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1909.

493RD ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.

MONDAY, MARCH 1st, 1909.

HEYWOOD SMITH, ESQ., M.D., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read and confirmed.

The following paper was then read by the Author :—

*MODERNISM: ITS ORIGIN AND TENDENCIES.* By  
REV. CHANCELLOR LIAS, M.A., Hulsean Lecturer, 1884.

I PROPOSE to state, as plainly as possible, my own personal views on the subject which I have been asked to discuss in this paper. The outspoken utterance of convictions which may be unpalatable to others, has not, I admit, been a principal characteristic of our past discussions, but it must be obvious to all who are acquainted with this Institute, that it is now attempting to meet the changed wants of the time by a certain change in its methods. Years ago, when Christianity was confronted with the somewhat rash dogmatics of a then new school of physical science, great care had to be taken in our papers and debates not to trample on the feelings, or, as may sometimes have been the case, the prejudices, of particular schools of thought among Christians. Our first desire was to unite *all* Christians, as far as possible, in resisting the materialistic teaching which threatened to overthrow, not merely Christianity, but every reasonable form of Theism. It must, however, be evident to us all that the forms under which scepticism and unbelief now lurk are of a different kind. The danger to faith assumes the shape, at present, of random

assertions, of false philosophies and one-sided schools of criticism. The only way, as it seems to me, to combat these new difficulties is to lay down the true principles of Christian philosophy, and to ascertain the true limits of criticism. This, however, can only be done by the fullest and freest interchange of opinion. The time has, I believe, come when Christians can meet together and discuss their differences reasonably and temperately, without unnecessarily offending prejudices, or evoking violent antagonisms, and without the endeavours, far too common, I am afraid, in the past, on both sides, to muzzle the free expression of opinion by calling names and imputing motives. If the Victoria Institute will boldly embark on this new departure, that of giving a fair hearing to all who "profess and call themselves Christians," on the weighty questions now debated, and of encouraging everyone to speak his mind plainly, so long as he shows proper respect for the opinions of others, it may do even a greater work in the future than it has done in the past. To the policy of repression must chiefly be attributed the intellectual and political convulsions which have alarmed the world. The permission of free speech to every man is the safety valve which prevents dangerous explosions.

Modernism, I take it, is the demand for free speech in the body which, for centuries, has been the greatest and most consistent enemy to all freedom of thought whatsoever. The barriers to that freedom of speech have of late been breaking down on all sides in the Roman communion. In the last paper I read before the Institute I gave the history of the first successful attempt since the Reformation to shake off the fetters of the Roman Curia. It is now my task to indicate, as far as I can, the character of a second great revolt, which is spreading rapidly in France and Italy, and which has its adherents even in England. It is an attempt which differs from that made by the Old Catholics both intellectually and practically. It not only deals far more freely with first principles than the older movement, but strangely enough, it demands the right to express far more advanced opinions than any Old Catholic has avowed, without separating from the communion of the Church whose most authoritative utterances it rejects. Such a movement in a church whose policy for ages has been the most rigid repression of independence, is absolutely certain to run into dangerous extremes in the opposite direction. Consequently, earnest religious men among ourselves have—again, naturally enough—treated it with scant sympathy. I venture to think this is a mistake. Before we withdraw our sympathy

from the Modernists, we are bound to remember the circumstances of their case. The iron repression to which they have so long been subject must of necessity lead to the strong recoil in the other direction which is displayed in their writings, and if we find reason to deplore some of their utterances, we ought not to excommunicate them altogether, but endeavour in a spirit of brotherhood and loving-kindness to bring them to view things from a wiser and more truly liberal standpoint.

