essay on Baur. Slightly altering Bruce's order of treatment in the "Apologetics", we propose to discuss these subjects under four heads thus: (1) The Christian Faith concerning Jesus; (2) The Historicity of the Gospels; (3) The Supernatural Element in the Gospels; and (4) The Development of Primitive Christianity in view of modern Critical Theories.

(1) Apol., p. 336.

In his discussion of the historical presuppositions of Christianity Bruce has established that it was for Jesus of Nazareth that the world had waited for many centuries, and that it was for Him that the whole history of Israel had been preparing. The Christian faith concerning Jesus is that His life and teaching are the final, highest revelation of God. Here, however, Apologetics is presented with a new task, which Bruce states thus:

"How important to know the real man as He appeared in Palestine, and the very words of wisdom and grace He spoke! Important for theology, it is not less important for the health of religion. Christianity not based on a sound, exact knowledge of the historical Christ, and permeated by His spirit, must be a sickly, unattractive thing, and may even be a corrupt, repulsive, pernicious thing. "Back to Christ" is in this view a thoroughly wholesome and legitimate watchword. But it presupposes that the true Christ of history can be known, and it is for modern apologetic to show that such knowledge is attainable."(1)

Before dealing directly with the question of the historicity of the Gospels, Bruce, in five notable chapters, sketches with reverent affection this central fact and supreme truth of the Christian faith— the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is clear that to him the charm and the claim of this Personality is the most satisfying evidence that Christianity is the power and the wisdom of God. The five chapter headings are these: (i) Jesus; (ii) Jesus as the Christ; (iii) Jesus as Founder of the Kingdom of God; (iv) Jesus Risen; and (v) Jesus Lord. Since much of the material provided by these chapters (apart from the chapter on "Jesus Risen") has already been discussed by us in our four sections on "The Christianity of Christ" and elsewhere, it will be sufficient here to outline Bruce's argument from the apologetic point of view of the present book.

(a) Jesus. Characteristically Bruce takes the man Jesus as the

foundation of his argument. The great object of his work as a theologian was to get to "the real historical person called Jesus of Nazareth." (1) He believes it possible to lose Christ, not merely in metaphysical and theological definitions, but even "in the Bible and through the Bible," (2) and the explanation of this strange circumstance he finds in failure to realize that "the Gospels are the core of the Bible." (3) While he fully admits that in the Gospels Jesus is represented as the Christ, the fulfiller of Israel's highest hopes and brightest ideals, he emphasizes that the fundamental fact is that the Jesus of the Gospels is a man and that He is welcome for His own sake:

"If Jesus was the Christ, Christ was also Jesus, a man who lived in Palestine at a certain date, of very unique moral and religious character, and very welcome for His own sake, apart altogether from His relation to the previous history of the world in general, or of Israel in particular." (4)

Going to "the school of the evangelists" men learn "at once the nature of true goodness, and what solid grounds there are for calling Jesus uniquely good." (5) The goodness of Jesus, as Bruce sees it, is marked by four outstanding features -- an "intense detestation of counterfeit goodness," entire freedom from "religious scrupulosity," humanity, and modesty. (6)

The important point to be noted here is that it is essentially in an apologetic interest that Bruce would -- as an initial step at any rate -- strip Christ "bare of theological investiture." (7) He seems to have felt keenly that many honest inquirers are "impatient of the trappings with which faith has invested Christ's person, the official robes and the aureole round His brow;" (8) and that, if only they could first see "the man Jesus" apart from His theological titles

(1) Apol., p. 338.  (2) Ibid., p. 509.  (3) Ibid.
and dignities, and love Him so seen, they would then pass on to higher affirmations with full intelligence and perfect sincerity:

"They must be allowed to begin at the beginning, and to learn Christianity de novo, as the disciples of Jesus learned it, becoming acquainted first with the man, and then advancing gradually to higher views of His person and work."(1)

We are unable to agree with Bruce's theological position in this matter; but we reserve our criticism to the final section of our "Summary and Conclusion" which will deal with his ideas regarding the essence of Christianity and the norm of Christian doctrine. Meantime we merely note his belief that in Gospel study apologetic values vary directly with historical values and are in inverse relation to dogmatic ones.(2) The hasty adoption of an orthodox system of theology "for prudential reasons" he regards as very foolish, and argues that no "haunting fears of eternal loss" should be allowed to distress or distract the inquiring doubter.(3) Elsewhere we have noted the suspicion with which he looks on such appeals to the evidence of Christian experience as that of R. W. Dale in his "The Living Christ and the Four Gospels."(4) His suspicion arises from his passion for the historical Christ. The argument from experience he regards as tending, if not actually attempting, to make Christ independent of history.

(b) Jesus as the Christ. Having drawn our attention to what is in itself an important fact, that Christ was Jesus, Bruce now turns to the other aspect of the matter, viz., that Jesus was the Christ. The result of Prophetism, we may recall, was to give birth to three ideals -- "a right Royal Man, a kingdom of the good with God's law written on the heart, and a suffering servant of God making Himself King of that kingdom by His spiritual insight and self-sacrifice."(5)

In this chapter it is shown by Bruce that, after the obscuration of

these ideals in the "Night of Legalism," they were historically fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The only point which requires to be specially noted here is Bruce's criticism of Martineau's position, that the humility of Jesus must have prevented Him from claiming to be the Messiah. That position is stated by Bruce thus:

"A self-conscious Messiah is, ipso facto, no Messiah; therefore all the words ascribed to Jesus which imply a Messianic consciousness must be regarded as an expression of the faith of the Apostolic Church, and not as genuine sayings of the Master."(2)

Martineau's argument seems to have troubled Bruce not a little; and that is understandable since the latter makes the Christhood of Jesus to follow naturally from His unique goodness. We doubt whether Christ's assertion of His claims suggests to the ordinary reader any suspicion of egotism or vanity. The difficulty having been raised, however, Bruce gives it all the attention it deserves. He points out that the "claims" of Jesus are often misapprehended.(3) To our Lord's mind the Messianic idea presented itself rather in connection with service and suffering than with honour, and His assertions on the subject were usually called forth by challenge and denial, like Paul's assertions of his apostolic authority.(4) Dignity is psychologically and ethically consistent with humility. If Christ did not know Himself to be such, then He was not the Christ. We give part of Bruce's argument in his own words:

"If Jesus could not compatibly with His humility be conscious of His Messiahship, then it is impossible to combine humility with the consciousness of being a father, a chief magistrate, a judge, a minister of state, a king. The Messianic dignity is unique; still it belongs to a class. ... If an ordinary king can be humble, so can the Messianic King. If the leader of a great religious reform, like Luther or Knox, can be lowly, so can He who said, "Take my yoke upon you." And where is the difficulty

in any case? Is the problem not constantly receiving solutions? Is it not among the great ones, great in position, responsibility, endowment, and influence, that true lowliness is found? Nay, is not God, the greatest, also the lowliest? "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Is this not the very truth involved in the incarnation -- God humbling Himself to share and bear the sins and miseries of His own children?"(1)

Jesus as Founder of the Kingdom of God. The ground covered by this chapter is largely the same as that of the book, "The Kingdom of God," which we have already reviewed. Bruce is concerned mainly with two questions: Christ's idea of the Kingdom, and the means He employed to bring it into existence.

(1) Outstanding characteristics of the Kingdom, as Jesus conceived it, were spirituality and universality. It was not a Kingdom of law, but a Kingdom of grace. Those chiefly invited to enter were not the righteous, but sinners.

(2) Christ's means and methods, congruous to the nature of the Kingdom, were, in Bruce's view, principally three -- unbounded sympathy and love, consummate wisdom, and the healing achievement of His death. (i) His love found expression in His preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom to the poor, in the friendship He offered to publicans and sinners, and in His marvellous works of healing:

"All three should be taken together as belonging to the same category, and as integral parts of the Messianic ministry. That Jesus evangelised the poor, associated with the sinful, healed the sick, were each and all signs that He was the One who should come, the genuine Christ of a sin and sorrow-laden world."(5)

To the supernatural element in the Gospels we propose to devote a separate section. Here it will suffice to note Bruce's very definite point of view, that Christ's miracles should be regarded "not primarily as acts of preternatural power, but as acts of unparalleled love."(6) (ii) Christ's wisdom showed itself conspicuously in the

choice of the men who "might be with Him," and in the whole training to which He subjected them; and Bruce considers that the materials relating to this subject "may be reckoned among the most certainly historical in the gospel records." (2) (iii) But it was above all by His death that Jesus established the Kingdom. His words on the subject are few and, to Bruce's mind, "leave much to be desired from the point of view of the dogmatic theologian." (3) This much, however, is certain, that our Lord looked upon His death as a voluntary sacrifice which He offered in order that, out of regard to it, "God would freely forgive the sins of all citizens of the divine kingdom." (4) In the final paragraph of the chapter there occurs a passage so highly characteristic of Bruce's mind that we quote it:

"The story of the Passion, told with such wondrous simplicity and pathos by all the evangelists, is not theology, but it is something better. .... What they see they say in severely simple terms without sentiment or reflection, leaving the story to speak for itself. And it has spoken, and continues to speak, with a power far beyond that of any possible attempt at theological interpretation. Stand by the cross with Mary if you would feel the spell of the Crucified. Thence emanates an influence you will never be able to put fully into words. Theological formulae may or may not satisfy the intellect, but it is the evangelic story of the Passion itself that moves the heart. Whatever formula we use must be filled with the story in order to become a vital religious force." (5)

A criticism which must be made of this chapter on "Jesus as Founder of the Kingdom of God" is that in it Bruce makes no mention of the Resurrection. In the following chapter the subject is treated at length, but not in close relation to the founding of the Kingdom. There is every reason to believe that the apostles had the mind of Christ Himself when they regarded His death and His Resurrection as two events which were in reality one. At the heart of their message, it is true, stood the Divine redemptive deed on

Calvary. But this event was never isolated from the other which crowned and completed it. In the language of the Book of Acts, they preached "Jesus and the Resurrection." That is to say, the Resurrection, so far from being dragged in or tacked on to the Gospel of the Cross, was implicit in every word the preachers spoke. And the burden of their declaration was that in these two shattering events, now seen to be one, the Kingdom of God had broken in with power and the new epoch foretold by the prophets had actually dawned. Bruce's failure to mention the Resurrection in connection with the founding of the Kingdom is in keeping with his emphasis upon the historical Jesus. He probably felt that there was an element of the illegitimate in bringing into the consideration of the earthly work of Christ something which was essentially part of the apostolic doctrine. What he failed to realize adequately was that until Christ rose again and began His reign in grace and glory, the work that His Father had given Him to do was not complete, and that until it was complete the whole Gospel could not be spoken to men.

(d) Jesus Risen. In this chapter Bruce criticizes very effectively the various theories brought forward to explain away Christ's Resurrection. Five theories in all are reviewed.

(1) The theft and fraud theory of Reimarus is deservedly dismissed as unworthy of serious consideration. (2) The swoon theory was in favour with the old rationalists and, strangely enough, was patronized by Schleiermacher. (3) But the objections to it are overwhelming. Apart from the unanimous testimony of the evangelists that Jesus was actually dead, there is a fatal consideration, strongly put by Keim and Strauss, and stated thus by Bruce:

"A Jesus who had never been dead coming from His tomb wearing an exhausted, ghastly look could never have revived the hearts of the disciples, or led them to believe in a Christ who had been dead, and was alive again." (1)

(3) To the vision theory of Renan and Strauss Bruce brings two powerful criticisms of his own together with three others urged by Keim. His criticisms are these. (1) According to Strauss the disciples only gradually got into the state of mind required for seeing visions, whereas, according to the Gospels, the Christophanies began within three days of the Crucifixion and were comprised within a period of little more than a month. "It is a disadvantage to the theory that it should be obliged to depart so seriously from the evangelic tradition." (2) (ii) If the Gospel chronology in the matter of the Christophanies is correct, there is against the vision theory the grave objection that "the disciples were in so depressed a state of mind that subjective visions were the last thing in the world likely to befall them." (3) The three grounds on which Keim chiefly rejects the vision theory are thus summarized by Bruce:

"(1) The simple, earnest, almost cold unfamiliar character of the manifestations; (2) the speedy cessation of the appearances; (3) the entire change in the mood of the disciples within a short time, from the excited state which predisposes to visions to clear knowledge of Christ's Messianic dignity and energetic resolves to bear witness to the world for their risen and exalted Lord." (4)

(4) Keim's telegram theory. Keim admits that the Christophanies had an objective cause. Jesus, continuing to live in His Spirit and desiring to give His disciples assurance that He still lived, produced the manifestations which they took for "bona fide bodily appearances of their risen Master." (5) The remarkable thing about this theory is that it is a resort to the supernatural by one who otherwise was a thoroughly naturalistic theologian. Keim frankly

admits that the explanation is supernatural, but pleads necessity. The subsequent Christian history imperatively demands the fact of the Resurrection, or something equivalent. Such an equivalent naturalistic theology cannot supply: the problem is too hard for it. In this solitary case, therefore, appeal must be made to the supernatural. Faith is able to rise above the natural order to which science is bound down, and so faith, not science, must come in here. By faith we are assured "not only that Jesus at death took His course to the world of spirits, but that it was He and no other who from that world gave to His disciples visions," and so revealed Himself to them.

