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**YOUTH
LOOKS
AT
RELIGION**

YOUTH LOOKS AT RELIGION

By

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WITH A REPLY BY THE
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Edited by
Kenneth Ingram

PHILIP ALLAN
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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS is the kind of book which positively insists upon an Editor's Preface. For one thing, some explanation is required as to why the book came to be written, how the authors were selected, and what they were invited to write. To launch the book without any such introduction would be to let loose a host of inquiries which could never be individually answered. My first duty is, therefore, to anticipate these questions.

For some time I had been very keen that such a book as this should be written. Few things interest me more than to discover what the younger, post-war generation thinks about the problems of life. I confess to a great sympathy with youth's ideas. On the whole, I suppose that I am more interested in what youth thinks about religion and the larger problems of life than in what my own generation thinks. And I do not believe I am altogether peculiar in this respect. I am sure that

there is a large number of middle-aged and elderly people who want to know what youth thinks : at least, they are always saying that they want to know.

That is one value of this book, as a voyage of discovery for the people who are no longer young. But it has another value, namely that it acts as an incentive to youth to think out its religious beliefs for itself, and to arrange those beliefs into some sort of coherent form which will bear expression and definition. Those who are no longer young have had to wrestle with philosophic and religious issues—some of us are still doing it. Well, youth must take on its share of the burden. It must make its mind clearer as to what it is going to scrap and what it means to carry forward into another age. I do not say this dictatorially. I am only emphasizing that to ask seven young authors, as I have dared to do, to contribute their views on religion, to declare what they believe and what they do not believe—and why—is a direct incentive to the classification of ideas. At one period, when I heard that several of those who have contributed to these pages were desperately worried, sitting up late at night, and working

hard with the examination paper I had set them, I feared that I might almost lose their friendship. But I am not in the least sorry that I set them the task ; and I am sure that by now they have forgiven me.

There is one type of critic who will be inclined to depreciate the conception of this book. He is the kind of man who protests that he is not interested in discovering what young people believe. He argues that youth is always youth, that young people always tend to suffer from the same mental attitude, which eventually matures into something quite different : and that therefore there is no particular significance in the religious views of the post-war generation. For myself, I can only answer that I am convinced such a critic is fundamentally mistaken, that he has failed to read the portent of the times. There is a unique difference between this generation and all the young generations which have preceded it. For the first time we have a race of men and women who have grown up without the legacy of any very strong traditions, particularly in the religious field. Their parents have been too unsettled by the general unsettlement of the neo-Georgian world to bequeath

anything like the same fixed principles and allegiances which previous ages accepted unquestioningly. And so to-day we have the first fruits of an experiment in upbringing which has not relied on discipline or fear. The youth of to-day has been left free, and encouraged to be free, for the most part, to form its own theories, to explore and inquire, without any veneration for age-long convictions.

It must surely be of supreme interest to know what youth is going to make of it all—particularly in the religious field, where we inevitably encounter the radical influences which affect human outlook and behaviour. And, with this in mind, I invited the seven contributors to state their views frankly. I emphasize the adverb, because older people, who read this book, will naturally find that some of their strongest convictions and most sacred ideals are ruthlessly attacked. They will disagree violently with some of the conclusions. So do I. But that matters very little, if it enables us to discover what the youth of to-day is thinking and asking.

Here, indeed, I must anticipate a further objection. It will be said that the seven

authors who have been selected are not necessarily representative of the general standpoint of their generation. The answer is that if the book had developed into an encyclopedia containing a thousand individual contributions, the same objection would be valid. Everyone must write from his or her personal point of view. But a selection of seven writers, whose names are known, is not a bad way of making contact with the generation to which they belong. And, though their conclusions vary profoundly, I seem to detect a certain unity of mental temperament beneath the differences.

Anyhow, I confess that it has been, for me, a very delightful task to invite and gather together these various expressions of opinion. This preface at least gives me the opportunity of thanking the authors, with a genuine gratitude, for their patience and co-operation with a tiresome editor. And last, but by no means least, my thanks extend to the Archbishop of York for contributing the reply. From the first I was sure that such a reply was essential in order to complete the book, and that he was the ideal person to undertake it. That he has made time in his busy life to accede

to my request will always remain one of the happiest incidents in my experience.