Most of us are fully acquainted with the position of Dr. Tyrrell, once a member of the "Society of Jesus," but now expelled from the Order, and disavowed by the Church to which he belongs. He has told us that Modernism is not a sect, but a school. That is to say, it lays down no principles and imposes no dogmas. It simply claims a right to express opinion freely while still belonging to a body which for a thousand years and more has not only systematically denied that right, but has been accustomed to put down those who claimed it with not a little ferocity. I am sorry to say that Dr. Tyrrell's description of Modernism is, I am afraid, not altogether correct. In Italy, at least, the Modernists have laid down dogmas of their own in the place of those against which they contend. In an article in the last number of the *International Theological Review*, an Old Catholic organ of independent Catholic thought, published at Berne, Dr. Herzog, Old Catholic Bishop for Switzerland, quotes the organ of the *Società Internazionale Scientifico-Religiosa* at Rome as laying down as a *commune terreno d'intesa* in the *Programma dei Modernisti* which it has issued, such propositions as the following, in regard to the gospels: "Mark is the oldest of the Synoptic gospels"; it was used by Matthew and Luke; "Matthew and Luke are independent of each other"; these last "have both used a writing called 'Logia'"; while "of the compiler of the fourth Gospel we are not able to catch a passing indication, but he is probably not identical with John." Then "the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews are clearly not authentic, and the Catholic Epistles are pseudepigraphic."\* Now, let it be understood that I have no objection to the freest possible investigation of the critical problem, unless in the case of persons who have undertaken obligations to some particular religious body, and to the public at large not to carry such investigations so far as to

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\* It is only fair to say that in a paper by the Abbé Minoechi which has reached me from Italy I find no tendency to dogmatism of this kind but only a plea for free inquiry.

conflict with the principles that religious body was formed to maintain. But for my own part I believe the establishment of positions by critical analysis to be a task of extreme difficulty, and also that it would be well for critics to be a little more modest in representing their conclusions as irrefragable and final. I would further observe that the modern critic is wont to establish his case by ignoring all methods of investigation save his own, and all considerations outside his particular methods which have led, or may lead, to a contrary conclusion.

Such a method seems to me as unscientific as it would have been for astronomers to have ignored the calculations of my dear and honoured friend the late Professor Adams on the perturbations of Uranus, and to have declared that there was not, and could not be, any cause but the idiosyncrasy of Uranus himself, for the eccentricities in his orbit. I shall return to this question later on. But I may mention here that in the article to which I have alluded, Bishop Herzog—he was for years Professor of N.T. Exegesis, I may say, in the University of Bern—has once more re-stated the arguments *against* the theory that St. Mark is the oldest gospel, and has at least shown that there is a good deal to be said on both sides of a question which, as far as my experience goes—and I have been reading both sides of it for more than half a century—is as insoluble by purely critical methods as is the problem of squaring the circle.

The principles of modernism, I think, find their most adequate expression in Dr. Tyrrell's now famous "Letter." I shall take this as my text-book, illustrating it, when necessary, from one or two of his subsequent productions. That it is a formidable attack on Romanism considered as a practical system, and that it deserves the closest attention of those among us who have been led to regard that system with deep admiration, few will be found hardy enough to deny. Its admissions are remarkable indeed. He acknowledges (pp. 48, 49) that "the conservative positions" in that Church "are maintained by ignorance, systematic or involuntary"; that "the close historical study of origins and developments must undermine many of our (*i.e.*, the Ultramontane) most fundamental assumptions in regard to dogmas and institutions"; that "the sphere of the miraculous is daily limited by the growing difficulty in verifying such facts, and the growing facility in reducing either them or the belief in them to natural and recognized causes." He further grants (p. 49) that "in the approved writings of her ascetical teachers (*i.e.*, those of the Church of Rome) and her moralists, in the

prevailing practices of her confessors and directors, in the liturgical biographies of her canonized saints, in the principles of her government and in her methods of education; much that revolts the very same moral and religious sense to which in the first instance her claims to our submission must appeal.\* This passage demands the very closest attention. Every portion of it is as formidable an indictment of the working of the Roman system as the most uncompromising of its opponents could have framed; and the most formidable of its features is that it comes not from those ignorant Protestants who, as the Roman controversialists are so fond of telling us, never did and never will understand the system of the infallible Church, because they have never viewed it from the inside, but from a man than whom no one better understands the Roman system and its working, having viewed it from the standpoint of the Order which above all others has proved itself indispensable to the Papacy, and is understood to hold the Infallible Pope himself in the hollow of its hand. Nor does Dr. Tyrrell flinch when confronted with expulsion from the Jesuit Order and from the Roman Church. He returns to the charge in his *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, and boldly arraigns Mediævalism in a subsequent work with that title. He does not scruple to speak of "the long and sordid record of clerical scandal that we find in Church history" (of course he confines this phrase to the history of the Church to which he belongs), "the persistent recrudescences of avarice, ambition and licentiousness in the ministers of the sanctuary" (p. 49). And though he tries to shelter himself under the plea that this admission "can prove no more against Catholicism" (by which he means Romanism) "than the like phenomena in the ministers of law and religion can prove against law and government," he forgets that human societies do not claim to be under