Bruce points out two great difficulties which attach to this theory. (1) To carry it out Keim is obliged to tamper with the Gospel narrative by calling in question the empty grave. If his difficulty is to conceive of a real Resurrection, the obvious retort is: "Surely the heavenly telegram which comes out at the earthly end as the image of a body is as much a wonder as the rising of a dead body from the grave." (2) (ii) It makes the faith of the disciples rest on a hallucination for which Christ Himself is responsible:

"Christ sends a series of telegrams from heaven to let His disciples know that all is well. But what does the telegram say in every case? Not merely, My Spirit lives with God and cares for you; but, my body is risen from the grave. That was the meaning they put on the telegrams, and could not help putting. .... If the resurrection be an unreality, if the body that was nailed to the tree never came forth from the tomb, why send messages that were certain to produce an opposite impression? Why induce the apostles, and through them the whole Christian Church, to believe a lie?" (3)

If recourse must be had to the supernatural, fewer difficulties are involved in taking the account of the Gospels as it stands, and believing that the body of Christ was revived and transfigured.

(1) Apol., p.392. (2) Ibid., p.393. (3) Ibid.
(5) The foregoing hypotheses assume that the first disciples had a real experience. Martineau's theory is that the Christophanies had no existence for the disciples, that they originated in later traditions, and that it is these traditions that are reported in the Gospels. The problem, therefore, is to explain how the legend of the resurrection arose. The basis of the legend, according to Martineau, is nothing more than this. The first disciples believed that the Crucified One "still lives, and only waits the Father's time to fulfil the promises." This faith came to them as their consolation after the shock and grief of the Crucifixion. Such is the sole basis of fact out of which the legend of the Resurrection grew. And it grew in this way. The disciples had a strong conviction of Christ's celestial life, and this conviction they wished to convey to the minds of others. The means they adopted was to say that they had seen Jesus. If we wonder how they were justified in doing this, we are told by Martineau that they meant no more than Paul meant when he said the same thing. That Paul's vision of Jesus was purely spiritual is taken for granted. Another point, however, requires explanation. How are we to account for the legend of Christophanies of a more substantial character? Martineau's answer, as given by Bruce, is as follows:

"Through the craving of the Jew and Pagan for something better than subjective visions in proof that Christ still lived. Under the influence of this craving, hearers of apostolic testimony would be prone to convert spiritual visions into optical ones, and the apostles themselves would be tempted not to be very careful to correct misapprehension." (3)

This theory is acutely criticized by Bruce under two heads. (i) Does it give a true account of the experience of the first disciples? and (ii) Does it give a probable explanation of the rise

of the more materialistic legend of the Resurrection? (i)

(i) The theory imputes to the disciples, who were Jews, the Greek view of the immortality of the soul. The Jewish notion of the future life was "a re-incorporated life" in which the body, though lacking the grossness of the mortal body, was still perceptible by the senses. (2) Again, the theory takes Paul's vision to have been subjective and tries to drag the Christophanies down to the same subjective level. But the apostle's argument requires exactly the contrary procedure. It was essential that he should "level his own vision up to the objectivity of the earlier Christophanies." (3) (ii) The account which the theory gives of the rise of the legend is that faith in the continued spiritual existence of Jesus produced the later tradition of optical visions, not such visions the faith. Bruce considers this is a view analogous to Strauss's theory that the faith that Jesus was the Messiah produced the legend of His miracles. "In both cases alike the true order of causality is inverted." (4) Without such visions as the Gospels record, the first disciples were not at all likely to have attained to firm faith that their crucified Master still lived. But an even more serious objection to the theory remains. The theory asserts that the disciples, in order to convince their hearers that Jesus lived on, were in the habit of saying that they had seen Him. But were they justified in saying this? The theory supposes that they had nothing definite to refer to -- nothing beyond a strong inner conviction. How, then, were they justified in using such language, and more especially when they saw, as they could not help seeing, that it was literally taken? With good reason Bruce asks:

"Is this not very like the reinstatement of pious fraud as a factor in the case, by reversion in part, or in a refined form, to the long-abandoned theory of Reimarus?" (1)

His conclusion is that "the physical resurrection remains," but that "it remains a great mystery." (2)

One main criticism must be passed on this chapter as a whole. While Bruce has undoubtedly succeeded in showing the impotence of naturalistic attempts to explain away the Resurrection, he has not sufficiently dwelt upon the weight of the positive evidence for that stupendous event. Apart from the marks of reality and authenticity on the very face of the Gospel narratives, there are at least four powerful evidential considerations. (i) The fact that at the time the evidence convinced thousands. As Dr J. S. Stewart has said:

"There were people in Jerusalem who wanted nothing better than to see the new movement nipped in the bud, and we may be sure that if by any means the central theme of the apostolic message could have been discredited and proved to be false, they would have lost no time in doing it. But no such refutation of the apostles' case was forthcoming. .... This failure on the part of Jesus' enemies is itself first-rate evidence of the truth of what the apostles were declaring. The facts remained unchallenged because they were above challenge." (3)

(ii) The fact of the amazing transformation of the disciples. Bruce has duly acknowledged this fact; but again we may quote Dr Stewart, who has incisively shown its significance:

"It takes the Resurrection, nothing less, to explain the sudden and complete change in these men from absolute despair and futility to absolute radiance and mastery of life. This is the rock on which any theory of an invented story or of a mere visionary fancy goes to pieces. The idea that the disciples, having lost their Master, fabricated a tale of His return to them, is negatived and made absurd by the lives of the men themselves. Inventions do not transform characters, nor do men endure martyrdom for impostures." (4)

(iii) The fact of the Christian Church. There can be no doubt that it was the Resurrection belief that brought the Church into being;

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and when the early Christians swept out from Jerusalem to the conquest of the earth, the Resurrection message was at once their Gospel and their inspiration. This fact Bruce did not adequately realize by reason of his absorbing interest in the earthly life and teaching of Jesus. It was Galilee rather than the empty tomb that held him. (iv) The fact that it was Jesus who was declared to have risen. The significance of this point has been well put by Dr. G. S. Duncan:

"It is essential to remember that the faith of the disciples did not spring, as it is too often represented to have done, solely from the Resurrection appearances and the discovery of the empty tomb. The soil had already been prepared for it by all their previous contacts with Jesus. The Resurrection had a meaning for them just because it was Jesus who had risen." (1)

In other words, the Resurrection must always be viewed, not as an isolated phenomenon, but as the crowning event in the whole context of Christ's life and teaching.

(e) Jesus Lord. This chapter which is concerned with the faith of the Early Church concerning Christ, opens with words that have a decidedly Ritschlian tone:

"Jesus has for the Christian consciousness the religious value of God. He is the Lord Jesus, and as such the object of devoted attachment and reverent worship." (2)

To the Ritschlian school all Christian beliefs are value-judgments, that is, affirmations of what things are to us, of their value to our life and experience. About what they are in themselves we are to say nothing. The Ritschlian position with regard to Christ is exactly stated by the first sentence of Bruce's words just quoted. Is he, then, identifying himself with the Ritschlians? Before assessing his position it is only fair to add his further comment:

(2) Apol., p. 398.
"What the metaphysical presuppositions of His divinity may be, and what the most fitting theological formulation of it, are questions on which different opinions have been and may continue to be entertained. It is even conceivable that the Church of the future may decline to discuss these questions, or to give them definite dogmatic answers, and may regard with the reverse of satisfaction the answers given in past ages. There is reason to believe that even now there exists in many Christian minds a feeling of coldness, not to say aversion, to the definition of Christ's person handed down to us from ancient councils, as consisting of two distinct natures combined in the unity of a single personality. This is not to be mistaken for a denial of Christ's divinity. It may be a morbid mood, a phase of that general aversion to precise theological determinations which is an outstanding characteristic of the present time; but it is compatible with an attitude of heart towards Jesus in full sympathy with the faith of the Catholic Church concerning Him, even in the most orthodox generations."

There is undoubtedly a marked difference of tone and emphasis between these words and Bruce's views as expressed in his Cunningham Lectures of 1875. In the latter, as we have seen, he argues strongly for the necessity of abiding by the "catholic" doctrine of "two distinct natures combined in the unity of a single personality." But although in the "Apologetics" he uses Ritschlian phraseology, we are not justified in supposing that he uses it with Ritschlian corollaries. The indecisive ring of his words is in keeping with the fact that in his later writings he is less dogmatic than in his earlier ones; and this circumstance, in turn, is probably to be explained by a feeling which he evidently had that, as "apologist" seeking to win the inquirer and the doubter, he must not identify himself with positions too rigid or too "orthodox." The question, however, presses itself upon us: can we be satisfied with value-judgments on the highest subjects apart from intrinsic truth? "Jesus has for the Christian consciousness the religious value of God," says Bruce. But is He God Incarnate or not? This is the question to which reason and conscience alike demand an answer.

(1) Apol., pp. 398f.
Turning again to Bruce's argument, we note these words:

"That Jesus had the religious value of God for, and was worshipped by, the whole Apostolic Church is certain. They called Him Lord, Κύριος .... What Jehovah was to Israel, that Jesus was to the religious consciousness of Christians."(1)

He shows persuasively that the main elements which contributed to the formation of this conviction were the holiness of Jesus, His death, and His Resurrection. But the title of "Lord", given to Him, was not "merely the exaggerated expression of admiration for His character and of gratitude for His redeeming love."(3) Theological reflection begun in the Apostolic Church. Paul is an example of it.(4) The Resurrection must have stimulated such reflection; and Bruce considers that the "theorem of the pre-existence of Christ" may be viewed as the "pendant and complement of the resurrection."(5) He does not think that the sinlessness of Jesus raised in Paul's mind any questions as to the manner of His coming into the world. Nevertheless, after reminding us that "the histories of the infancy in Matthew and Luke do not belong to the original Synoptical tradition" but are "a later addition prefixed to the evangelic story of the public ministry and the final sufferings of Jesus," he writes:

"Some modern theologians, accepting the moral miracle of sinlessness, reject the physical miracle, which, according to the Gospels, was its actual, if not necessary, presupposition; or at least treat it as a thing of no religious importance so long as the moral miracle is believed in. The element of truth in these views is that the supernatural birth is not an end in itself, but only a means to an end. It is the symbol, the sinlessness being the substance. A sinless Christ is the proper object of faith. Under what conditions such a Christ is possible is a very important question, but it belongs to theology rather than to religion. Yet it has to be remembered that faith is ever in a state of unstable equilibrium while the supernatural is dealt with eclectically, admitted in the moral and spiritual sphere, denied in the physical. With belief in the virgin birth is apt to go belief in the virgin life, as not less than the other a part of the veil that must be taken away that the true Jesus may

be seen as He was — a morally defective man, better than most, but not perfectly good."(1)

Thus Bruce has little doubt that belief in the virgin life must go if a purely naturalistic theory of the universe is carried out to its full consequences; for, as he says, the sinless Christ of Schleiermacher and Abbott "is as much a miracle in the moral world as a virgin birth is a miracle in the physical world."(2) His position is that he holds firmly to the moral miracle and thinks the physical one reasonable and probable.

