

that between them there is a great gulf fixed, and that they must find themselves perpetually kept apart in ideals and aims and methods. Yet the synthesis of individualism and socialism is the setting of the *complete man* amidst the ideal society." (Yeaxlee.) The modern world, like the ancient and mediæval world, is moved by strong personalities. All the greatest movements in history have been the outcome of deep convictions in the hearts of individuals. Evangelicalism has produced the strong personalities, the "complete men," who in other ages have solved the problems of their day, who have proved that Christ and "the great peculiarities of Christianity" are indeed the power not merely to lift individuals on to a higher plane of life and service, but to sweeten and uplift the life of the community. The conditions of the modern world to-day may be unique, but if Evangelicals will unitedly preach the old Gospel of Redemption through the Crucified Saviour, and emphasize afresh His power as the Living and Indwelling Lord, men and women will respond again, as they have done in the past, to His call, and will go forth in His strength to win fresh victories under new conditions. For whatever may have changed, the human heart remains the same. And it is that primarily with which Evangelicalism has to deal.

In one of his Outspoken Essays, the Dean of St. Paul's says that "Christianity as a dogmatic and ecclesiastical system is unintelligible without a very considerable knowledge of the conditions under which it took shape. As our staple education becomes more modern and less literary, the custodians of organized religion will find their difficulties increasing." If that be true, then Evangelicalism will have its supreme chance: for it presents not Christianity as a system so much as Christ as Universal Saviour: it lays stress not on the authority of the Church, however venerable, but on the personal authority of the historical Jesus, crucified, risen and working to-day through His Spirit: it comes not primarily with a teaching, but with a message of glad news and freedom, authenticated by the experience of the messenger, and backed by the credentials of the written Word of God.

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BY THE REV. CANON H. FOSTER PEGG.

**B**ETWEEN the first word of my subject, "Evangelicalism" and the last phrase, "The Modern World," there is a vast difference of appeal; to many the former is uninteresting, almost unmeaning, but to nearly all the latter is both interesting and arresting. Merely to mention to the man of affairs the words "the Modern World" is to excite interest and to bring an anxious expression upon the countenance; and the same effect is also produced upon the keen Churchman, a man interested in religious matters. To both of these types of men "the modern world" is an enigma, an amazement, and a fear. They have both gazed

abroad upon the world at large, and Europe in particular, and their eyes, like the dove liberated from the ark, can find no spot to rest upon with satisfaction and delight. 'Tis but a dreary scene of confusion, tumult, instability and unrest. It is the same in what we must describe, for clearness sake, the Religious World; there, too, we discover unrest, instability, uncertainty.

The Great War is immediately responsible for this state of affairs, but it is to be borne in mind that the Great War but accelerated and manifested the tendencies which had been silently working in the nations, and were only visible to the observant few. Now the Great War has not only broken up the deeps of national life, but has also opened the windows of Heaven by sharply revealing to us a hitherto unrecognized, or if recognized a disregarded, fact, the insecure basis upon which modern civilization rests. The Great War has demolished many dream idols. We do not now make wooden or stone images to bow down before, but we manufacture dream idols composed of various ideas or theories, which we hold strongly. I mean such as the widespread belief that commerce would introduce the reign of universal peace and prosperity, and link the nations in the bonds of brotherhood; or (the dream) that education would banish all the evils of life and turn this world into a second Eden; or that political freedom and the vote would introduce the Millennium. These and many such theories have been violently shattered by that Titanic struggle, and we have been compelled to see that human nature is *still human nature*, with a strong tinge of the brute remaining that has not yet been cast out. The lesson we need to learn is, that man needs something more than external reforms to lift him to true manhood. Man needs help, and that help we believe can only come from *without*, from God, through Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit working upon man from *within*. Our Evangelical Faith rests upon the solid facts—of man's *nature*, sinful; man's *need*, grace; man's *hope*, Divine assistance. The Cross, with all its depth of meaning, *needed* by all—*open* to all—*sufficient* for all.