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\* The apologists of Rome will also do well to notice the admissions of Cardinal Mercier in regard to Belgium, the country in which the Roman Church has perhaps a firmer hold on the people than in any other country in the world. He says (see Tyrrell, *Mediævalism*, p. 16) that while every young man "as he grows up takes a pride in developing his bodily strength, in adding to the amount of his knowledge, in forming his judgment, in deepening his experience, in improving his speech, in refining his style, in mastering the ways of the world, in keeping in touch with the course of events . . . many a Catholic of twenty, thirty, or forty years of age would, if asked, be forced to confess that since his first communion he had learned nothing, and perhaps forgotten a good deal of his religion." Extremes, it seems to me, meet on this matter. Our habit of allowing everything to be questioned is becoming as fatal to religious research or reflection among our laity as is that of the Roman Church in forbidding all inquiry.

infallible rule, and to possess infallible Divine guidance. Once more, in his "Letter," he allows that "the Roman communion may be no more than the charred stump of a tree torn to pieces by gales and rent by thunderbolts"; that "she may be and *probably is*\* more responsible for all the schisms than the schismatics themselves"; though he admits that this is "too elliptical an expression" (note 8). When he explains that by the Church he means "Churchmen," he makes confusion worse confounded. For in the first place what he said was not "the Church," but "the Roman communion." And next, does he mean by "Churchmen," the members of the Church, or is he using the word in the loose and inaccurate fashion which is so common even among those who should know better, as indicating the clergy or the hierarchy?

However, he goes on to say that all this will not prevent the Roman communion from standing for the "principle of Catholicity, the ideal of a spiritually united humanity centred round Christ in one divine society." It is here that those who are not members of the Roman Church will be inclined to join issue with him. If the Roman Church has adulterated the true faith to such an extent as to be largely, at least, responsible for the schisms which have taken place, how does this "ideal" fit in with her treatment of persons, validly baptized into the Catholic Church according to the formula ordained by Christ Himself, and thrust out by ecclesiastical intolerance, pride, or arrogance, sometimes to die excommunicate and accursed, and perhaps after being "handed over to the secular arm." Or if the rulers of a church, presumed as an organization, remember, to be infallible, have presented the spectacle of the gravest scandals, frequently unpunished and screened by their brethren, if they have been so frequently stained with the crimes of "avarice, ambition, and licentiousness" (p. 49); what becomes of the unfortunate lay folk who have been encouraged to sin by the example of their teachers, whose voice, *ex hypothesi*, should be to them as the voice of God Himself?

Dr. Tyrrell's attitude to his Church in the face of such damning facts as he has himself admitted certainly needs some explanation. If the Church of Rome, while professing supreme authority and even infallibility *as* a Church, has so grievously and persistently misled those who have looked up to her for guidance, how, we who are outside her may fairly ask, can an honest man remain any longer within her pale? "Come out

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\* The italics are mine.

from her, and be ye separate" would be, one would think, the natural verdict of conscience in such a case. What is the use of telling us that Christianity is a Life, when that Life is not lived by those who alone can, by precept and example, transmit it to us? "How, then," as St. Paul would say, "shall God judge the world?" Has not Dr. Tyrrell told us (p. 93) that the most difficult "note" of the true Church with which to "deal" is that of "sanctity," and that no intelligent member of the Roman Church can be "unfamiliar with the shock experienced by the cultivated lay mind at first encounter with certain pages in ascetic and moral theology"?\* Dr. Tyrrell goes on to say that he "need not specify" these "pages." Had he done so, he would have given certain apologists of Rome among us a "shock" which would be of considerable use to them. Unfortunately in this age we are so "tolerant" that we often shut our eyes to facts, if this indeed be tolerance. Had Dr. Tyrrell been able to "specify" and quote these pages, they would have been a surprise to most of us. Many of them would be found such as, to use Gibbon's expression, were best "veiled in the decent obscurity of a learned language." I have not, however, space to enter into Dr. Tyrrell's ingenious defence of his present position in the Roman Church. His refinements of logic, I must confess, appear to me to savour too much of the methods of the Society to which he has ceased to belong.