And now the editor can gracefully retire. There is no need, fortunately, for him to interpose at any further stage. My apology—but on second thoughts I shall not apologize for this foreword. I shall merely disappear behind the curtain.

KENNETH INGRAM.

CHRISTOPHER CASSON

Christopher Casson is the second son of Lewis Casson and Sybil Thorndike. He was trained on the "Worcester" and entered the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. But the appeal of the stage was too great for him, and after becoming a midshipman he left the Service, and joined the Albert Hall Dramatic School. At the time of writing he is touring the United States with Sir Philip Ben Greet's Company, and playing various Shakespeare parts.

I

CHRISTOPHER CASSON

THE task of making any statement as to my own religious beliefs is exceedingly difficult for many reasons. It is difficult mainly because my beliefs are so far from static. I realize that they have changed considerably already in my life, and they are, at the present moment, far from being mature or distinct, so far, indeed, that they do not readily lend themselves to the kind of exposition which is here required. At this precise moment I am in the throes of an Atlantic crossing. The ship is rolling about enough to unsettle the views of G. K. Chesterton himself—if he were here. It is not perhaps an auspicious time at which to embark on a religious essay, but I must gather together such ideas as I have tried to think out for myself hitherto. And I offer them, with the reservation that presently, when I look back on my effort as it will appear in

print, I shall find that I have developed sufficiently to disagree with a great deal of what I have said.

Of what can I be really certain? It seems to me impossible to dispute Descartes' first proposition, *Cogito ergo sum*. In other words, I cannot deny the existence of my individual consciousness. I am conscious of the fact that, to a limited extent, I can reason, and that I do so with something which I call my mind. I find myself getting into very deep waters when I try to philosophize about the conclusions which my reason draws. It is these conclusions which in my experience prove so shifting and uncertain. I shall try to avoid uncertain theories. I want rather to express what—at the moment, at least—I feel to be my inherent convictions.

Mind—the working of one's mind—evolves. And, as it evolves, the range of one's consciousness widens. I become more and more aware of the beauty and the truth of things. Let me take the example of a creature whose mind is very slightly evolved, and whose reasoning powers, if any, are very small—an animal. So far as I can observe, an animal differs from a man largely because it shows no appreciation

whatever, no consciousness at all, of any of the beauties around it. No doubt some animals lead a very pleasant life. But they are not thrilled by the glory of the sunset, nor by the first view of a great range of mountains, nor by any of the beauties of the world which may be visible to us. They have probably fewer worries, but they are hardly conscious of the splendour of nature, and not at all conscious of the treasures of art.

Robert Bridges in his *Testament of Beauty* expresses what I am trying to indicate :

“ This spiritual elation and response to nature is
Man’s generic mark. A wolf that all his life
Had hunted after nightfall ’neath the starlit skies,
Should he attain the first inklings of thought
Would feel its wonder . . . of beauty.”

And, in degree, this principle applies to the human race. One is able to determine to some extent the standard of development which an individual has reached by the degree to which he is conscious of the beauty of the world around him. The “ hearty ” or the “ sporty ” type of man, for instance, seems to have little desire to develop his mind at all. He appears to want nothing better than to lead an existence of beer-drinking or killing things.

Like the animal he does not seem to wish for a wider range of consciousness, because he does not imagine what a wider range of consciousness would involve. But if his mind grows, he will begin to arrive at some "inklings of thought." He will feel that spiritual elation which is the fruit of a higher state of mind. He will begin to yearn for something greater—even if he does not know exactly what he wants.

There is another faculty which, if men grow, they will develop, and that is a sense of humour. It is difficult to believe that an animal has any idea of the funny side of things. Who has ever seen a group of horses thrown into hysterics by the antics of an inexperienced rider? I know that this is a sense of fun rather than humour, and that fun is more elementary than humour. Animals have very little sense of fun, and though the undeveloped human mind may have a sense of fun, it has very little sense of humour. Most people feel themselves to be deeply insulted if they are told that they have no sense of humour: they do not even believe it. It is only when their minds develop further that a particle of humour begins to evolve, and they see how

limited their appreciation of humour was at an earlier stage.