(f) The Light of the World. The last chapter of the volume, with the foregoing words as title, rounds off Bruce's discussion of the Christian faith concerning Jesus. It deals with the question: Who or what is the seat of ultimate authority in religion? and the answer given is, "Christ, not other religious masters, not the individual reason, not the Church, not even the Bible."(3) The final paragraph contains an eminently characteristic statement, summing up the results of the whole discussion in a strain of noble faith:

"In the foregoing pages the authority of Christ has been exalted above that of all other claimants. But it has not been set in antagonism to any legitimate authority. Christ's attitude is not one of zealous antagonism but of grand comprehension. His teaching sums up and crowns the best thought of the wise in all ages and lands. It is throughout in affinity with reason. The just, wholesome authority of the Church depends on the measure in which Christ's spirit dwells in her. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Therefore Christianity is the absolute religion. It is indeed God's final word to men. On the simple principle of the survival of the fittest, it is destined to perpetuity and to ultimate universality."(4)

2. The Historicity of the Gospels.

Our discussion of Bruce's views on the subject of the historicity of the Gospels we propose to confine to the Synoptics. His attitude to the Fourth Gospel has already been treated at some length in our

section on the "Johannine Conception of Christianity." \(^{(1)}\) The Synoptics he always regarded as the most important and valuable books in the New Testament, and their historicity was the question with which as apologist he was chiefly concerned.\(^{(2)}\) At the outset we may note that he sharply distinguishes between historicity and harmonistic. This is a point that is frequently insisted upon in the "Commentary":

"Historicity is not to be confounded with absolute accuracy, or perfect agreement between parallel accounts. Harmonistic is a thing of the past. It was a well-meant discipline, but it took in hand an insoluble problem, and it unduly magnified the importance of a solution, even if it had been possible.\(^{(3)}\) Strained harmonistic devices were foreign to Bruce's largeness of mind. He dwelt in a region where petty discrepancies cannot rise to ruffle the calm. His hold on the essential truth of the history was too firm for his grip of it to be shaken by the nervous tremors which unsettled the faith of more timid and anxious souls. We are not greatly surprised, therefore, that we look in his books in vain for any elaborate discussion of such questions as the relations between the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, or the date of the Last Supper. On the latter he has a characteristic remark:

"This is one of many harmonistic problems arising out of the Gospel narratives from this point onwards, on which an immense amount of learned labour has been spent. The discussions are irksome, and their results uncertain; and they are apt to take the attention off far more important matters: the essentials of the moving tale, common to all the evangelists. We must be content to remain in doubt as to many points.\(^{(4)}\)

Far from straining after an artificial harmonistic, Bruce had, as we shall see, an extraordinary genius for making apologetic capital out of difficulties. It might be the quotation of prophecy by Matthew, or the omission of an incident or phrase by Luke: all is laid under contribution. While the older harmonistic racked its brains to

\(^{(1)}\)Vide supra, pp. 190ff. \(^{(2)}\)Cf. Apol., p. 448. \(^{(3)}\)C.S.G., p. 25. \(^{(4)}\)Ibid., p. 310.
account for discrepancies and ended by convincing nobody but those who were responsible for it, Bruce welcomes discrepancies as independent, because divergent, testimony, and uses them to illustrate either the essential historicity of the incident in question, or the literary methods or religious interests of the Evangelists.

(a) In endeavouring to establish the essential historicity of the Synoptics, Bruce accepts the main result of modern criticism, viz., that at the basis of these Gospels there lie two documents, one of which is either our Mark or an earlier document closely resembling it, and the other a book of sayings of Christ (Q). The two presumably correspond with the Mark and the Matthew of Papias, the former giving the incidents common to the three Synoptics and the latter the sayings common to Matthew and Luke. The deeds of Jesus reported by all three Gospels have thus the authority of an apostle, Peter, for whom, according to Papias, Mark acted as interpreter; and the words of Jesus recorded by both the First and the Third Gospels have as voucher another apostle, viz., Matthew. (1) The conclusion Bruce comes to is stated thus in the Introduction to the "Commentary":

"We have the satisfaction of feeling that the three synoptists bring us very near to the original eye and ear witnesses. The essential identity, amid much diversity in form, of the words ascribed to our Lord in the two Gospels which draw upon the Logia, inspires confidence that the evangelic reports of these words, though secondary, are altogether reliable." (2)

As he presents his argument in the "Apologetics", it is from Luke that Bruce derives most help in his endeavour to establish the historicity of the Synoptics. While Matthew and Mark do not openly admit us into their secret, Luke, in his Preface, takes us into his confidence and carefully explains his aim and method as an author. The inference Bruce draws is in these terms:

"Without straining his words, we are entitled to infer from that preface that Luke is going to tell us what can be ascertained, from written sources or otherwise, concerning the words and deeds of Jesus. He alludes to the work of predecessors as a help in his task, he refers to the twelve as the original source of information, and he indicates it as his desire to enable his readers to attain certain knowledge in the matters of which he writes. All this surely reveals a purpose to write, as far as possible, history."(i)

This conclusion, that Luke set himself to write history, is a most important one and, as Bruce clearly saw, one which carries much along with it. (i) It covers the historicity of Mark, which is admitted by critics to have been one of Luke's sources. Luke must have regarded Mark as a good source, "good in the sense of being a reliable report of the apostolic tradition, a faithful record of what had been learned from the eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."(2) (ii) The conclusion drawn from Luke's prefatory statement covers also the large amount of material, chiefly consisting of sayings of Jesus, found in his pages, to which there is nothing corresponding in the Second Gospel, or even in the First. His Preface entitles us to hold that Luke "had sources for these sayings, as well as for the deeds for which Mark was his chief voucher, and that he believed them to be true words of the Lord."(3) (iii) The conclusion covers even Matthew. On investigation we find that, in all matter common to him with Mark and Luke, or with Luke alone, he gives substantially the same account, and obviously means to write history. In other words, when we are in a position to test him, we find that he is "not a man given to inventing, but to simple, honest, matter-of-fact narration."(4) Bruce very properly draws the conclusion that, "this being the character he has earned when in company, he is entitled to the benefit of it when he is alone."(5)

(b) Having made a strong case for the essential historicity of the

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Evangelists, Bruce hastens to add that none of them can be regarded as a mere chronicler:

"For the writers of the Gospels the religious interest is supreme. Their temper is that of the prophet rather than that of the scribe. They are truly inspired men, and as such their main concern is not to give scrupulously exact accounts of facts, but to make the moral and religious significance of the facts apparent."(1)

In the "Apologetics" only a few sentences are devoted to this aspect of the historicity of the Gospels; but in chapters I-III of "With Open Face," in the "Introduction" to the "Commentary", and (in the case of Luke) in the "Critical Introduction" to "The Kingdom of God" we have fairly lengthy statements on the subject.

(1) Bruce believes that, when compared with the other Gospels, Mark is seen to lack a conspicuous didactic aim. The outstanding characteristic of the earliest Gospel is realism.(2) The reference here is not to the writer's graphic, vivid, pictorial style, but to the fact that, being "unembarrassed by reverence," he presents in an unreserved manner the person and character of Jesus and of the disciples:

"The thing to be noted about Mark is not the use of heightened or accumulated phrases so much as the avoidance of toning down, reticence, generalised expression, or euphemistic circumlocution. He states facts as they were, when one might be tempted not to state them at all, or to show them in a subdued light."(4)

Mark, for example, quotes the title "Carpenter" on the lips of the people of Nazareth,(5) and the saying of the relatives of Jesus, "He is beside Himself."(6) "Jesus," Bruce remarks, "was a real, not an amateur, carpenter, the difference being as great as between a volunteer soldier and one who engages in actual fighting."(7) Several further instances of Mark's realism are given; but the important point to be noted is the apologetic use Bruce makes of it. The

realism of the Second Gospel makes for its historicity. (i) "It is a guarantee of first-hand reports, such as one might expect from Peter." (i) (ii) The same realism is a strong argument in favour of Mark's priority. "Mark is the archaic Gospel, written under the inspiration of fondly cherished past memories." (ii) (iii) In this Gospel we get nearest to "the true human personality of Jesus in all its originality and power." (iii) All this is well said and, from the point of view of Apologetics, most valuable. One word of criticism, however, must be expressed. We consider that Bruce is wrong in minimizing Mark's didactic purpose. Commenting on the opening words of the Gospel he says:

"The writer seems to say, not: "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," but more simply: "These are written that ye may know Jesus." (4)

Here Bruce is making a false distinction. Certainly the Gospel was written that men might "know Jesus"; but the only Jesus known to the Evangelist, and the only Jesus he desired his readers to know, was "Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

(2) The most outstanding characteristic of Matthew's Gospel is that it "paints the life-image of Jesus in prophetic colours." (5) Jesus is presented as the Christ, and is verified as such by the applicability of many prophetic oracles to the details of His childhood, His public ministry, and His last sufferings. It is to be noted that the Evangelist applies his prophetic method to the whole of his material, including that which is common to him with Mark. He has his prophetic oracles ready to hand to be attached to events which Mark reports simply as matters of fact. (6) Bruce is clearly right in saying, with reference to Matthew, that "the facts suggested the texts,

(1)C.S.G., p.33. (2)Ibid. (3)Ibid. (4)Ibid., p.34. (5)Ibid., p.40. (6)Cf. Ibid.
the texts did not create the facts. .... If invention has been at work it has not been in his imagination." The very weakness of some of the citations is testimony to the facts. A notable example is, "That He should be called a Nazarene:" on which Bruce comments:

"It is impossible to say whence it is taken; it could never have entered into the mind of any one unless the fact of the settlement in Nazareth had been there to begin with, creating a desire to find for it also, if at all possible, some prophetic anticipation." Thus does Bruce turn to a new apologetic use these prophetic passages which, in a different fashion, served their purpose in the apologetic of the apostolic age.

(3) It may seem somewhat strange that, having emphasized that Luke's Preface is "full of words and phrases breathing the fact-loving spirit," Bruce should find the most marked feature of the Third Gospel to be a certain "idealisation of the characters of Jesus and the disciples." We shall see shortly that even this element of idealization can be used to establish the essential historicity of Luke's narrative. Meantime we note the care with which Bruce points out that, in applying the epithet "idealized" to the picture of Jesus and the disciples presented by Luke, he does not mean to suggest that the narrative is dominated by a theological idea, or by a controversial tendency, as was imagined by writers of the Tübingen school. The Evangelist's presentation of his material is dominated rather by religious sentiment having its root in the personal idiosyncrasy of the writer and his care for the edification of his readers. The ground of this judgment is the fact that Luke's variations are seen to have a common character. "This could not be the result of accident," says Bruce. "It brings in the element of preference, either in Luke or in the traditional reading he followed, or in both." 

Jesus and the disciples are contemplated not so much in the light of memory as through the brightly coloured medium of faith:

"The evangelist does not forget that the Personages of whom he writes are now the Risen Lord, and the Apostles of the Church. Jesus appears with an aureole round His head, and the faults of the disciples are very tenderly handled." (1) These, to Bruce's mind, are the features of the narrative most plainly bearing traces of editorial discretion with a view to edification.