It is impossible to touch on all the interesting points raised in the "Letter," and in the volumes which have succeeded it. I can but pick out one or two more and then pass on to modernism of another type. I have no space to discuss the attempt to minimize the errors and dangers of the Roman system by which remaining in her is defended. I can only say that I prefer the attitude of Döllinger when he said of the Vatican dogmas that neither "as a Christian, a theologian, an historian, or a citizen" could he subscribe them, and the honest determination with which he remained till death outside the pale of the Roman Church. Nor can I stop to point out the singular identification of Romanism with Catholicism in Mr. Tyrrell's pages.† But what, I confess, surprises me not a little, is the way in which he seems to ignore the facts of history when he consistently endeavours to represent "Catholicism," by which he means Romanism, to be a *free* development of Christian

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\* See *Novellen*, by Marie Murland.

† M. Loisy adopts the same assumption in his *Gospel and the Church*, p. 175.

opinion.\* If there is any one fact more indelibly stamped than another on the pages of Church History, it is that the Papal claims, from their first appearance to the days of the Vatican Council, have been based on a succession of the most daring outrages on individual freedom, on consistent and continuous appeals to force instead of logic. It is true that little stress is laid in our days on such facts as those of the statute *De Heretico Comburendo* in this land and the Inquisition on the Continent. Most of us who are not Roman Catholics feel bound to hope—some of us rather “against hope,” I am afraid—that those methods of producing and securing faith are disapproved now by our brethren of the Roman Church, and so we have ceased to press them. But when we hear of the “historical development of the Catholic Church,” we must surely admit that the claims of the Papacy were enforced by fire and faggot, by plots and assassinations, by “wars and rumours of wars,” that the Papacy has never disavowed the use of such means, and that its authority has been founded rather on them than on the free verdict of the Christian Church. I do not deny that Christianity may and will develop. But such a development must proceed by fair and reasonable processes. I must hold that the methods of the Papacy have to the last been neither fair nor reasonable, and that the full and healthy development of religious belief has been, and will be impossible as long as those claims continue to be recognized. “He that letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” Nor can I understand how any development can possibly be a satisfactory one unless the Orthodox Churches of the East, and those at least of the Protestants who accept the ancient faith of Christendom, and who are, therefore, as good Catholics, if not better, than the members of the Church to which Dr. Tyrrell still belongs, are allowed to contribute their quota to it. Even from those who reject the Catholic Faith altogether we may learn a good deal as to the most convincing way of stating it.

Cardinal Newman, it is true, based his secession to Rome on a theory of development. But that development was neither logical nor natural. That is to say, it was neither the result of the application of the reason to the words of Christ and His first Apostles and ministers, as handed down to subsequent ages in the Christian Society, nor the result of natural forces, such as develop the plant from the seed, the child into the man, or the growth of the Universal Church of Christ as she exists to-day,

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\* See “Letter,” p. 62.