So, it seems to me, one of the realities of which I can be sure, is that there is a development of mind—that the mind climbs further and further, and that there is a definite direction in which it climbs. God, to me, is the symbol of the highest state of mind, the greatest consciousness, and the most wonderful sense of humour. Many people, I suppose, would claim that a sense of humour is not nearly so important. But I feel it to be essential to include this in my idea of God. A sense of humour is so essential to religion. Not only does it make a religion much pleasanter and more human—and therefore more real to the person who professes it—but it helps me at least to feel how small I am, to steady my sense of proportion, to remind me that there are some things which, after all, are not so terribly vital. And I cannot think of God without linking Him to a sense of humour. When one examines the face of a mosquito, for example, one can hardly imagine that God had not an exquisite sense of humour in creating such a design.

Is there a God, a God anyhow of the nature

I am trying to suggest? Here one enters the realm of proof, and I suppose that the existence of God will not be conclusively proved, to the satisfaction of everyone, for many thousands of years to come. That is why I have described God as a symbol. I cannot understand God, I cannot argue for His existence. But I suggest that He is there as a symbol for all that one is striving for.

And this brings me to the question of revelation. It brings me therefore to the question of the Bible. Man can accept the truth of the Bible or not, as he pleases, and I am not scholar enough to argue for or against its authenticity. I want rather to approach the Bible in the same way as I have tried to indicate my idea of God. It seems to me that I find in the Bible, in the New Testament especially, a story which shows that there is a God, and a God who is the same as the God whom I have tried to imagine. The story corresponds with the symbol which I have vaguely suggested. The wonderful symbolic legends of the Old Testament seem to confirm this same idea—the God who is the symbol of what men have always been striving to attain. That is why it seems to me to be reasonable to

accept the Bible—the Old Testament symbolically, and the New Testament more or less literally. It is a story, the proof of which really lies in my own small experience.

But this is really the idea of a transcendent God, a God towards whom man is trying to reach. And the idea of a transcendent God does not go far enough. Let me make use of a simile. From a transcendent point of view God is like the commander of an expedition, leading his men forward. But his party are not as strong or as brave as he. They cannot keep up with him. They fail, although his example encourages them to strive to follow him. And this is not enough. Somehow, to make the picture complete, to make my own idea of God complete, I must establish the idea also of an immanent God. I must think of a commander, but a commander also who is within the ranks, who marches alongside his men, and encourages them because he is one of themselves.

To try to offer any explanation of why I believe also in an immanent God involves me, I find, to some extent in the thorny issue of the existence of good and evil. I cannot deny that there is good and evil, or, anyhow, that there

are some things which are more good or less good than others. If I drown some fellow-creature who is looking to me for protection, I am doing—to say the very least—something less good than if I give a half-crown to someone who is starving. I cannot deny—no one, it seems to me, can deny—that love is better than hate, or generosity than meanness. A savage is not conscious that he is doing anything wrong when he eats human flesh. He knows no better, and he knows no better because he has reached only a very elementary level of intelligence. He is not a cannibal because he has come to realize that cannibalism is a far finer ideal of life than vegetarianism : it is merely that he knows no better.

It is true that man may deliberately adopt what he knows to be the lower course of action. We all do that. But we do not in our heart of hearts confuse the lower with the higher moral levels. A thief does not seriously contend that thieving is the result of living at a higher moral level than the man who respects other persons' private property. He thieves either because he knows no better, and cannot therefore make a choice : or because he deliberately chooses to take the lower path.

But, apart from his own consciousness, it *is* a lower path. There are different levels of conduct, which we call good and evil. And there is, I believe, a natural urge within all of us, however comparatively undeveloped, to work towards the higher levels. It is this urge which will tell a man that he ought to rescue a drowning baby, even if he is disinclined to get wet and cold in the water. He knows at such a moment—and in most moments all men know—what is the better and what is the less good course of action.