(1) We may note, first, Luke's discreet manner of dealing with materials relating to the disciples. "Luke ever spares the twelve," says Bruce, quoting Schanz. (2) Especially is this noticeable in the case of Peter. The stern word, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," (3) is omitted. In the narrative of Peter's denial of Christ, the pre-intimation of the coming fall is most gently handled, and the account of the denial itself is a "benignant understatement." (4) The whole body of the Twelve, however, are treated with equal consideration. Their faults, while acknowledged, are touched with sparing hand. Some narratives of Mark or Matthew in which these faults appear very obtrusively, are omitted altogether, notably, the conversation concerning the leaven of the Pharisees, the ambitious request of the sons of Zebedee, the anointing in Bethany, and the flight of the disciples at the apprehension of their Master. (5) Even more instructive, however, is the delicate way in which Luke deals with the disciples' faults when he is compelled to speak of these. Their weak faith, manifest in the storm on the Lake, and at the foot of the hill of Transfiguration, is very mildly characterized. (6) The rivalry of the disciples, mentioned in the story of the Last Supper, appears as a petty fault of temper in comparison with their heroic fidelity. (7)

Their failure to watch in Gethsemane is apologetically described as sleeping for sorrow. (1)

(ii) It is with Luke's portraiture of our Lord, however, that Bruce is mainly concerned, and the outstanding features of the Third Gospel which lend distinctiveness to the Evangelist's picture are thus summarized:

"Some things related in Matthew and Mark are omitted, some things strongly emphasised, some things set in a subdued light, and, finally, some things introduced for the first time into the evangelic story: all making for one end, giving prominence to certain aspects of the Saviour's career and character that strongly appeal to faith and love, and throwing into the shade others making severer demands on the power of appreciation." (2)

Among the omissions are the realistic word about that which defileth, the seemingly harsh word about "dogs" spoken to the woman of Canaan, and the awful cry on the Cross: "My God, My God!" (3) Among the things emphasised are whatever things tend to bring out into strong relief the power, benevolence, and saintliness of Jesus. (4) The two former of these attributes are made prominent in connection with acts of healing. Peter's mother-in-law suffers from a great fever; and the leper is full of leprosy. The hand restored on the Sabbath is the right hand; the centurion's servant is one dear to him; the son of the widow of Nain is an only son; the daughter of Jairus is an only daughter; the epileptic boy at the foot of the hill of Transfiguration is also an only child. (5) The holiness of Jesus is made conspicuous by the prominence given to prayer in connection with critical occasions. Striking illustrative instances of understatement are Luke's narratives of the cleansing of the Temple and the agony in Gethsemane. (7)

To the same category Bruce refers the treatment by Luke of the anti-Pharisaic element in Christ's teaching. Much of this element is

(7) Cf. ibid., pp.72f.
omitted; and much of what is retained is softened by being given, not as spoken about, but as spoken to, Pharisees by Jesus as a guest in their houses. (1) Luke's additions, though not exclusively, are predominantly such as serve the purpose of emphasizing the grace of Jesus. Seven examples are given. The story of the woman in Simon's house; the parables concerning the joy of finding things lost; the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Great Supper, and the Pharisee and the Publican; and the winsome stories of Zacchaeus and the penitent thief. (2) The conclusion to which Bruce comes is that the particulars which he has adduced under the four heads of omissions, emphasized statements, understatements, and additions, all conspire to one end, viz., "to exhibit the Lord of the Church divine in Power, Holiness, and Goodness." (3)

Bruce has no doubt, however, that the picture of Jesus which we obtain from Luke is one-sided:

"Luke's picture of Jesus is one-sided. The side shown is indeed so attractive that we thank the Evangelist for what he has given rather than blame him for what he has withheld. Yet we ought distinctly to see, and acknowledge to ourselves, that his presentation is defective. We cannot accept as complete a Christ who is simply good and kind. We need a Christ who can be angry, indignant, terrible in passionate abhorrence of evil; who can hurl thunderbolts of denunciation at the "unwedgeable and gnarled oak" of powerful, privileged, and plausible iniquity. The love of Jesus to the sinful, as it appears in this Gospel, is beautiful; but the hatred of Pharisaism which is somewhat thrown into the background is equally indispensable. So likewise is the stern purpose, at all costs, to purge out of the disciples evil elements of temper which, left unchecked, would soon turn the new society of which they were to form the nucleus into a community little better in spirit than that in which the scribes bore away. Who that considers to what extent Christianity has been wrecked by priestly assumption can regret that the evangelic records have so faithfully shown how contrary that leaven was to the mind of the Lord Jesus?" (4)

These judgments would appear to be, on the whole, well-founded; but they are interesting not only in themselves but because they reflect

so much of Bruce's own personality, above all his strong moral
passion, revealed here in his hatred of everything savouring of
Pharisaism or ecclesiasticism.

We have shown that Bruce bestowed systematic and original work on
the question of the peculiar secondary character of Luke's Gospel,
and that he attained to results to which he attached considerable
importance. Our main concern is with the apologetic aspect of those
results. Bruce believed that Luke's peculiarities can be utilized
for the apologetic purpose of establishing the general credibility of
the evangelic tradition. This applies even to Luke's omissions.
At first we are inclined to argue: If Luke had known these things,
he would have reported them. But when the element of intention is
introduced, this reasoning is invalidated. Evidently there were
classes of facts which the Evangelist did not care to preserve. "At
the very least," says Bruce, "intentional omission, once established,
cancels all presumption against historicity."(1) On the other hand,
understatement bears positive evidence to the reality of the fact
reported. What a writer tones down, he is tempted to omit. By
simply understating, instead of omitting, "he becomes a reluctant and
therefore reliable witness to the historicity of the matter so dealt
with."(2) Again, even heightened statements can contribute to the
cumulative apologetic argument. If the added particulars be the
result of fuller information, this is self-evident. But even if the
Evangelist exaggerates for a purpose, he witnesses to the truth of the
basal narrative; for we see within what narrow limits editorial
discretion was willing to restrict itself. "A writer who has ideas
to embody," says Bruce, "is tempted to invent when he cannot find
what will suit his purpose."(3) Luke did not invent, but "only at most

(1)W.O.F., p.78. (2)C.S.G., p.49. (3)Ibid.
touched up stories given to his hand by a reliable tradition." (1)

Finally, since this is the Evangelist's method in narratives common to his Gospel with those of Matthew and Mark, we can well believe it to have been his method even in those portions of his Gospel for which he is our sole authority. (2)

3. The Supernatural Element in the Gospels.

Bruce has made a very strong case for the essential historicity of the Gospel narratives. A special task which, as apologist, he had to tackle, was to show that the mantle of historicity is ample enough to cover the supernatural element in the Gospels, or, more specifically, the miracles of Jesus. Two main questions arise in this connection: (a) How can we best meet the arguments from the side of philosophy, science, and history which appear to make it difficult or impossible for us to believe that Jesus worked miracles? and (b) If we have to admit that Jesus worked miracles, how are these to be interpreted in the context of His life's work? The subject was one to which Bruce turned at a relatively early stage of his career as theologian. In 1881, in "The Chief End of Revelation," the second of the questions we have indicated was discussed in the chapter entitled "The Function of Miracle in Revelation," while some five years later a large volume, "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels," was devoted to the problem as a whole. In the "Apologetics" only a few pages are given to Christ's miracles, the reason doubtless being that the theme had been treated very fully in the earlier books.

(a) (1) Miracles in relation to Speculative Philosophy. In the opening lecture of "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels" Bruce shows clearly that much modern unbelief in the supernatural has its

roots in "a priori speculative reasoning." (1) Miracles are possible if Theism is a reasonable view of the universe. Whether miracles will be wrought is a different question, on which parties will range themselves according to "the strength of (their) conviction as to the need for a new departure in the moral history of humanity." (2) But this does not affect possibility. In a striking and valuable discussion of the doctrine of evolution in its relation to the Christian Faith Bruce maintains that that doctrine "does not rob the Christian theist of his God," (3) and is not in itself inconsistent with a God who works miracles. Any necessary connection between evolution and agnostic conclusions is, rightly, denied:

"Evolution, so far as I understand it, excludes neither God nor the knowledge of God." (4) "Evolution leaves us a God with theistic attributes, therefore capable, if needful, of working miracles. If therefore miracle be excluded it must be on the ground, not that it exceeds Divine Power, but because it is out of harmony with the ascertained method of Divine action." (5)

We do not think that Bruce has quite disposed of the agnostic position by saying, "It is not a scientific, but only a philosophic argument. The whole system of modern agnosticism has only a philosophical, as distinct from a scientific, basis." (6) Of Theism, too, it may be said, that it has a philosophical, as distinct from a scientific, basis. Science deals with the facts and order of the known universe. All questions which relate to transcendent existence are, from the nature of the case, philosophical; and if the theistic question is to be debated to its root, it is with arguments of philosophy that we have to deal. This, however, is by the way. Bruce is undoubtedly right in his view that speculative assumptions are at the foundation of much of the denial of the supernatural.

(2) Miracles in relation to Scientific Views of the Order of Nature. In his second lecture Bruce deals with the tendency of the modern mind to "naturalize" supernatural events. "The apologist of the present time," he says, "has an interest in minimizing the miraculousness of miracles, and making them appear as natural as possible." (1) The tendency referred to is attributable to the assumption that scientific views of the order of nature do not allow of the miraculous. Standing himself for a real supernaturalism, Bruce proceeds to criticize various theories that had been put forward with a view to harmonizing miracles with the uniform order of nature. Two theories in particular are considered -- (1) that miracles are the product of a higher natural law, and (ii) that they are the product of an accelerated natural process. (2) Though he rejects both theories, largely on the ground that miracles must be viewed as originating in a particular act of the Divine will, it is observable that Bruce does not advocate any theory of his own, but contents himself throughout with speaking of miracles as "events out of the common course of nature, and not explicable by natural laws," (4) and, again, as involving "a breach in the continuity of nature." (5) His sympathies are with Rothe and Bushnell in their views of the relation of nature to the supernatural; but he criticizes the latter's employment of the term "supernatural" to denote both the spiritual and the miraculous. (6) In one of the most interesting sections of the chapter Bruce offers a friendly and discriminating criticism of the celebrated book, "Natural Law in the Spiritual World", by his college colleague, Henry Drummond. (7) He shows that analogy between natural and spiritual law is mistaken for identity. (8) If the same law operates in the two worlds, why the

distinction between them?

"One expects every world, like every land, to have its own laws. The kind of law should determine the kind of world. Accordingly the alleged identity cannot be maintained without overlooking a radical distinction between the natural and the spiritual worlds, this, viz., that the one is the sphere of necessary physical determination, and the other the sphere of freedom." (4)

Two observations on this chapter may be made. (i) Science is to-day much less willing than it was in Bruce's day to draw narrow limits of what is possible. It is true that it does not appear possible to explain the healing of epilepsy or a withered arm by means of any purely physico-chemical categories; but it is less obvious that psychology, which has refused to bow down to physics and chemistry and has claimed its own rightful place as an independent science, will always be unable to explain such things by means of its own proper categories. Examples of remarkable healings are commonplace of the text-books of psychology, even if no completely satisfactory explanation of them has been found as yet. (ii) The idea of a higher natural law is probably much more valuable than Bruce realized. It is quite possible that certain events, which we now regard as miraculous, will one day be seen to have happened in accordance with higher laws as yet undiscovered by science. In this sense all miracles may well have a scientific explanation. The power of mind over matter may perhaps be discovered to work according to certain higher laws of which as yet science knows little. If this is a rationally ordered universe, there is no inherent improbability about the existence of such higher laws, although it does not follow that we shall ever be able to discover them. If we did discover them, the universe would certainly not become less wonderful. Our sense of wonder would rather be increased as we pondered the

(1) M. E. G., p. 74. (2) M. E. G., p. 100.
marvellous design lying behind the vast framework of the world. As for the miracles of Christ, the wonder would be increased that He should have been able to work in accordance with these higher laws which we, nineteen centuries afterwards, barely know and cannot operate. It would then be even more obvious that He stood near to the secret of the universe, to the Mind which ordered it, and that He was able to live in accordance with the will of the creating Spirit.

(3) Miracles in relation to the Apostolic Witnesses and the Evangelic Records. This is the theme of the third and fourth lectures. It is obvious that the credibility of miracles depends upon the testimony to them and upon the record of that testimony. If the testimony is in any way defective, miracles are to this extent invalidated. If the testimony was originally adequate, but the record of it was subsequently vitiated in any degree by legendary and erroneous matter, miracles again are to this extent invalidated.