with her Archbishops and Bishops, her Presbyteries and General Assemblies, her Synods and Conferences, her canons, rules and regulations, from a simple brotherhood in a single city, into a complex organization extending throughout the world. Cardinal Newman describes his "development" as consisting in a "contemplation of the object of its adoration" which from "an impression on the Imagination" becomes "a system or creed in the Reason." Accurate thinkers will be more inclined with Bishop Butler, to attribute to imagination all the errors with which the world has been afflicted since man entered it.\* The Cardinal speaks of a development according to ideas of congruity, desirability and decorum, formed by the action of "patient reflection and moral sensibility." But of *whose* "patient reflection and moral sensibility"? Not of Catholics at large, but of an "infallible developing authority"—the wire-pullers of the Vatican, to wit. Dr. Tyrrell again speaks of what he calls "Catholicism" as an "explicitation" of the "thought of the greater prophets, of Christ, of St. Paul, of Tertullian, of Origen, of Clement of Alexandria." So far as Tertullian is concerned, we may agree to make him a present of that more or less heretical writer. But when we read Roman theology, we cannot help seeing how intensely Latin it invariably is. Christ and St. Paul may be "developed" in it. But it is an altogether unnatural development, out of all "proportion" to the "faith." Clement and Origen—why Dr. Tyrrell inverts this order I cannot say,—when read, appear to transport us into a fresher and healthier intellectual atmosphere altogether, and one far more in harmony with modern thought than anything Latin theology has ever given us. And Origen soon became a heretic in the eyes of the hide-bound theologians of a later age. Those who read him in Roman Catholic editions will often find his pages punctuated with "*Caute*," in order to warn the reader how sadly his free and breezy utterances conflict with the cut and dried "developments" of subsequent ages. "Development" there undoubtedly is in Roman theology, but it is out of shape. The iron of authority has entered into the thinker's soul. And the stamp of Latin thought, with its narrow and delusive axioms and postulates, and its clear and vigorous though rigid method of deduction from them, is upon it all through. And that it is why it is losing its hold, and *must* eventually lose its hold, on the mind of man yet more completely, as race after race is brought into the Christian fold.

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\* *Analogy*, Part I, chapter i.

I must add a word or two on another form of modernism, which reveals the attitude of the school on the criticism of the Bible. There is not much to detain us in the Abbé Loisy's *The Gospel and the Church*. It chiefly takes the forms of criticism of Professor Harnack's *Wesendes Christentum*. I, at least, have no controversy with him here. Alike in his orthodoxy and his heterodoxy I am disposed on the whole to agree with him. But he adopts in his criticism methods of a particular school which appear to me, as to many others, open to serious objection. Thus he remarks (pp. 31, 32) that "it seems inconceivable that Jesus should have preached at Jerusalem, declaring Himself to be the Messiah, on several occasions, during several (*three ?*) years, without being arrested. He can but have done so once, and paid the forfeit with His life." This seems to me the *πρώτον ψεύδος* of the method of the modern school of criticism. You say that this or that statement is "inconceivable," and you fancy yourself thereby to have exposed the inaccuracy of contemporary, or all but contemporary, and, moreover, extremely well informed historians.\* Then St. John's Gospel is rejected, not because it conflicts hopelessly with the contents of the others, but because it gives the esoteric, as the other three Gospels give the exoteric, teaching of Christ: and this, in spite of the overwhelming evidence which has been adduced in favour of the Gospel having been a genuine production of a disciple of Christ. Modern criticism carries on its own isolated research mainly on lines altogether subjective, and establishes its

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\* M. Loisy, it is true, soon goes a good deal farther than he does in his *Gospel and the Church*. In *Quelques Lettres*, pp. 93, 94, he tells us that "on the evening of the Passion the Body of Jesus was taken down from the Cross by the soldiers and thrown into some common grave, where nobody could have had the idea of going to look for, and recognizing it after the lapse of a certain time." Note here, as an illustration of modern so-called "scientific" methods, that we (1) have a definite historical statement made eighteen centuries and a half after the event, without the slightest historical evidence on which to rest it; (2) that Mr. Loisy flatly contradicts the statements purporting to be made by eye-witnesses, although handed down as contemporary documents for nearly eighteen hundred years *in a society definitely organized for that purpose*; and (3) that such a masterly statement of the evidence as that, for instance, in Godet's *Études Bibliques* is absolutely and contemptuously ignored. And that just because the writer personally imagines the event of which such strong evidence can be produced to be incredible! I shall believe this sort of criticism to be "scientific" when I find secular historians resorting to such canons of criticism, and not before.

conclusions by altogether refusing to discuss any conflicting results which may seem to have been established on lines other than its own. I may myself claim to have established the facts (1) that the doctrinal matter declared in the fourth Gospel to have been taught by Christ is the foundation of the doctrinal system proclaimed in *everyone* of the Epistles; and that (2) the language in which Christ's teaching is reported in that Gospel is invariably more elementary in form than the language in which that teaching is presented in the Epistles. Now the conclusion I have drawn from these facts, namely, the genuineness of the fourth Gospel, may be sound, or it may not. But it cannot be said that the opposite conclusion is established until this theory has been examined and proved to be false.