We cannot wonder that to-day, considering the outlook of things in general and of the state of religion in particular, that there should be a great deal of pessimism abroad. Men are earnestly asking: What is the end of it all to be? Is modern civilization played out? Has religion failed? Now the cure, I venture to think, for this state of depression, is a strong dose of History. It is so natural to imagine that no one's trials are really so hard to bear as our own, and it is a temptation to think that there never was such a crisis as that of the present. Now let us take the dose I have ventured to prescribe, by looking back upon the eighteenth century, and as far as the religious aspect is considered, and it is with that I am especially concerned in this paper, there is a striking resemblance.

I quote the description of the state of men's minds with regard to religion to-day, given by Bishop Gore in the opening chapter of his *Belief in God*, "The Breakdown of Tradition": "The

world in which we live to-day can only be described as chaotic in matters of religious belief. . . . But wherever men and women are to be found who care about religion and feel its value, and who at the same time feel bound, as they say, 'to think for themselves,' there we are apt to discover the prevailing note—not the only note, but the prevailing note—to be that of uncertainty and even bewilderment, coupled very often with a feeling of resentment against the Church, or against organized religion on account of what is called its 'failure.' " "Chaotic"—"Uncertainty"—"Bewilderment"—"Resentment." Certainly a dark, but by no means an overdrawn—I would rather say an underdrawn—picture of to-day, for it omits the prevalent and widespread spirit of indifference or carelessness to organized religion in any form. Now let me give you a description of the eighteenth century, drawn by the master hand of Bishop Butler. "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject for inquiry; but that it is, now at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all persons of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world" (*Advertisement to the Analogy*). Let me quote another description later on in that century by the famous lawyer, Sir William Blackstone, who said that he had gone from church to church in London, and that "It would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius or of Mohammed or of Christ." I give you a third description of those times from an historian: "Never had religion seemed at a lower ebb. The progress of free inquiry, the aversion from theological strife which had been left by the Civil War, the new intellectual and material channels opened to human energy, had produced a general indifference to the great questions of religious speculation which occupied an earlier age. The Church, predominant as its influence seemed at the close of the Revolution, had sunk into political insignificance. . . ." The decay of the great dissenting bodies went hand in hand with that of the Church, and during the early part of the century the Nonconformists declined in numbers as in energy. But it would be rash to conclude from this outer ecclesiastical paralysis that the religious sentiment was dead in the people at large. There was, no doubt, a revolt against religion and against Churches in both the extremes of English society. In the higher circles "every one laughs," said Montesquieu on his visit to England, "if one talks of religion." "Of the prominent statesmen of the time the greater part were unbelievers in any form of Christianity, and distinguished for the grossness and immorality of their lives."

Now I venture to think that the most pessimistic and depressed will not dispute that though to-day things are dark and gloomy, they are neither so black nor so distressing as they appeared to be in that century. We do well to remember that even then the

“religious sentiment was not dead in men”; that in spite of such a state of things, “England as a whole remained at heart religious.” Religion was not dead then, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, and in my judgment it is equally true that it is not to-day. Therein lies our hope. I have not done with the eighteenth century yet. To meet that dark and serious crisis and to deal with such a state of affairs, Bishop Butler was moved to write his famous *Analogy*; later on Paley wrote his brilliant book on Natural Theology, basing his argument on the Fixity of Species. We are indebted to Bishop Gore in his *Belief in God* for pointing out that this idea was the prevalent scientific conception. He says: “But as a matter of fact the idea appears first, not in Christian Fathers or Schoolmen, but as a scientific conclusion of the seventeenth century. A conclusion drawn especially from the limits within which interbreeding is possible” (Gore, *Belief in God*, p. 6).

It was this scientific doctrine which Paley made such brilliant use of. Not for a single moment would I in any way detract from the importance and necessity of such work. It was necessary then, and it is necessary to-day. I would encourage scholarship, wide reading, research and patient thought in all directions. No school of thought can survive without scholars, and the greater and more numerous the scholars, the wider the influence. Neither we Evangelicals nor any other school of thought can flourish upon ignorance, faulty scholarship, or scanty reading. My advice to all is *read—read—read—mark*, learn and inwardly digest all knowledge, biblical, scientific, historical, social and economic, that from your treasures of knowledge you may, as occasion serves, bring forth things new and old for the advancement of the Master’s cause and the salvation of mankind.