Now this urge which I find within myself, and which I believe all men find within themselves, cannot be explained from the standpoint of transcendence. It is something quite distinct from that magnetic influence from outside which impels men and women to strive towards a higher life. It is quite distinct and yet it is the same. But it comes from within. It is not easy to express these ideas, but I want to convey the sense both of a Mind and Will in the universe, of which life is a part, and which calls to us from outside : and a Mind and Will which become part of ourselves and urge us from within. I think of

this influence and Mind from outside as the transcendent God, God the Father.

But there is also the sense of good within ourselves, without which the picture is incomplete. I think of that as the immanent God, and I call Him God the Holy Ghost. They are both aspects of the same God. It is not a complete analogy, of course, but I make my belief clearer to myself if I think of these two aspects—the Mind and Beauty and Truth outside ourselves, of which we become only conscious as our consciousness slowly expands : and the spirit and inspiration within ourselves which point towards and urge us on to these greater heights.

But I find also another aspect of God. In order that we should be able to live our lives in harmony with both these aspects—to know more clearly what are the heights outside towards which we must strive, and how to develop this sense of good within ourselves—we need a human example. I believe that we are given this in Jesus Christ, that He is the highest ideal in humanity. And therefore I conceive of Him as another aspect or Person of God, combining in Himself both the transcendent and the immanent ideas.

I believe personally in Christ, just as I believe in a God the Father and a God the Holy Ghost. But my belief is not based on conclusions which I have arrived at only after weighing lengthy scientific evidence, or ponderous historical arguments as to whether the Bible is authentic or not. It is a personal belief. I believe it because it harmonizes with my own experience. Were the Bible and the whole Christian record disproved to-morrow, it would make no difference to me. The ideals would still remain.

So I believe in God. And I believe in two main aims in life—the first, that one must try to follow the sense of right that is within us; and the second, that one must develop and increase one's own—and other people's—mind and consciousness to the utmost of their power—by study, and by making the fullest use of all one's faculties. I believe to neglect either aim is a sin. If a musician suddenly came into a fortune, and, as a result, threw up all his work, and lived in complete idleness in some ancestral home, and never worked at his music again—he would be guilty of a deadly sin, even if he was completely moral and kept all the commandments. He would be sinning

to the furthest degree. For, when an artist is inspired, it means that he has become suddenly conscious of some great further truth. He puts this truth into the form of composition, because, only as a form can it be communicated to other people. By his composition he has therefore helped other people to develop their minds a little more. And if, because of prosperity, or for some other cause, he closes the door to his imagination, and works no more at translating his inspiration to form, he is neglecting his service to others in the world.

That is my conception, in general, of religion. Religion in fact, seems to me to be the work of developing your own spiritual faculties : and of so working and ordering one's life that you are also, in your small way, helping other people to develop theirs.

But the subject of one's religion brings one inevitably to the question of prayer. Prayer, as I understand it, is an act of will, the act of setting one's mind in the same direction as the will of God. That is a conception I can appreciate and feel to be necessary. But when it comes to prayers which make particular requests, it is a very different matter. I have never been able to see the object of prayers

asking for this and that, for deliverance from famine, or safety for the King, and the like. All I know is that I have a certain very limited power to hinder or assist God's purpose, which purpose is always towards good. Having decided to try to work with and not against Him, I can do no more than put my mind into harmony with His, and try to act accordingly. Most of the evils which arise are created by the misuse of our limited free wills : the evils, as we may call them, which are caused by something which human imperfection could not have created, and must therefore be part of God's purpose. And, as God's purpose is good, they are not really evils. If some catastrophe overwhelms us which is clearly other than the result of human ignorance or misuse, it is part of the divine scheme. We must accept it. God has sent it for some reason which we do not understand.

Now this is a real difficulty to me, as far as church-going, or rather the views of the average church-goer, are concerned. The lady who kneels Sunday after Sunday devotedly in her pew, would probably say that we, God's children, are wallowing in the mire of our sins, and that we must call to our Father for

help. Probably she would not express herself quite in that way, but that is, I suspect, what she would believe. And a great deal of the Church's prayers seem to be framed in that spirit. They are a call to God for mercy and help. But God is helping us and showing us mercy all the time without our asking for it ; and our duty is to live righteously and see that our minds are put in harmony with His.