M. Loisy, it is true, does not, at least in his *Gospel and the Church*, accept the dogmas about the priority of St. Mark's Gospel laid down by the Italian modernists. But he appears to be working on their lines, which appear to me, I confess, to be altogether unscientific. Therefore, it may be well to bear in mind the language of Bishop Herzog in the article I have mentioned above, echoed as it has been by Professor Flint, by Professor James Robertson, by Professor Orr, and other competent authorities. "The programme of the modernists is an expression of opinion which compels respect. But we shall do well to examine it critically before we accept it." A great question such as this should surely be regarded from every possible point of view, and every argument in relation to it carefully examined before the matter is assumed to be settled. Otherwise our methods, by whatever epithets we may be pleased to describe them, differ in no way from those of the Vatican, and must ultimately, however long they may hold the field, share the fate of all unproved sayings, from whatsoever quarter they may come.

Dr. Tyrrell, like M. Loisy, does not remain altogether stationary. With what I cannot help thinking to be the somewhat hazy metaphysics of a good deal of his *Scylla and Charybdis* I have, I must confess, little sympathy. But with his bold indictment of modern Roman methods, and his vigorous protests against the Cardinal's characteristic phrase, "the apostate Döllinger," I am thoroughly in accord. I have not, I must admit, made an exhaustive study of Dr. Tyrrell's works. But what I *have* been able to read, I have read with attention: and I have not found a word which need prevent him from becoming an Anglican, an Old Catholic, or even what is called an "orthodox Nonconformist." I admire heartily his concluding

appeal to Cardinal Mercier in his *Mediævalism*. I cannot blame him for his honourable sentiment of loyalty to the great communion to which he still belongs. But I would ask him, in all seriousness and in all sympathy, if he himself would have been a possibility but for the solvents applied to Roman theology by a Catholicity broader and worthier than that to which he still continues to cling.

I have now expressed what I feel on this subject with plainness, but I trust in no dogmatic spirit. If I have used the personal pronoun pretty largely, it is not because I regard myself as the ideal man, with whose conclusions every rational person must agree, but, on the contrary, because I can only speak for myself, and therefore refuse to dogmatize. I am quite willing to be converted, if I am shown to be mistaken. But I believe we shall never have a true development of Christianity until it is founded on sound reason, until it takes account of other bodies and other theologies beside that of Rome, and is established by the fullest, the freest, and the friendliest discussion. Finally I must say that it seems utterly impossible that the Church of Rome can tolerate such utterances as those of the modernists, and that for a very simple reason. On the day she does so, she ceases to exist.

#### DISCUSSION.

The paper being concluded—

The CHAIRMAN (Dr. HEYWOOD SMITH) expressed the thanks of the meeting to Chancellor Lias for his paper, and said that all were indebted to him for his frankness and boldness in holding such language. The great difficulty to his mind was to define Modernism : did it imply development, had it this as its object ? If so they must bear in mind the possibilities of this development and consider whither it might lead them. Then it might be that they would have to ponder whether simplicity was not more valuable than any development to further complication of structure. There was also the question to consider as to whether Modernism attacks one sect and one creed only for its abuses, or whether it is not merely increasing criticism to hypercriticism of all established religion.

The Rev. R. V. FATHFULL DAVIES (Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society) said that Modernism was a wide subject with a

vast range, from a position tenable to the Roman Church to one that could not be recognized as Christian; the term Modernist was used to denote men who differed very extremely from one another on points of the greatest importance. It was, then, very difficult to gain a general idea of the movement. Modernism must be defined as a tendency even more than a school. Those Modernists who remained in the Roman Church traced their opinions to the doctrine of development of Newman, and it is considered possible that Newman's letter may be condemned as a source of Modernist principles. It was very difficult to gain a general idea of the movement. Loisy's book, *Autour d'un petit livre*, gave a very interesting view of his position; while Tyrrell's *Through Scylla and Charybdis* was also very interesting. Perhaps a good general idea could be obtained from a little book called *What we Want*, being a translation by Mr. Lilley of a protest by thirteen Italian priests. A translation of the encyclical *Pascendi* is appended to M. Paul Sabatier's interesting lectures on Modernism. In the Encyclical the Modernists are denounced up hill and down dale, and the opinions ascribed to them severely condemned, but it is a question whether they really hold these opinions, or whether the Vatican thinks that this is what Modernists believe, or ought logically to believe. The representation is, however, of the nature of a caricature. In Sabatier's volume there is not a great deal of information, but the position of the extremists will be found to be stated by Loisy.