But there was also a movement of another character advancing along other lines—a movement associated with the names of John Wesley and Whitfield. These and men like-minded faced the crisis by preaching the Gospel, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, and through Him alone. Their method was to preach the Gospel at all times and in all places, and the result—ah, what a result! Listen to an historian’s testimony: “A result which changed the whole temper of English society” (Green, *A Short History of the English People*, p. 718). “The Church was restored to life and activity.” “Religion carried to the hearts of the poor a fresh spirit of moral zeal, while it purified our literature and our manners.” “A new philanthropy reformed our prisons, infused clemency and wisdom into our penal laws, abolished the slave trade, and gave the first impulse to secular education.” “In the nation at large appeared a new moral enthusiasm which, rigid and pedantic as it often seemed, was still healthy in its social tone, and whose power was seen in the disappearance of the profligacy which had disgraced the upper classes, and the foulness which had infested literature ever since the Restoration.” “But the noblest result of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the

social degradation of the profligate and the poor" (*ibid.*, p. 721).

We are faced with difficulties and perplexities, we are confronted with darkness, indifference and levity, but not greater nor more threatening than those which confronted Wesley and Whitfield. They won through, not by dissembling, not by trimming; they triumphed by boldly bearing aloft the full banner of Calvary, the whole virtue of the Cross for the ills of man and society in that dark period. I know that some will say that the present circumstances are different, and the old appeal is not fitted to meet the modern need. I grant that the old way of presenting the appeal may not be so fitting for modern times, but the appeal itself, and not its method of presentation, is fitting, and there is still no other. The Gospel, I believe, was so ordained by its very nature to be a perpetual answer to the fundamental needs of man. Man's fundamental needs do not change, but abide the same; sin, love, suffering, loss, hope, sorrow, despair are, and always will, remain the same, and it is to these fundamental needs of the soul that the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ appeal and satisfy.

We need the adaptation of the old truths to modern needs, and this may mean a changed presentation, but not a different Gospel. I am not advocating the adoption of the same modes of thought which were so fresh and powerful with the Reformers, or the schemes so ably propounded by the dogmatists of the seventeenth century, or the exact expressions of the eighteenth. But underlying all these there was a positive strain, which made them forceful and impelling. Nothing is more characteristic of the modern mind than its passion for reality. Dr. Forsyth says, in *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*, p. 269: "Nothing is more characteristic of the modern mind than its passion for reality. What the modern world seems to crave is reality. It is blindly groping for reality; it is intensely practical. It seeks for actions, for results. All things are brought to the test of reality, and the positive is the appeal which touches it." We may learn useful lessons from careful observers outside the domain of the Church; I mean from such ardent souls as Thomas Carlyle (*Past and Present*, p. 208). His remarks about the speaking man haunt one's mind, "That a man stand there and speak of spiritual things to men. It is beautiful—even in its great obscurity and decadence it is among the beautifullest, most touching objects one sees on earth. This Speaking Man has indeed in these times, wandered terribly away from the point; has, alas, as it were, totally lost sight of the point: yet, at bottom, whom have we to compare with him? . . . A man even professing, and never so languidly making still some endeavour, to save the souls of men. . . . I wish he could find the point again, this Speaking One; and stick to it with tenacity, with deadly energy; for there is need of him yet!" It is our wisdom and vindication to proclaim to the world the full-voiced Gospel of Jesus Christ. To-day we need to proclaim the Gospel of Love. The heart and core of Calvary is love. Love almost too wonderful for speech. We have nothing to fear from modern science or from modern scholarship.

We need not fear the most searching test of either, so long as we speak that which we do know, and testify that which we have seen." I like Carlyle's dictum, "On Heroes," p. 161: "Belief I define to be a healthy act of a man's mind. It is a mysterious indescribable process, that of getting to believe;—indescribable as all vital acts are. We have our mind given us, not that it may cavil and argue, but that it may see into something, give us clear belief and understanding about something, whereon we are then to proceed to act." "A man lives by believing something; not by debating and arguing about many things."