I do not feel that this difficulty is removed if the "request" type of prayer is prefixed by the condition, "If it is Thy will," for I know that such a prayer for a particular gift will not be answered, unless what I am asking for is part of His purpose, and for the benefit of the universe. I can understand, and I can appreciate, the need for prayer which is an act of conforming my will to God's will. There are also the prayers which are acts of worship and thanksgiving for all the beautiful things around us. But I cannot understand the justification of prayer for a particular object, the idea that I shall only attain that object if I ask God for it. If it is His purpose that I should receive, I shall receive it without any such petition.

I want to emphasize this difficulty, because the aim of this book is partly to discuss

whether in the future there will be a need for religion, for institutional religion. And so much of the Church's prayer seems to repeat the phrase, "Have mercy on us." From my own point of view this kind of phrase is meaningless. I confess that it antagonizes me. No doubt the lady in the pew will answer by reminding me that we are all sinners and that we therefore deserve to be punished. But even from this point of view there seems to be something entirely wrong in the conception. If a child has stolen some jam out of the kitchen cupboard, the best thing for him to do is to apologize. But if it is necessary for him to be punished by a loving father for the offence, he ought to stand up and face the punishment sensibly and with as much courage as he can muster. He ought not to cringe, and fawn, and cry out, "Don't hurt me, father ; spare me, have mercy on me."

There is something which seems to me quite wrong in the tone and idea of such prayers. And, moreover, they introduce the sin of sanctimoniousness, a sin which I happen to detest almost more than anything else. I am not sure how far my feelings in this respect are common to other people. But I cannot help

believing that this is a cause of a good deal of the antipathy which people feel for Church services. There is a wrong attitude in so much of the prayers which are offered—these repeated phrases that we are miserable sinners and that we beg God to spare us from the punishment we deserve. And this tone correspondingly introduces the atmosphere of sanctimoniousness. The Church is too largely composed of people who keep the rules of Christianity strictly, but who look down their noses at others who are outside and are not as holy as the orthodox.

But I must come back to the main point. It seems to me quite clear that for the better running of the world the people who are trying to conform to God's will and are attempting to do good to their fellow-men, should act corporately and not merely individually. A combined and united force is much more effective than one made up of isolated units. So, it seems to me, the idea of a Church is essential. In the Church we should be inspired and exhorted to help forward the purpose of God. The outstanding feature of the Church's worship is that it should be quiet, so that one can think peacefully. There

should be regular worship, regular services, to which we go regularly. Otherwise the combined force of the human attempt to do good will not be effective. Besides, it is necessary I believe, for one's character to have certain rules and regulations in one's life.

There must be holidays from regular worship. Otherwise one becomes stale and mechanical. I believe that to have such holidays makes one all the keener and fresher for united effort when one comes back to church after an interval.

It seems to me absurd to suppose that everyone will like or need the same form of religion. Human minds and temperaments vary too much for that. Each man and woman must discover for himself what form of religion is most adapted to his requirements. This does not mean dis-unity. The unity is there if the purpose is the same. To try to take part in a worship whose form does not appeal to our spiritual senses seems to me quite undesirable and indeed impossible. There must be many forms, just as there must be many buildings. The form or organization is only an arrangement devised to meet human needs.

That is why I am not a Roman Catholic. I

distrust the idea that it is necessary to have a unity of form and organization, one Church in the sense the Roman Catholic claims to be essential. And this conception seems to me to make for intolerance. The Roman Catholic theory inevitably results in a refusal to admit that there may be equal value and truth in organizations and forms which are non-Roman Catholic.

The Quaker idea of worship appeals to me very much in theory. I like the idea of everyone sitting quietly together in a church until someone is inspired to speak. It would be ideal if all the congregation were artists and were capable of being inspired in such a way as to inspire others. But in practice, I imagine, many people who speak on these occasions, and who fancy that they are being moved by the Spirit, are really the victims of their own emotions. The Quaker scheme of worship seems to me to provide a terrible opportunity for the bore who likes to hear himself speak, and only talks rubbish.