Professor ORCHARD said that Modernism appeared to be the revolt of the slave against his fetters. It was produced by the reaction against the Roman system and its intellectual and moral slavery. In the movement itself the love of liberty could be recognized as its inspiration to a greater extent than the love of Truth. Its followers were affected not a little by the dominant passion of the present day. They had not been able to keep clear of the methods of the higher criticism.

There were two points in the paper on which he would like to make separate comment. First on p. 129 where reference was made by the writer to Newman's system. It was interesting to know that Newman tried this on his brother, Professor Frank Newman, surrounding him with objects of contemplation which were to lead to the desired result, but without effect.

Again, on p. 130, where the Cardinal was quoted as writing of an

“infallible developing authority,” in the speaker’s judgment if the Roman hierarchy laid claim to “development” it could not at the same time claim to be “*semper eadem*.”

The Rev. J. TUCKWELL concurred with Mr. Faithfull Davies in what he had said as to the wideness of the subject and its want of definition. There were, however, some threads of a scientific character to be found, and a Modernist Philosophy was developing which was becoming very attractive to some. There was, however, a desire to prove a Unity in all natural things which could only lead to Pantheism, and too great a leaning on modern methods of criticism which were too often subjective and too apt to ignore external evidence and fact. He was amazed at the frequent ignoring of archæological evidence to the falseness of theories accepted by the Modernists. The position adopted by the Modernist critic of to-day, *e.g.*, Loisy, could be traced to French Deism which was transferred to Germany after the Napoleonic era. They should rejoice in the revolt if it led back to truth and simplicity and not to rationalism and an anti-christian pseudo-philosophy. The rejection of all Christian doctrine and all supernatural religion in France, seemed to be a great danger to Modernism, with which it was brought so much into contact.

The Rev. S. PIKE was glad to have heard Chancellor Lias’ sentence (p. 124) on the higher critics. It had often happened that theories had been developed which were later on overthrown by the spade of the investigator ; the critics pass from their theories but still forget why. It would be a pity if the Modernists should forget that true advance was generally founded on historical fact and not on theory alone. Owing to the system of the Roman Church Modernism was in a manner stultified. Its followers were trained in blind faith, and seeing a revolt they were too anxious to adapt the system to those who were drifting away.

Colonel ALVES asked those present to consider how many so-called reformers had practically thrown the Old Testament overboard. Christian people were too apt to give a flat denial to statements in the Old Testament which have not as yet been fulfilled, as for example the statement often made that the Jews shall not go back to their own land, denials that the Temple shall be rebuilt, or that the recurrence of the animal sacrifice is once again to be witnessed.

The Rev. CHANCELLOR LIAS, in replying, said that he had really

little to say, for all those who had spoken were, like the game cocks in the story, all on one side. Something had been said of the danger of development, which applied not only to the movement now being discussed, but also to such societies as the Victoria Institute. It was impossible that they should all be able to accept one another's theories as they stand, and agreement could only be arrived at through free discussion. Agreement so arrived at would be development, and this development was that which was needed on all sides. The development against which all should be on their guard was that of "Reason led by imagination." Imagination was too apt to run riot.

As regarded the definition of Modernism, he agreed with the Rev. Faithfull Davies that the subject was too wide for exact definition. But in their criticism it would be well to bear in mind that Modernism was in great measure a revolt. They must bear in mind the case of the ex-priests, and remember how helpless these people were when they first escaped. So it must be with the Modernists, they must be treated patiently. For with them too the revulsion must at first be extreme.