The result of Bruce's discussion of miracles in relation to the Apostolic Witnesses is to show that, whatever hypothesis be accepted as to the composition of the canonical Gospels, it is "almost certain that the primitive Gospel contained a considerable miraculous element." As he puts it in the "Apologetics":

"The primitive gospel, whether it was the Logia of Matthew or the Gospel of Mark, the report of Peter's preaching, appears to have been to a greater or less extent a miracle gospel." (2)

In his discussion of miracles in relation to the Evangelic Records, Bruce lays just stress upon the very intimate connection of the narratives of the miracles of Jesus with the rest of His history as given in the Gospels, and makes it clear that if we cut out the miraculous from even the earliest of our Gospels we are left with a narrative which has ceased to be intelligible:

"The miraculous element in the Gospels is no mere excrescence or external adjunct easily separable from the body of the history, but an essential portion of it, closely woven into the fabric, vitally connected with the organism. Words and works are so united that the one divorced from the other would in many instances become unintelligible." (1)

It is interesting to note that in his posthumous article, "Jesus", in the Encyclopaedia Biblica, writing of the healing miracles, Bruce gives expression to the same historical judgment:

"The healing ministry, judged by critical tests, stands on as firm historical ground as the best accredited parts of the teaching. ... In most of the reports the action of Jesus is so interwoven with unmistakably authentic words (e.g., in the case of the palsied man) that the two elements cannot be separated: we must take the story as it stands or reject it entirely." (2)

Turning to the question of the number of events ostensibly miraculous and their classification, Bruce points out that the eleven miracles common to the Triple Tradition Synoptic Tradition contain examples of each of the three classes into which the Gospel miracles have been divided: (i) those wrought on Nature; (ii) those wrought on the body of man; and (iii) those wrought on his spirit, or on the spirit world. (3) With regard to discrepancies between the accounts, Bruce inclines to support B. Weiss's view that these originated in "the somewhat uncritical use of written documents by honest but simple men unaccustomed to the art of constructing history as practised by a modern literary expert." (4) He considers that such an explanation is "compatible with the fullest recognition of the historical value of the records on the whole." (5)

Since Bruce's day the Gospels have been subjected continuously to the most exacting scrutiny which all the resources of modern historical and literary criticism can devise, and it can be said that they have stood the test with complete success. Broadly speaking,

they have been found to preserve the substance of what was believed in the Church during the lifetime of those who had known and worked with Jesus. There cannot be the slightest doubt that those who knew Jesus best believed that He had healed the sick and performed other notable deeds of power. The historical evidence is that Jesus did work miracles, and there are no sound historical grounds on which this statement can be denied. This aspect of the matter has been very forcibly expressed by Dr Alan Richardson:

"It is indisputable that all the historical evidence that we have goes to show that Jesus worked miracles of the kind described in the Gospels. There is no historical evidence to show that Jesus did not work miracles. It cannot be disputed upon historical grounds that all the people who came into contact with Jesus during His ministry in Galilee believed that He worked miracles; even His enemies believed it. If our judgment were to be decided by strictly historical considerations and by nothing else, we could not avoid the conclusion that Jesus worked miracles. The evidence that Jesus worked miracles is just as strong, and is of precisely the same quality and texture, as that He taught that God is Father and that His disciples should forgive one another. We cannot on historical grounds alone accept the evidence for the one and reject that for the other." (1)

While Bruce's main aim is to establish the credibility of the Gospel miracles in general, he does not affirm absolute inerrancy in every particular of the narrative. As he puts it:

"While it is a matter of faith that we should recognise the presence of a miraculous element in the Evangelic history as a whole, it is not a matter of faith, but simply a question of fact and of exegesis, whether a miracle must be recognised in any particular event." (2)

Realizing that Christ's performance of works of power excited wonder, he allows the possibility that in some of the narratives amazement has led to misconception. The real significance of a miracle may have been misunderstood; or minor accompaniments may have been invested with an importance which did not originally belong to them; or supernatural agencies may have been traced behind events for which

to-day a natural explanation would be accepted as satisfactory.

Accordingly, in his fifth and sixth lectures, Bruce takes up the miracle-stories in detail and subjects them to an exegetical examination with a view to determining the supernatural element in each of them. The principle of judgment on which he proceeds is stated thus:

"Every miraculous act of Christ must be conceived of as congruous to His Messianic vocation, and serviceable to the interests of the divine kingdom. None of the miracles, of whatever class, can be regarded as mere displays of power; they must all be viewed as arising naturally out of their occasions, and serving a useful purpose in connection with Christ's work as the Herald and Founder of the kingdom of heaven. Any reputed miracle which did not satisfy this requirement would be justly liable to suspicion." (1)

Of the story of the stater in the fish's mouth, he says: "This very peculiar nature-miracle cannot be regarded as an absolute certainty, but at most as a probability." (2) Again, while seeking to defend the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, he admits that it is "intrinsically probable that there was a much larger store of provisions in the crowd than was at first known to the disciples and their Master." (3) Obviously a special problem is presented by the nature-miracles. Bruce's view is that these are not, any more than the healing miracles, to be regarded as mere displays of power but, like the others, as "serving a useful purpose in connection with Christ's work as the Herald and Founder of the kingdom," especially as providing an "occasional defence of the kingdom against the hazards to which it was now and then exposed." (4) "The nature miracles," he says elsewhere, "assert the supreme claims of the kingdom, and the certainty that its interests will be vindicated at all hazards." (5)

(b) Having presented a powerful case for the essential historicity

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of the supernatural element in the Gospels, Bruce, in his eighth lecture, turns to the question of interpretation. He rejects the old-fashioned view, advocated by Mozley and others, that miracles are to be regarded as vouchers for the truth of revelation, especially for the truth of Christ's claim to be the Son of God. As to this latter position, he says that the conviction which the disciples had, that Jesus was the Holy One, would appear to have been arrived at, not through miracles, but "through an intimate knowledge of His character made possible by habitual companionship." It is to be noted, however, that he freely admits that Christ's mighty works "were among the things through which the character of Jesus gradually manifested itself to them in all its spiritual beauty." This is an important admission; for, as Dr Richardson has pointed out:

"The only historical evidence that we possess is that of a Jesus whose deeds as well as His words led His disciples to perceive that He was the Christ, the Son of God." Miracles are thus a part of revelation, not an outside buttress to its contents. They are not the bell calling attention to the sermon about to follow, but a vital element in the sermon itself. Insistence upon this point of view is Bruce's great contribution to their interpretation. In "The Chief End of Revelation" he says that Abbott, in his "Supernatural Religion", was glad to have so easy a task given him by Mozley as the shelling of such a vulnerable position as that miracles are simply a guarantee and voucher of revelation:

"Revelation, so conceived, has nothing in itself to commend it to men's acceptance; it is utterly devoid of self-evidencing power; its only prop is miracle, and that being knocked from under it, or rudely shaken, the whole superstructure tumbles to the ground." Our quarrel with the traditional view of the function of miracle is, not that it is wholly false, but that it is altogether inadequate, and gives the first place to that which is secondary and subordinate, and so leads ultimately to a wrong conception of

the very nature of miracle." (1) "The true way of conceiving miracles, and also prophecy, is to regard them, not as mere signs annexed to revelation for evidential purposes, but as constitutive elements of revelation, as forming in fact the very essence of the revelation." (2)

This is just the central thesis of "The Miraculous Element in the Gospels." Here Bruce expresses his contention thus:

"Miracles forming an essential part of revelation are as important as the revelation itself. The two stand and fall together. On the other hand, miracles attached to a revelation as evidential signs assume the position of detachable and dispensable accidents." (3)

In the "Apologetics", where the same lesson is pressed home, stress is laid, in the case of the miracles of healing, upon their ethical aspect:

"Men do not now believe in Christ because of His miracles: they rather believe in the miracles because they have first believed in Christ. .... It is difficult to establish any congruity between miracles and Christ's personal character or His Messianic vocation when miracles are viewed in the abstract merely as products of supernatural power. Then they sink into mere external signs attached to Christ's proper work for evidential purposes, a mode of contemplating the subject which has ceased to have much value for many thoughtful minds. It is otherwise, however, when the miracles of Christ are regarded, not primarily as acts of preternatural power, but as acts of unparalleled love." (4)

Two observations may be made on Bruce's main contention. When viewed as media of revelation, Christ's miracles would appear to gain immeasurably both in historical value and in ethical import. (1) They gain in historical value because, while they are essentially supernatural, they are now seen to be also in a real sense "natural." They are natural as parts of Christ's revelation. What more likely than that He who was at once the all-powerful and the all-loving should, when brought in contact with human misery and want, exert His power to remove them? (ii) They gain in ethical importance. On the old view, all that was required was the abstract fact that the deeds were miraculous. Any kind of miracle would do, so long as it

was a miracle. Drinking poison without evil result, changing a pen into a pen-wiper (Matthew Arnold's typical example), or other similar miracles, were all that was needed to prove that the actor was supernatural. But how foreign all this is to the spirit of Christ! A high attestation of the historicity of the Gospel miracles is their noble, ethical character. It is true that there are some for which it is difficult to vindicate this character. But they are few, and it is with them that modern criticism may be left most free to deal.

From the particular point of view which Bruce has developed it might seem as if there were no room left for regarding Christ's miracles as possessed of any evidential value. But in the tenth and last lecture, on "Christianity without Miracle", he attaches the very highest significance to the supernatural as evidence, and puts the matter in a way that for strength of statement is not surpassed by apologists of the old school. He reaches this conclusion by a different method. Following Ullmann and others, he views the moral miracle of Christ's sinlessness in character, spirit, and conduct as the one miracle that is of vital importance to Christian faith:

"Believers could part with the physical miracles of the Gospels if science or exegesis demanded the sacrifice; but if a sinless Christ were taken from us on the plea that the moral order of the world knows only of imperfect men, all would be lost."(2)

The ninth lecture, dealing with the moral perfection of Christ, is once the most beautiful in the volume and the book's true climax; and it bears comparison with the masterpieces that have been written on the subject in modern times. Bruce's contention is that here, in this sinless Jesus, we have a moral miracle, -- "rupture of continuity in the moral order,"(3) and that, if we so receive Him, we will receive much more for His sake:

"All other Gospel miracles appear natural to one who believes in the Incarnation, and sees in Jesus the true eternal Son of God, and the perfect Son of Man." (1)

We conclude with two comments. (i) We have no doubt that Bruce is right in his main contention that the supernatural element in the Gospels is to be viewed as an integral part of revelation. More recent New Testament scholarship, however, interprets this principle in a manner slightly different from that of Bruce. From the words used to describe the miracles of Jesus, viz., "works" (ἐργα), "powers" (δυνάμεις), and (in the Fourth Gospel) "signs" (σημεῖα), and from the whole Gospel context, it is seen that these miracles were viewed by Christ and by the early Christians as manifestations of unseen power, indications that God Himself was at work in His world. (2)

There can be little doubt that Jesus shared the popular belief that many of the distresses to which humanity was subject came from the domination of the world by evil spirits, and that, when He came to grips with those powers of evil, He did so as One armed with the power of God and commissioned to overthrow them. At a crucial point in His ministry His enemies accused Him of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. He answered, "If I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." (3) Our Lord proclaimed the imminence of the Kingdom; His miracles attested it; Satan's house already was being despoiled; the strong man was bound. In the light of the Gospel records we can say with confidence of the miracles as a whole that they were inspired by the free creative Spirit of God working for the establishment of good and the dethronement of evil. This interpretation of them has been well expressed by Dr G. S. Duncan:

"What Jesus was and what He did are not to be separated; and when we take a conjunct view of the evidence of the Gospels we see that His mighty "works of power," according to which blind men received sight, lepers were cleansed, and the dead raised (Matt. xi.5), were regarded by Him as an evidence that in Him the Kingdom of God had begun."(1)

(ii) Though he by no means overlooks it, Bruce does not sufficiently bring out the fundamental place which faith has in the whole context of the Gospel miracles. This aspect of the subject was brought into a new light and a new prominence in this country by such writers as Dr A. G. Hogg, in his "Redemption from this World," and Dr D. S. Cairns, in his "The Faith that Rebels."(2) The Gospels represent Jesus as doing His mighty works in virtue of His own perfect trust in God, and also (in the case of the healing miracles) because the recipients of His blessings had the receptive spirit which accompanies faith. Moreover, Jesus would appear to have encouraged the belief that, with a trust in God similar to His own, other men might do similar works of power.(3) The fact that Jesus normally was able to perform mighty works which to ordinary men are, as we cannot but think, normally impossible, is an indication that His relations with God were characterized by a complete harmony of mind and spirit, such as is not found in the relations of other men. That harmony is expressed in Scripture in terms of the unique relationship between the Father and the Son.(4)

4. The Development of Primitive Christianity in view of Modern Critical Theories.

The development of Primitive Christianity is a subject in which Bruce was deeply interested during the major part of his life. We have seen how in his early days, as student and probationer, he was greatly upset by the revolutionary views of Strauss, and how, through

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a close and sympathetic study of the Gospels and above all of the
Jesus who is presented there, he attained to assurance of faith and
peace of mind. (1) By the time he came to write his first book, "The
Training of the Twelve" (1871), the critical theory which occupied the
limelight and disturbed the faith of many was that of Baur; and in
the footnotes to the Second Edition of that work (1877) he took
opportunity to point out some of the theory's groundless assumptions
and false arguments. In the Preface to that edition he writes:

"The material dealt with in The Training of the Twelve, must, from
the nature of the case, have some bearing on this conflict-
hypothesis of Dr Baur and his friends. The question arises,
what was to be expected of the men that were with Jesus? ..... In
the present work I have merely indicated the places at which
the different points of the argument might come in, and the way
in which they might be used. The conflict-hypothesis was not
absent from my mind in writing the book at first; but I was
neither so well acquainted with the literature relating thereto,
nor so sensible of its importance, as I am now." (2)

Some years later Bruce was invited by the Religious Tract Society to
contribute a tract on Baur's theory to their series of "Present Day
Tracts on Subjects of Christian Evidence, Doctrine, and Morals." The
tract, No. 38 in the series, was published in 1885 and bears the title,
"Ferdinand Christian Baur and his Theory of the Origin of Christianity
and of the New Testament Writings." In the course of the years,
however, other theories concerning the tendencies at work in early
Christianity were propounded, and when Bruce came to write the chapter
on "Primitive Christianity" in his "Apologetics" (1892), he had to
deal with no fewer than four distinct theories advocated by modern
critics. It is with the materials of this chapter that we shall be
chiefly concerned.