Buddhism, and the eastern types of religion, seem to me rather depressing, and quite impracticable to-day for the western mind. The Theosophical theory I distrust on sight,

because it professes to be able to explain the mysteries of the universe so minutely and completely : our finite minds, at their present stage of development, could never have arrived at so thorough an explanation.

I believe that the Christian Scientists have discovered a very wonderful form of practising auto-suggestion. Their miraculous cures seem to me to be due merely to the triumph of mind over matter. They will their sub-conscious minds to believe that there is nothing substantial in their pains and misfortunes, and that drives the evil out. But I find myself quite unable to believe that there is no evil in the world except in our own imagination. Even if we have created evil by our wills, it has been created, and therefore exists.

I come finally to express my conviction that for sheer beauty and inspiration during these twenty centuries there is no form of religion to equal the Catholic. I dislike Roman Catholic intolerance, and I could never be as sure of my beliefs as they would wish me to be. I cannot accept the idea of certainty which follows the theory of an absolutely infallible Church. I am therefore an Anglo-Catholic. The Catholic form of worship is the same all

the world over, so that I can use Roman or Eastern or Anglo-Catholic churches, and be equally inspired by each. But as an Anglican I can remain tolerant, I can remain free to think for myself, and to develop my mind and life, with a tradition behind me, and yet without fetters. And that, I think, is what I need.

PAMELA FRANKAU

Pamela Frankau is the daughter of Gilbert Frankau, the novelist, and Dorothea Frankau. She was educated at the P.N.E.U. School at Burgess Hill, and for two years worked on the editorial staff of the Amalgamated Press. At nineteen she had published her first novel "Marriage of Harlequin." Since then six other books of hers have appeared.

II

PAMELA FRANKAU

I

WHERE religion is concerned, I appear, in common with many other people of my age, to be weak enough to stand on my own feet. I am not being bright about the problem. It is much easier for people who think to drop the whole question of religion overboard and leave it. Its requirements are so large. I am certain that there can be no half-measures about religion, that it must be the big thing in life, or nothing at all. And it is much easier to make it nothing at all. Then one can go straight ahead. One's reason argues that earthly existence is in itself sufficiently complex to keep an active brain fully occupied for twenty-five hours out of the twenty-four. The only trouble is that Christianity itself has a way of entering among the problems of the earthly existence; which is inevitable,

since it was created for man by One who was man for a while.

To stand on one's own feet is a fairly happy position. My intellect teaches me that happiness lies less in doing good to others than in a luxurious independence of thought—a small room of one's own with a notice on the door, saying, "No opinions, influences or interferences admitted." I have achieved this independence only occasionally. In direct opposition to my intellectual wish for it, my instincts are against achieving it permanently. The other name for independence might be selfishness—and it is only commonsense to admit that total selfishness takes every risk of seeing its own stock fall. I would not like to bank on my own small soul and fluctuating sense of values to keep me happy. But, if I lock the door of my room, what else have I?

The curse of our age, if there be a curse, is that we know too much too early. We see that life is a bad business, and while this indisputable fact does not worry us, it is inclined to make us careful and cynical. We walk through emotional adventures, holding something of ourselves in reserve, lifting an

elbow to ward off the crash before it comes. This attitude of defence is, after all, only a lack of faith. And we are told that faith is the centrifugal force of Christianity.

While we are ranging intellectually over Christian sources and statutes, we shall find the going fairly easy. We shall be able to say, "The Bible is composed of miraculously good literature. The story of Christianity makes romantic history. There is poetry in religion. There is beauty in the Higher Church services. And there is a definite theistic bias in all mankind. Let it remain vague and lovely, a spiritual longing behind the shadows of the mind—not to be touched or translated, only guessed at by some as evidence of immortality." And, having thus patronized, we can pass on to the stupid tranquillity of thoughtlessness.

But the intellect is an irregular force, and, when left to itself, after a declaration of this kind, it is inclined to dig for further information. And it sees at once that there is more in Christianity than a mere spiritual longing. Christianity's moral code is unassailable.