Evangelicalism is to-day subject to the lure of Modernism on one side and of Sacerdotalism on the other, both very real dangers. In the last issue of the *Church Times* (September 1) we are told in an article on "Schools of Thought": "To-day Evangelicals, as a school of positive belief and devotional ardour, have more or less dropped out of the running, or become absorbed in Liberalism." Perhaps the wish is father to the thought, but there must be some grounds for such an assertion. Both of these tend to interpose a wedge between the soul and God, the one of the Priest and the Church, the other of the Law and Order. Personally, I see no fear from any discoveries of science, save only from false inferences. I stand by Coleridge's statement: "In no case can true reason and a right faith oppose each other." To me the Gospel of Jesus, Evangelically interpreted, is one of the most wonderful exhibitions of scientific revelation, using the word in its highest sense, ever revealed or that could ever be revealed. I am not prepared by the specious pleadings of Modernism to accept the naturalistic interpretation of Nature, for the simple reason that it creates more difficulties than it removes, nor do I feel drawn to the haven of rest promised by Sacerdotalism. There is a peril that I do fear, and that is the danger of division in our ranks. United we stand, divided we fall. A house divided against itself is nigh collapse. Let us seek for inclusion, not for exclusion. Let us earnestly seek for the points of agreement, and we shall discover that those on which we agree are more in number and of infinitely more importance than those upon which we unhappily differ. If we look to the rock from which we were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which we were digged, we shall find that our Evangelical forerunners were men of *vision* and men of the broadest *sympathy*. Their vision swept the whole world, their sympathy touched the whole of life. Their sympathy and vision led them to found the great societies, and their sympathy to rescue and help the poor and downtrodden. The gospel they proclaimed was as wide as the world. It was good news, liberation, freedom from all that was wrong and oppressive. They did not select certain spheres, social, economic, or philanthropic, but the Gospel they believed in compelled them to enclose all within its compass. The whole world and the whole of life was their sphere. With such vision, with such largeness of soul, with such breadth of sympathy we may confidently, in the strength of God, confront and save the modern world.

I close my paper with the stirring words of Dr. Frank Hugh Foster in his admirable *History of New England Theology*: "The questions of the present hour are more fundamental than those with which New England theology or its immediate successors have had to concern themselves. A ringing call is sounding through the air to face the true issue—the reality of God's supernatural interference in the history of man versus the reign of unmodified law (or ideas and processes). The question is not whether the old evangelical scheme needs some adjustments to adapt it to our present knowledge, but whether its most fundamental conception, the very idea of the Gospel, is true. Before this all the half-way compromises of the present day must be given up. Men must take sides. They must be for the Gospel or against it."

One word more, I began with an appeal to History and I will end with another: Look back across the intervening centuries since Christ came; note the crises, mark the difficulties, consider the oppositions; and yet, in spite of all, He triumphed, and His cause progressed. To-day the fairest flowers of modern civilization spring from the root of His cross. All that is sweet and true and of good report we owe to Him. We believe that we hold God's truth, that God is working in us and for us; therefore we need fear no foe, blanch before no difficulty, falter before no opposition. "He that is with us is greater than all that is against us." It is ours to guard the sacred deposit of truth revealed to us. It is ours to hand it on unimpaired and undiminished. May I be pardoned for altering slightly some well-known words—

Naught shall make us rue  
If only we to Christ Himself do rest but true.

It is my belief that Evangelicalism may calmly, confidently and boldly face the modern world with all its problems—in Christ—with Christ—for Christ.

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## THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

BY THE REV. A. W. GREENUP, D.D., Principal of St. John's Hall,  
Highbury.

THE authority of Scripture is not undermined by the higher critics, but rather by those who believe that higher criticism has undermined its authority. To start on the assumption that criticism undermines Biblical authority is weakening the cause of religion. Matters of opinion are not matters of faith; and a sharp dividing line should be drawn between them. Argument must be met by argument, criticism by criticism. The criticism of the Bible has never been so trenchant as it is to-day; yet the authority of the Bible has never been more fully established amongst scholars in face of it and by the aid of it. "A Christian who knows that God