The New Testament writings reveal that within the Apostolic Church
there were divergencies of view as to the relation of Christianity}
to Judaism; and this fact raises the wider question as to the phases through which Christianity passed in the formative period of its history, and the relation in which these stood to Christ and to Paul. (1)

Four theories, which practically exhaust the possibilities of the case, are discussed by Bruce; and, for the sake of definiteness of statement, these are connected by him with the names of four individual scholars. Each name, however, represents more or less a school. The whole subject is suitably considered under three heads: (a) Outline of the four main theories as to the development of Primitive Christianity; (b) Criticism of these theories; and (c) Inferences from such criticism.

(a) Outline of the four theories. (1) In Baur's view Christ, while adhering to the Jewish Messianic idea, was universalistic in spirit and taught a religion which He intended to become the religion of humanity. Paul, however, was the only one of the apostles who entered with intelligence and enthusiasm into the spirit of the Master. Hence arose a great controversy as to the relation between Christianity and Judaism. Paul contended for the right of Christianity to be free from the restrictions of Jewish law and custom, but the Eleven strove to keep the new religion in a state of subservience to the old. The progress of the controversy, as conceived by Baur, is thus outlined by Bruce:

"The history of Christianity from the apostolic age to the rise of the old Catholic Church in the middle of the second century was the history of this controversy in its various stages of (1) unmitigated antagonism between the two opposed tendencies; (2) incipient and progressive reconciliation; (3) consummated reconciliation and completed union and unity."(2)

The theory is based upon the philosophical assumption that all historical movements proceed according to the Hegelian law of

development by antagonism. Baur contended that the New Testament books all relate to one or other of the three stages specified, and that their dates may be approximately fixed by the tendencies they respectively represent.

(2) Bernhard Weiss was the most thoroughgoing opponent of the school of Baur. With regard to his general attitude, Bruce rightly points out that "it is not the fact that the Tübingen school is always wrong, and it is a very questionable service to the Christian faith that is rendered by an apologetic going on that assumption." (3) Briefly put, Weiss's view is that "neither in the case of Jesus nor in the case of Paul was Christianity, as originally conceived, universalistic." (4) The aim of Jesus was simply to establish a theocratic national kingdom; and it was only at a late date, and as a result of disappointment with Israel, that the idea of making disciples among the Gentiles arose in His mind. As for Paul, his universalism was not the immediate outcome of his conversion experience, but arose from his experience of Jewish unbelief and Gentile receptivity in the course of his mission tour through Asia Minor. Thus, on Weiss's view there were no materials out of which the controversy conceived by Baur could arise. All the apostles were Judaists to begin with, and in the course of time they all alike "bowed to events and acknowledged that God had granted to the Gentiles eternal life." (5)

(3) Confident that Primitive Christianity contained from the start an element of universalism, Bruce is opposed to Weiss as much as to Baur and adheres largely to the mediating views of Weizsäcker.

We may note here the interesting circumstance that Bruce edited the

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English translation of Weizsacker's "Das Apostolische Zeitalter" (2te Auflage, 1891) for Williams and Norgate's "Theological Translation Library." In his Preface he expresses his attitude to the German author's views thus:

"This work is confessedly of exceptional value, exhibiting as it does not merely the learning we expect in a first-class German author, but a moderation and soundness of judgment which are by no means common either in Germany or anywhere else. On some subjects, as, e.g., the Resurrection of Christ and the historical value of the Book of Acts, readers may meet with views from which they earnestly dissent. But even there it will be found that the author's treatment is scientific in spirit and reverent in tone. In the preface of his work on God and the Bible, the late Mr Arnold pronounces Ferdinand Christian Baur an unsafe guide because of the "vigour and rigour" characteristic of most German Biblical critics. Weizsacker compares very favourably with Baur in this respect. There is plenty of vigour in his book, but not nearly so much of the rigour of which Mr Arnold complains."(1)

Weizsacker not only believed that the religious spirit of both Jesus and Paul was strongly universalistic, but considered that our Lord's universalism was of a more decided character than even that of the apostle.(2) He differs from Baur chiefly in thinking that there was in the Palestine Church a universalistic tendency entirely independent of Paul and to be seen in such leaders as Stephen, Barnabas, and Apollos. The original apostles are conceived to have sympathized to a certain extent with this tendency but to have come far short of Paul in zeal for a Christianity emancipated from Jewish legalism.(3) Weizsacker's view thus reduces the cleavage in the early Church to less formidable dimensions. All the leading men were practically on one side, and whatever cleavage there was, was not one of race. While room is still left for controversy, the conflict of opinion "could not be the tragic affair that it was bound to be according to the Tübingen scheme."(4)

(4) Pfleiderer, while believing that our Lord's teaching contained the germs of universalism, assigned to Paul the credit of being the first to proclaim with insight and emphasis a gospel of grace for the world, and for all on equal terms. The leading apostles he conceived as sympathizing to a certain extent with Paul's position, but lacking a clear understanding of the principles at stake. Consequently misunderstanding, controversy, and alienation might easily arise. In Pfleiderer's view, however, the outstanding fact of Primitive Christianity was not the conflict between Paulinism and Judaism, but rather the development within Paulinism itself. Paulinism, as described by him, is a complex system of two sets of ideas, derived from different sources, lacking inner harmony, and liable therefore to fall asunder in the course of development. The one set of ideas, borrowed from the Pharisaic schools, includes the doctrine of imputed righteousness, while the other set, derived from the Hellenistic philosophy as represented by "Wisdom" and Philo, includes the doctrine of imparted or real righteousness. The two doctrines are characterized as "Christianized Pharisaism" and "Christianized Hellenism" respectively. Pfleiderer's contention is that in the course of the further development of Christianity Paul's doctrine of imputed righteousness, being too abstract and Jewish to be understood by Gentiles, was to a large extent ignored, and that only the Hellenistic side of his theology took root and grew in the Christian communities founded by him. The outcome of the process, as conceived by Pfleiderer, is thus summarized by Bruce:

"So arose a new type of thought, Pauline in its origin, holding firmly the great principle of Christian universalism, but disregarding Paul's controversial theology and rising above the antithesis of original Paulinism. This new catholic theology is,

we are told, not to be regarded either as an external reconciliation of Paulinism and Judeistic Christianity, nor as a corruption of Paulinism through heathenish superficiality and Greek world-wisdom, but rather as the legitimate development of Hellenism Christianised by Paul, and, as such, distinct both from Paulinism and from Judeistic Christianity, a third thing beside and above both."

(b) Bruce's criticism of these hypothetical constructions is best considered as it relates (i) to the religious attitude of Jesus; (ii) to that of Paul; and (iii) to that of such men as Stephen, Barnabas, and Apollos.

(1) We agree with Bruce that Weizsäcker's idea of our Lord's religious attitude, as "more purely and absolutely human and universal than that even of Paul," would appear to be "thoroughly reasonable." Weiss, in spite of his critical acumen, lacked the power of appreciating the character of Christ. In the Gospels there are many indications that our Lord was very far from being as national and narrow in His views and feelings and hopes as the ordinary Jewish Christian of the apostolic age. His passionate abhorrence of Pharisaism, his friendly relation to the outcasts, and His significant parabolic comparison of the religious movement He had inaugurated to new wine and a new garment, all point in the direct of universalism. As Bruce says:

"Jesus seems to have risen above legalism and Jewish particularism without effort or struggle, as a bird rises from the ground into the air, its native element. Paul purchased his spiritual freedom at a great price, but Jesus was free-born." (4)

(2) In our review of Bruce's "St Paul's Conception of Christianity", we have supported him in his judgment that the apostle was a universalist from the time of his conversion. Of Weiss's account of Paul's religious experience Bruce justly remarks: "Nothing could be more prosaic." The conversion, as conceived by this theologian, was not

prepared for, or rendered probable, by any antecedent spiritual experience. It was a pure miracle, wrought by an external cause, viz., the appearance of the risen Christ. Many years after this first conversion to Christianity, the apostle is supposed to have undergone a second conversion to Christian universalism, the cause again being external circumstances. We have already urged that in his own construction of Paul's spiritual history Bruce, in a subjective interest, does less than justice to the apostle's testimony as to the overwhelming effect upon him of the vision of the risen One. The subjective preparation, however, undoubtedly had an essential and vital place in the total experience, so that Bruce is quite justified in saying that, on Weiss's view, "Paul's experience loses all moral contents and his convictions all spiritual depth." The true situation, as we see it, is that on the Damascus road the objective and the subjective came together to produce in the apostle a mighty conviction regarding Christ and one that, very soon at least, was seen to have a universalistic reference. Modern New Testament scholarship would support Bruce in his view that Pfleiderer's derivation of Paul's doctrine of the believer's solidarity with Christ from Hellenistic sources is altogether fanciful, and that "it is quite unnecessary to seek for any explanation of this doctrine outside the exigencies of Paul's own spiritual life." Here again, however, the vision of the risen Christ was surely the creative factor. Pfleiderer's theory probably contains this element of truth, that many Gentile Christians, like many Christians to-day, would be more attracted by the mystic side of the apostle's doctrine of righteousness than by its legal aspect.

(3) The indications are that even men of the second magnitude, such as Stephen, Barnabas, and Apollos, had a presentiment that their work concerned mankind. (1) The most natural explanation of the stoning of Stephen is that the perpetrators of this deed felt very strongly that the gospel which he so eloquently declared meant serious danger to Jewish privilege and prerogative. Weiss's idea, that the fanatical rage of the murderers sprang from Stephen's denunciation of unbelief and impenitence and his threats of impending retribution, would appear to be wholly inadequate. (1) (ii) The kind of man Barnabas was may be seen from three facts. First, he was sent as a deputy from the Jerusalem Church to Antioch when the Greeks there began to receive the Gospel. (2) Second, persuaded that Saul was the man for the work that had just commenced, he went down to Tarsus to seek him. (3) Third, the two men were selected by the Antioch Church as the agents for the first Gentile mission. (4) With regard to Weiss's view, that this mission was merely to the Jewish Diaspora and only by good luck led to Gentile conversions, Bruce justly remarks:

"How the prosaic mind sucks all the romance out of history, and levels everything down to flat commonplace! If we are to regard the account given in the Acts as at all reliable, it is quite certain that something great, unusual, startlingly novel, and solemn, in view of its unforeseen possibilities, then took place." (5)

Had the mission been intended only for the Diaspora, there would be little point in speaking of Barnabas and Saul as specially "called" to it. The manner in which the fasting of the brethren is mentioned is a further indication that the occasion was a very solemn one. (6)

(iii) That Apollos shared Paul's universalistic attitude is clear from the way in which the apostle speaks of him in I Corinthians. As Weizäcker remarks:

"Paul recognises his perfect independence and the distinctiveness of his teaching; and yet he is conscious of being in entire agreement with him in the chief points; in their conception of the Gospel, their principles of working, and certainly their universalism, they were alike."(1)

(1) The inferences which Bruce draws from his discussion and criticism of the various theories reviewed appear to us to be sound. They are mainly three.