The qualities of kindness, truth, and discipline are the three major points of the moral

code. I have put kindness first. I am certain that people who are not kind are utterly worthless. The young, as a race, are unkind because they are so busy thinking about themselves that they have no time left to think about anybody else. They snub their parents, snarl at their contemporaries, and take a short cut across the susceptibilities of others in the rush for their own advantage. But they learn. Unkindness in youth is a blemish of growing. Unkindness in older people is the most damning sign that they have learned nothing of the world. It is as though they had walked through a town in revolution, where wounded bodies lay about the streets, where the strong smashed the weak and blood ran, and they had shut their eyes to it and said: "What has that to do with me?"

I shall never regret doing the most stupid action of kindness. I shall regret till I die the times when I have added to the general slaughter which is the world's cruelty—however strong and sensible the arguments in favour of the line I took.

The question of truth is a harder business altogether. To know the truth is a lesson which it will take one a lifetime to learn. To

tell the truth—here we, most of us, drop generalization and feel guilty. Lying is a silly, undignified habit—and any intelligent person will despise himself for telling a lie. He will hedge himself in with the argument that on occasion it is kinder to lie than to admit a truth which will hurt another person. Very coldly, Christianity smashes the argument with its incredible standard—“Never do a thing which will hurt another person. Then you will not need to lie lest he is hurt.” That is not very comforting to lazy people. It seems to present the first instance of where Christianity does not fit a modern existence. They will aver that Christianity is too simple for the complicated affair of everyday life—or alternatively that Christianity is complicated whereas life with all its muddles is essentially simple. What is wrong, say the lazy, is certainly wrong. What is right is so obviously and patently right that there is no need to drag in religion.

The wholesale words “wrong” and “right” are apt to endow an action with false and sentimental values. Fidelity in marriage is not “right” because the Bible sets an unreasonable moral standard—it is

“right” because the Bible law was based on the theories of kindness and commonsense. Self-discipline is not “right” because it is worth while to fight a battle with the flesh—it is a logical restriction of forces which, when over-indulged, may destroy the whole physical and mental machine. Thus far, the Christian code has every opposing argument knocked flat.

(A further and possibly irrelevant question, rising from the problem of discipline, is the question of justice. Justice held an important place in the Old Testament, but you will not find it anywhere in the New. There we are told to forgive. But in our time community-forgiveness would hardly lead to satisfactory results. The law exists for the benefit of the community. We kill a man who has committed murder. We imprison a man who has stolen money, because, for the good of the community, wrong must not go unpunished. So a gentleman in a wig, whose vices remain anonymous, has the right to tell his fellow-creature that he will be hanged by the neck until he is dead, and the right to add, by way of shifting the responsibility, “May God have mercy on your soul.” Should the gentleman in the wig commit a murder, he would be told

the same comfortable words by another gentleman in another wig. It is the law. The trouble is that it doesn't seem to be the Sermon on the Mount.

The New Testament preached forgiveness as man's best answer to wrong-doing, with the assumption that God alone had the right to punish. The law gives man the right to punish, with a postscript awarding to God the privilege of forgiveness.)

II

If the first part of this essay appears to play trivial variations on a majestic theme, I am sorry. I find it extraordinarily difficult to write what I think without appearing insincere, because my convictions are assorted, and when sorted they are contradictory. I do know quite well that to believe in the standards of kindness, truth and discipline, and to try to live by these standards is not the beginning and end of Christianity. The thing that sticks in the throat of young people to-day is the spiritual thing. It sticks in my throat.

The Bible stories were told to me when I was

a child. I said my prayers with a desperate concentration. I believed that I would be punished strategically for every one of my misdemeanours. I believed in heaven and hell. I catalogued my small circle of friends and relations in two teams, one for heaven and one for hell. I went on saying my prayers while I was at school, though they had begun already to mean only a telephone-service through which I shouted for anything I happened to want. The church-service, never very sympathetic to my senses, became alternately a winter nightmare of cold feet and continued droning, a summer horror of stuffy warmth and somebody falling on the floor in a faint.

I became enthusiastic when I was confirmed. For some years I was a regular communicant, and I concentrated hard all through the early morning service upon vaguely spiritual thoughts. Then I began to talk religion over, to argue it out, with a chilly reasonableness, until, little by little, I dropped the habit of prayers and Communion.