#### COMMUNICATION FROM REV. A. IRVING, D.SC., B.A.

Being prevented from attending the meeting on March 1st, I beg to offer a few remarks upon Mr. Chancellor Lias's paper on "Modernism." The term seems to me to carry a wider connotation than the author of the paper has given to it. Modernism, it is conceived, has two phases—(i) the scientific, (ii) the pseudo-scientific; and it is with the latter phase that the learned Chancellor mainly deals, in such a way, however, as to have my full sympathy. I am glad to find that (pp. 124-5) he substantially endorses the criticisms which I ventured to make on the position of the "Higher Critics" in the discussion of Professor Sir Wm. Ramsay's paper two years ago (see also my letters to the *Guardian* of last year (November and December) in reply to the Norrisian Professor of Divinity, and to Dr. Dukinfield Astley). I entirely agree with the author's rather severe remarks upon the position of M. Loisy on pp. 130-1, and with the stricture of Bishop Herzog (p. 132). The spirit of that *πρωτον ψευδους* (p. 131) taints the whole method of that school, and I am bold therefore to maintain that it is "pseudo-scientific."

A short time ago I was driven in private controversy to adjure a champion of that school, in the name of intellectual veracity, not to juggle with the word "science," under which all sorts of fallacies may lurk. I hold that, unless a man has done enough work in the region of those sciences which come under the purview of the Royal Society, to know the difference between what he *knows* and what he has only a reading or talking acquaintance with, he needs to beware of getting on very slippery ground, and of advancing some other cause than the cause of truth. (See the correspondence in the *Guardian* of 1905 between myself and the late Canon MacColl.)

Then, as regards the scientific aspect of "Modernism," I need not tell the members of the Victoria Institute that I have no sympathy with what Chancellor Lias (p. 122) describes as the "rash dogmatics of the\* school of physical science"; indeed for the last two decades I have been engaged in my small way in combating them. Even Pope Leo XIII. attempted something of the sort, but found himself out of his depth, and had to fall back upon St. Thomas Aquinas (if I remember rightly) as entitled to have the final say upon the highest questions of philosophy, to which the discoveries of science may lead up in this twentieth century! I should rather say that there is more true philosophy in the dictum of the poet Wordsworth—

"To the solid ground

Of Nature to trust the mind that builds for aye."

So when a champion of the "higher criticism" tells me that the real difference between us is in "the presuppositions with which we start," my reply is the simple one, that *inductive science* knows no presuppositions; it finds its data in observed facts, and checks its inferences by further observation of facts. I will ask permission to add two short quotations:—

"Liberty to seek—liberty to formulate the found. Devoutly we claim it beside the graves, at which the whole world creeps up to mourn with us; the shrine of our aged master (Darwin), the snow-drift of our young master (young Balfour of Trinity). Far-withdrawn teachings out of the perfect *Work* they opened for themselves and for us. What deeper and yet more universal teachings became theirs out of the all-wise *Word* we perhaps may not know. And they will help us to read the Word itself more truly. Well has it

\* I said "a," not "the."—J. J. L. See p. 122.

been said by a believing man of science (Lionel Beale)—‘Science can no more submit to be controlled than theology can allow herself to be fretted at every little alteration in scientific opinion. Intellectual work of every kind must be free.’ And the New Testament is still the one volume of religious books, which accepts the whole statement”—(see *The Spirit of Enquiry*, a sermon preached before the British Association in 1882, by the Bishop of Truro, Dr. Benson, afterwards Primate).

To this I will venture to add some remarks introductory to a sermon by myself on the Papal Encyclical, *De Unitate*, of 1896, published in the *Clergyman's Magazine* :—

“When the Papacy gathered the ‘catholic’ world around it in the sixteenth century at the Council of Trent, and added twelve new doctrines to the Creed of Christendom (as the great Christopher of Lincoln used to say) it virtually made itself ‘a new church,’ and took up a position antagonistic to that ‘forward movement of the human mind,’ which, beginning with the *Renaissance*, has been going on ever since. Whatever chance was left to it of retreating from that position would seem to have taken away by the decrees of the Vatican Council of 1870. So it has come to pass that there is a fixity, we might almost say, a petrification of thought, which characterizes the teaching of the Roman Church, and has tended to place her more and more outside of human progress and of sympathy with the march of the human intellect, which has marked the nineteenth century. With ideas and modes of thought still cast in an Italian mould she bids fair to be left ‘high and dry’ by the great Teutonic races, who have become readers of their Bibles, and investigators of Nature, and to whom the future of the world seems to belong.”

Even the late Lord Acton saw this; and I remark (*loc. cit.*) that “it is a pity the leaders of thought in his Church cannot share his enlightenment.”