(1) If our Lord's religious attitude was broadly human and universal, we must not hastily suspect sayings ascribed to Him that are universalistic in drift, or lightly explain away their natural import. Individual texts which give rise to critical doubts should, of course, be dealt with on their own merits. (2)

(2) If there was in the early Church a Christian universalism entirely independent of Paul, it follows that "the presence of a universalistic element in any New Testament writing cannot by itself be regarded as a proof of Pauline influence." (3) Bruce shows at length how this applies in the case of the "Epistle to the Hebrews", the relationship of which to St Paul has for long been one of the problems of New Testament criticism. Baur had regarded this book as a work of conciliatory tendency, emanating from the Judaistic side of the great controversy. Its author, having risen far above the narrowness of Judaism, desired to raise others to the same level by exhibiting the ancient Hebrew cultus as a subordinate, rudimentary, and transient stage in the process of religious development which had now culminated in the absolute, eternal religion, Christianity. Here we have the frankest recognition of the Epistle's universalistic standpoint. (4) As Weiss understood it, the Epistle is of Judaic-Christian origin and lacks the universalistic element. (5) Pfleiderer,

while fully recognizing the broad humanity of the book, attributed this feature to the influence of Paul. He placed the Epistle in the class of New Testament writings to which he gave the collective title of "Christian Hellenism" or "Deutero-Paulinism." These, as we have noted, had for their characteristic the combination of some of Paul's ideas, especially of his universalism, with elements derived from the Alexandrian Jewish philosophy.\(^1\) Bruce's own view, with which we are in accord, is that there is no good reason for regarding the Epistle as Pauline, either at first or at second hand. The whole style of thought is entirely different from that of the apostle's recognized Epistles. The circumstances demand an author "in sympathy with Paul in his general religious attitude, but differing from him in temperament, training, and spiritual experience, and consequently in his manner of conceiving and expressing the Christian faith."\(^2\) The universalism of the Epistle may be pointed to as "one more proof of the existence in the early Church of a Christian universalism independent of Paul."\(^3\)

(3) The main result of Bruce's discussion is to show that there is little or no foundation for "the imputation of theological tendency" to the New Testament writers.\(^4\) Not only so; a theory of omnipresent tendency acts prejudicially on critical inquiry in two ways: (i) in the case of historical books it shakes confidence in the truth of the narrative; and (ii) when one is determining the dates at which particular books were written, it becomes the main consideration. As Bruce puts it: "The more tendency the less fact, and given the tendency of a book its date is approximately fixed."\(^5\) Baur's treatment of the Acts of the Apostles is used by way of illustration. In

\(^1\)Cf. Apol., pp. 443f. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 444. \(^3\)Ibid. \(^4\)Ibid., p. 445. \(^5\)Ibid.
the out-and-dried scheme of the Tübingen school the aim of this book was to create a pleasant though false impression regarding the relations of Peter and Paul. History, however, did not supply such incidents as were requisite for the purpose, and the author was forced to invent his facts. As for the date, the mere circumstance that the book was regarded as having been written to gratify the general desire for peace meant that it had to be placed well into the second century. Now, if the situation in the apostolic age was such as Bruce has represented it to be, there is no foundation for the Tübingen theory regarding "Acts." No problem is created by Peter's acting in the spirit of universalism, for Paul had not a monopoly of this. No ground exists for doubting that the writer's aim, inspired admittedly by a religious interest, was simply to record a series of events which he knew to be true and regarded as important. As for the date of composition, what time would be more appropriate than when these events were comparatively recent and their significance was only beginning to appear?

Bruce goes on to show that Pfleiderer's Tendenz-Kritik, developed in connection with his favourite hypothesis that the outstanding phenomenon of Primitive Christianity was Paulinism and its later developments, is just as speculative as the theory of Baur. There is, indeed, an improvement in this respect, that the tendency ascribed by Pfleiderer to the New Testament writers was not, on the whole, so conscious and deliberate as that ascribed by the Tübingen school. It was rather a case of the writers being unable to conceive of Jesus and the Eleven and Paul as thinking otherwise than according to the fashion of their own later period. In some instances, however, Pfleiderer imputes theological motives almost as broadly as Baur.

Mark's Gospel, for example, is treated as having been written "in order to complete and ground the Pauline Gospel by a historical account of the life, teaching, and death of Jesus"; while Matthew's is represented as "little else than an endeavour to remodel the evangelic history in accordance with the principles of Deutero-Paulinism, after it had become the creed of the Catholic Church." The dates assigned to these two Gospels are in accordance with their supposed aims. "St Mark" is placed not very long after the death of Paul, while "St Matthew" is relegated to the middle of the second century. "This new criticism of the Gospels," Bruce justifiably concludes, "is not less violently theoretical than the older type which it aspires to supersede, and it is certainly as little entitled to implicit credence." Since Bruce's day New Testament scholarship has tended more and more to support earlier rather than later dates for the books which we have been discussing.

E. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

In a letter to his friend, the Rev. J. P. Struthers, Dr Denney summed up Bruce's abilities and limitations in these terms:

"Bruce is not a philosopher, and he is not a scholar, but there is one thing he can do thoroughly well, and that is to speak about the beginnings of the Christian religion. It is the only subject on which he is an authority at first hand." (4) In its positive aspect this judgment is sound. In its negative aspect it is somewhat too sweeping. Bruce had obvious limitations. He had little of the technical equipment of the pure scholar, and he made no endeavour to burden his books with a weight of scientific

learning. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt at all that, in the words of Dr W. M. Macgregor, "he belonged to the slender group of the original and quickening minds in the Scotland of his generation."(1) Dr Maogregor, who elsewhere refers to Bruce as "one of the greatest of the moderns," records how Marcus Dods once exclaimed to him with impatience, "Why does Bruce bother so much with Weiss and Pfleiderer and the rest? His is an infinitely better mind than theirs."(2)

Something of Bruce's greatness is revealed in the testimonies to his influence which have been so gladly and sincerely given by some of his most distinguished students. Denney himself was so much impressed by his teacher, and was so warm an admirer of his work, and especially of his Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, that he remarked concerning him, "He let me see Jesus!" Dr Lewis A. Muirhead, another scholar whom he trained, inscribed his book, "The Eschatology of Jesus," to the memory of his teacher in Latin thus:

"In memoriam sacram Alexandri Balmain Bruce, D.D., ....... docti, dilecti, desiderati, in rebus praeerentibus potius quam in praeteritis vera quaerentis, discipulus magistro, ipse discipulo, hunc dedicator libellum, unus ex permultis qui, illius freti auxilio, intuebantur GLORIAM DEI in HOMINE, JESU."(4)

Dr W. M. Macgregor's notable volume of sermons, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," has this inscription:

"To the dear memory of these two servants and friends of Jesus Christ, Duncan Macgregor, my father, and Alexander Balmain Bruce, through whom, to many and to me also, was disclosed the glory of the Son of God."(5)

Dr A. J. Gossip tells how, when it was rumoured that Macgregor thought of deserting the pulpit for a chair, and men in astonishment asked for his explanation, he modestly replied that he had learned

some things from Bruce which he would fain hand on. (1)

In bringing to a close our review of Bruce's work as a New Testament scholar and a theologian, we propose to sum up our results and conclusions under three heads thus: (1) An evaluation of his contribution to New Testament study; (2) An appreciation of his work as apologist; and (3) A critique of his ideas regarding the essence of Christianity and the norm of Christian doctrine.


In any evaluation of Bruce's contribution to New Testament study three facts must stand out.

(a) He was essentially a pioneer in the modern critical approach to the New Testament. He naturalized the critical processes that were already well-established in Germany, and with singular open-mindedness resisted mere tradition in the handling of the Scriptures. The old Free Church of Scotland was jealously conservative, and the very possibility of an advance along these lines, within the sphere of New Testament scholarship in this country, was largely due to the work done by Bruce. His abiding service was one of stimulus: where he ventured, others followed. The finest testimony to his work and influence in this direction is that of Dr Moffatt in the Preface to his first book, "The Historical New Testament," where he speaks of Bruce in glowing terms thus:

"Both by teaching and example he has rendered to many in this generation a timely service of liberation not unlike that which in another sphere America is said by Lowell to have gained from Emerson: "He cut the cable and gave us a chance at the dangers and the glories of blue water." Dr Bruce's work thrust his students upon the responsibilities of freedom. It awakened them especially to the subtle and comfortable peril of antiquarianism in dealing with the Christian facts, while at the same time it

steadied them on the conviction that no genuine faith had ultimately anything to fear from strict and fair enquiry."(1)

All this was conspicuously brought out in Bruce's treatment of the historical basis and element in early Christianity. In his various books he sought to inculcate the vital conception that historical truth and genuine religion are inseparable allies. It was his conviction that even the faults and mistakes of candid inquiry somehow work together for the truth, that truth is the surest defence of faith, and that faith is the justification as it is the germ of real criticism. The pioneer instinct never left Bruce, and to the end of his days he exhibited the questioning and exploring mind. Dr W. M. Macgregor, whose judgment in the matter we may trust, has stated that in this respect no contrast could be imagined greater than that which existed between Bruce and Dr Dods, his companion in reproach at the time of the heresy trials of 1890. Dods's nature was positive and conservative, and he "could not have been a heretic if he had tried." His instinct, in terms of modern warfare, always was "to dig himself in." Bruce, on the other hand, loved "open warfare", and "his mind was pushing on to the last."(2)

(b) Bruce took a special delight in bringing out and emphasizing the human element in Jesus, in the Gospels, and in the New Testament generally. This was only natural; for he was always himself so wholeheartedly human. The story is told that once, when it had been announced that he was to preach in a certain church, a member said to the minister: "We are to have Professor Bruce with us on Sunday; I believe he is a very great divine." To which the minister made ready reply, "Yes, and he is also a very great human."(3)

(2) "Persons and Ideals," pp. 4f.
whole, but most obviously those dealing with the Gospels, are the work of a very great human. Here, indeed, we have part of the explanation of their author's weakness as a theologian. The Jesus who is presented to us, especially in the later books, is sometimes too human for the truth. From another point of view, however, this emphasis upon the human is part of Bruce's strength. It is an emphasis that was greatly needed in those days of stiff orthodoxy; and the sort of thing Bruce achieved by it is nowhere better described than in the notable eulogy upon him delivered by Dr Stalker in the General Assembly of 1900:

"The atmosphere of a Church like ours, just because it is so earnest and evangelical, is apt to become too hot and close, too exclusively pervaded by theological virtues; and much is due to anyone who, even if with some violence, opens a window to let in the fresh air and the virtues of the natural man." (1)

Teaching his students and writing his books in this spirit, Bruce did more than almost anyone throughout the country in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to make the knowledge of Jesus and His Christianity welcome and rich and reasonable.

(c) Prominent in all Bruce's work as an interpreter of the New Testament is his fondness for insisting on the distinction between verbal and real exegesis. (2) He held that it is possible to approach a passage merely along the lines of text and usage and grammar. The textual evidence is examined, emendations are considered, changes in verbal usage are noted, and the force of grammatical peculiarities is measured. While all this is of substantial value, Bruce rightly maintained that it is far from exhausting the task of the exegete. After one of the supreme passages of the New Testament has been submitted to this process, the best that one can say is that the ground has now been cleared and the task of real interpretation can

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be begun. Real exegesis is engaged with the vital relations of the passage concerned. It makes its way through to the realities of life and feeling. It brings the mind into contact, not with words merely, but with these as they give expression to the life of man and of God. Words are studied as in a context of experience, and the New Testament writers are seen as living men, with hope, fear, joy beating in their souls.

It is hardly surprising, in view of his known attitude, that Bruce's strength does not lie in verbal exegesis. Here, indeed, he is not infrequently disappointing, most perceptibly in the case of important theological terms which call for careful treatment at the hands of the expositor. For real exegesis, however, he had a very considerable aptitude, and his strength at this vital point should help to keep some of his work alive. His instinct for reality brought him much closer to the old interpreters than might have been supposed; for in his reading of the Scriptures heart spoke to heart, and experience to experience. He was, all things considered, a great teacher of the New Testament, labouring to make his students, in Luther's phrase, not so much "doctors of theology" as "doctors of Holy Scripture." But, more than that, he was a spiritual force; and, as Dr Macgregor has well and truly said, "one may set him and Davidson side by side as having made a deeper mark for good upon the spirit of their men than any Scottish teacher since Chalmers." (1)

2. An Appreciation of Bruce's Work as Apologist.

The function of the apologist, as Bruce conceived it, was to deal with antichristian thoughts and prejudices in such a way that Christianity might get a fair hearing. (2) Apologetics was thus essentially

an affair of practical interest, a branch of evangelistic work, a real preparatio evangelii. Bruce's early doubts and struggles peculiarly fitted him for the unique work which he was to do for his generation within this particular sphere. His own critical experience enabled him to realize vividly and sympathetically the doubts raised by legitimate speculation, and to state with great fairness the case of an opponent. Only one consideration limited the influence which he sought to exercise. He neither hoped nor attempted to convince those who refused to bring to the investigation the moral qualities without which no religion, least of all Christianity, can be appreciated or even understood. He wrote for those whose minds are darkened, but whose hearts are pure. Those who denied the Faith because it suited them to deny it would, he held, be more likely to be convinced by experience than by argument; and so he devoted his great apologetic powers to those whose faith had been shaken by Biblical criticism, philosophy, or science.

(a) The main strength of Bruce's apologetic is that it is an apologetic, not of speculation, but of fact. Speculation, he felt, had too often obscured the faith it had sought to interpret. In the imposing definitions of Apologetics given by the speculative theologians of Germany he was only mildly interested. If someone undertook to prove that Christianity is the absolute religion; if he undertook to discover, to analyse, and to refute the principle of all possible doubts concerning it, Bruce had no objection. He himself, however, was not impressed with this kind of thing, and he was persuaded that it did not impress those whom he desired to reach. None of his own mental capital was invested in such ventures. He had an innate distrust of everything which promised too much. He was quite content if he could find truth in Christianity without characterizing it as
absolute truth. He was satisfied if he could prove that it was better than any other religion, without proving that no other religion could really be. This, he says in the final chapter of the "Apologetics", "was the line of argument pursued by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; it cannot be amiss to follow his example."(1) Bruce appears to have had a strong sense of the limitations of the mind. He felt that, whatever the true religion might be, and however sure we might be of it, there must always be a large place left for agnosticism. Hence in his "Apologetics", though he discusses the philosophical presuppositions of Christianity, we feel that it is somewhat against the grain. He was undoubtedly well read in this department of literature; but it did not touch his mind to the quick, as did sceptical questions from another quarter. His own experience as a young man had led him to the side of those who hold that it is doubts arising, not in the sphere of metaphysics, but in the sphere of history, that really bring the soul into distress and set his task to the apologist. It is not surprising, therefore, that over two thirds of his treatise on "Apologetics" is devoted to historical matter. Even the Gifford Lectures, on the Providential Order and the Moral Order, are largely concerned with historical considerations.

(b) Bruce's main endeavour as an apologist was to let the great Gospel facts shine in their own light. He set himself to show the "sweet reasonableness"(2) of Christianity, that is, the Christianity of Christ, -- a reasonableness so cogent, he believed, as to attract, if not convince, any fair mind the moment it was adequately presented. He felt strongly that the wooden apologetic of the past had alienated rather than helped earnest seekers, and was keenly "sensible of the wrong that has been done to the Divine word by its professional

(1)Apol., pp.495f. (2)Ibid., p.494.
expounders." (1) In the first edition of "The Kingdom of God" we find him saying:

"The task of an apologist is desperate if he is supposed to be the advocate of the status quo in theology. It is otherwise if he appear as the expositor or advocate of the Christianity of Christ. In performing this role he may fail to convince confirmed sceptics, or to give satisfaction to dogmatists who regard an apologist as a sort of prize-fighter for all the details of a traditional creed, but he is likely to commend Christianity to men of open mind and ingenuous spirit." (2)

Bruce's creed was short -- too short, in some respects. His doctrine of the Church and the Sacraments lacked what we must regard as necessary and vital elements. He was confident, however, that, whatever his creed omitted, it comprised "the things most important to be known, and most worthy to be believed concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the religion called by His name." (3) He held, moreover, that those things were certainties -- proved by satisfactory historical evidence to be certainties. Accordingly, they had but to be allowed to shine in their own light to be recognized for what they were. In this way they apologized for themselves; or, rather, they needed no apology. "What Jesus says about God and man and their relations needs no elaborate system of evidences to commend it." (4) To Bruce the Christian verities were verities, and they had nothing to fear but misunderstanding. While he held firmly that there is a Christian view of the world, it was not so much for the view as for the facts that he cared. In this we have a characteristic attitude, for his genius was historical and interpretative rather than speculative.

(c) We are now in a position to appreciate Bruce's treatment of the special difficulties which were presented by science and Biblical criticism. Taking his stand on what he regarded as the indisputable facts of Christ's life and their necessary implications, he fearlessly

faced — indeed, in most cases welcomed — the conclusions and hypotheses of both science and criticism. Evolution, if conclusively proved, would not in the slightest degree weaken his defence; and no more would the most radical results of Old Testament criticism. Both in nature and in Scripture Bruce would only have seen striking illustrations of the great principle of gradual growth, for which, in practically all his books but most notably in the Gifford Lectures, he so persuasively contends. "The two evolutions," as he puts it, "should be faced with the same spirit of fearless trust."(1) He felt there must be an element of insecurity in any defence of the Faith that had to assume the impossibility of principles the application of which made nature and history so luminous. He himself had too much confidence in the great facts on which he laid supreme emphasis, and too just a view of the unity of truth and of the legitimacy of all earnest search after it, to suppose that Christianity was incompatible with a hypothesis which might, in the end, prove true. Fittingly enough, the principle of gradual growth found embodiment and illustration in Bruce's own life and experience. He was himself a man who grew. He was always adjusting his focus to new presentations of truth. J. D. Thompson hardly exaggerates when he says in an appreciative review:

"A Christian apologist never lived with more insight than he into the strong and weak points of his case, or more skill in putting them, or more honesty in dealing whether with his public's mind or his own. He was emphatically, and in no time-serving spirit, a man for the times."(2)

3. A Critique of Bruce's Ideas regarding the Essence of Christianity and the Norm of Christian Doctrine.

An interesting question underlying Bruce's theological work as a

whole is, What is the Christianity which it is proposed to interpret and to defend? There is peculiar danger of doing him injustice here, for in some respects he would appear to have done injustice to himself. As sources for our knowledge of Christ and Christianity, he lays the principal, almost the exclusive, stress on the Synoptic Gospels. Christianity for him is, in the first instance, the Christianity involved in the sayings and doings of Christ recorded in these Gospels -- particularly Christ's revelation of the Divine Fatherhood, of the sonship of men, and of God's grace to the sinful. That this is the basis of Christianity may freely be admitted; but there are not wanting, in Bruce's writings, expressions as if he would fain have the Church stop there, and were disposed to treat the further doctrinal determinations of the New Testament as mere theological developments of the first generation of believers -- the result of subjective reflection on their part, to which we cannot ascribe normative value for the Church of to-day. In the "Apologetics", for example, we have this rather characteristic statement:

"It is the business of theology to determine the affinities between the Galilean and the Pauline Gospels, but it is the privilege of religious faith to enter into life by the door which Jesus has opened without stopping to try whether Paul's key fits the lock."[1]

A more careful examination of Bruce's statements will, we think, show that the view which we have just mentioned is scarcely his meaning. Besides Christ's sayings and doings in His earthly ministry we have, by Bruce's own acknowledgment, as facts to be taken account of in Christianity, His Death, Resurrection, and exaltation to Divine Lordship, with all the light which these events throw back on His earthly course and on His sayings as to the redemptive virtue of His Death and its connection with the forgiveness of sins.[2] We have seen,

moreover, that Bruce recognizes that Christianity involves even a "theory of the universe." It is on these facts as a whole that the Apostolic Gospel is based; and it is a question which must be faced, whether that Gospel is to be treated as only human deduction from these facts, or whether, as the apostles themselves affirmed, it was the product of the revealing Spirit, guiding them into the understanding of their meaning. In any case the question has to be answered, Is the apostolic doctrine of Christ's Person and Work true? If it is, we plainly cannot decline to take account of it in reading the records of Christ's earthly life in the Gospels. This is where we do not see how Bruce's theory can be carried out, that the earnest inquirer ought to begin with the human side of Christ's character as presented in the Synoptic Gospels, ignoring the teaching of the Epistles and other books of the New Testament, and only gradually rise to the recognition of Christ's Divinity and reconciling work as spiritual insight develops. (1) We cannot retrace the steps of the first disciples as if we were exactly in the same position as they, -- as if nothing had happened in the interval. Christ has now not only lived, but has died, has risen again, has been exalted, has poured out His Spirit, has reigned in grace and glory for nineteen hundred years. Can all this be treated -- even in the most elementary teaching about Christ -- as non-existent? Is it not part of the Gospel regarding Him -- truth we are bound to teach if we would guide men into the right understanding of His nature and claims? Bruce is unquestionably right in saying -- and it is his great merit to insist upon it -- that it is only through the historical manifestation of Christ that we can put real meaning into the terms about His Divinity and Messiahship. He did invaluable service in recalling

the Church from dogmas to the living image of the Lord in the Gospels. We cannot think, however, that men will understand Christ better by separating the end from the beginning, and refusing the light which the one casts on the meaning of the other.

We may illustrate our contention in connection with the supreme facts of the Death and the Resurrection of Christ. (i) When Jesus, in the course of His ministry, wished to make manifest to men the redemptive love of God, He invented that story which many have regarded as the most beautiful story ever invented by anybody, — the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The lesson, moreover, was reinforced by the fact that behind the story told, giving reality and conviction to the telling of it, was the character and the life of the Teller. It is a wonderful story. But Dr John Baillie has written about it some very wise words, which exactly express the point of our present contention with regard to Bruce’s theological position:

"In truth there is for us another story that is more wonderful still, a story stranger and more beautiful than any fiction, and yet one which Jesus Himself could not fully tell, because the first chapters of it were only being enacted as He spoke. But when, a few years afterwards, Peter and Paul and John went about in their turn to prove that same redemptive love of God to the men of their own day, they were able to preach to them a better sermon and to announce to them a fuller Christianity than even the Master Himself had been able to do; for instead of telling them the parable of the Prodigal Son, they could now tell them the history of the Passion of Christ." (i)

The Pauline Gospel is simply the "Galilean Gospel" carried to its true completion, and in our view the earnest seeker will have a fuller appreciation of the latter if he approaches it in the light of the former.

(ii) In his chapter on the subject in the "Apologetics", Bruce has ably vindicated the great miracle of the Resurrection. Now, it is a first principle with him — and here, in our judgment, he is unques-

iodably right -- that miracles are not to be viewed as mere external appendages to Christianity, but are to be regarded as integral and constitutive parts of it. This principle applies to the miracles of healing. But it applies, surely, not less, but more, to the greater miracle of the Resurrection. Our view of Christianity, therefore, even on the basis of the Synoptic Gospels, must be one which takes in the Resurrection of Christ as a constitutive part of it. But this already carries us beyond the "Galilean Gospel", and leads us to some such conception as that of the Pauline Gospel. In his chapter on "Jesus Lord" in the "Apologetics", as well as elsewhere, Bruce fully acknowledges this. What is not obvious is, how, distinctly recognizing it, he should yet think it possible or desirable to limit the initial knowledge of the earnest seeker to the period when as yet Christ's claims were not fully manifest. Certainly the greatest of the Evangelists would have us approach from the other side: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. .... and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." (1) Indeed, this is the oldest approach of all: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." (2) When we find our God in Christ, how easy to pass to the Man of Galilee. But how hard it has been for many to rise from the Man of Galilee to "my Lord and my God." "The victories of the Faith," says Dr W. M. Macgregor memorably, "have commonly been won not by the proclamation of a bare minimum of belief but rather of things strange and hard to accept, because they are so full of God." (3)

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