From a period of fairly voluble agnosticism, I have since settled into tolerance. I do not "believe" as Christians believe. Nor am I

quite sure that I do not "believe" *something*. But I cannot reconcile the ritual of Christianity with logic. It is a wonderful story. It is dignified, poetic, endlessly interesting and endlessly provocative of thought. And while I think it means no more to me, I am interested in my past reactions when a Jewess of my acquaintance remarked to me: "I read the New Testament again and again, because I do so much admire the beautiful character of Jesus Christ." I thought, "That is impertinence." I was offended and angry. And I couldn't tell you why.

The habit of going to an uninspired church service every Sunday morning, of dropping on one's knees twice a day to pray about one's own negligible problems—these are the aspects of Christianity which act as stumbling-blocks to the intellect. The imagination receives little or no stimulus from the Church of England prayer-book. The Roman Catholic ritual has won whole armies of converts for this reason. And the average bulldog arguments against the Church of Rome do not hold water. You will hear the colonel say at lunch-time, "Catholics don't have to think for themselves, they get a priest to think for

them." But he forgets that the Church of England, like every other Church, makes the same demand.

Faith in what? There is nothing simple here. They ask us to believe in something beyond commonsense, beyond science, beyond humanity, a reason for the whole colossal business of living, a God. They do not invite us to find the workings of a plan in the world's existence—they invite us to admit that there must be a plan whose workings we cannot see. They would tell us that the dead are happy in another country. They would teach us that the words of our ill-thought-out prayers are carried through the towering ether to the ears of an omnipotence who will understand and answer them. They want us to learn that the flesh is of no importance—and at the same time to beware of the flesh. They expect us not to fear the inscrutable agony of death that is waiting for us, because they tell us we shall struggle through a manhole to find Eternity. And this last is perhaps the hardest to believe, since for millions of years we know that men have died and been forgotten, nor for a second has any knowledge of a life after death broken the profound silence.

Enough, one would think, to keep the young fairly busy fighting their doubts. And even now that leaves out the Bible story, which Christians accept without question, and which we must likewise accept if we are to be called Christians. I say again, without intended irreverence, that I cannot accept it. To do so is to me a miracle of faith. Therefore, I must detach my religion entirely from my intelligence—or I must abandon the effort after Christianity.

And again one instinct contradicts the other. I would rather not abandon either thing. I would keep my intelligence and at the same time I would be convinced, I would have faith—call it what you will.

Here you may very reasonably ask me why? Certainly, I have admitted that I am in a pretty good muddle about everything. But if my head has chosen doubt for me, why do I not stick to doubt, and cease worrying because I cannot fit myself into Christianity? Who am I, anyhow, to imagine that it matters what I believe?

“Don’t think about it,” reason soothes me. “If there is a God, He is too far, too great to know of your existence. If there is no

God, then you are perfectly safe as you are."

But since it is my habit to see what I can do about inevitable things, and to let avoidable disasters come my way from plain curiosity, so do I wait on the edge of the insoluble problem, peering into its darkness. And it is very dark.

III

A person of imagination will not shrink from observing that the world is in a mess. A religious person will accept the mess as part of the plan he cannot see. His blind spot of faith is his ultimate security. He knows that his far, unimaginable God sits in another place, working everything out for the good of humanity, guiding the machine through appalling disasters and deaths of the individual, through the mass-murders of war and revolution, to an end which is good, logical and perfect, because it is the divine purpose.

The person of imagination, having no faith, can see in the growing chaos only the evidence that man is suicidal from birth, that the will

to death will at last prove stronger than the will to live—and so end the world.

If to the latter person there could be proved the existence of a doctrine of love, based on no spiritual belief, but only on common humanity, he might feel better. He would not, one might say, need Christianity at all. But will he find the power of love among this world's professional successes, party politics, wars, finance and class-distinction? His own principles may be faultless, his own life may keep the pace, but he will not, unless he is a fool, persuade himself that mankind as a whole follows his creed. He will be saddened and tormented by the state of affairs about him. So, you may remark, will the Christian. But he at least has an altar on which to place his sorrows.

So we have our person of imagination and worldly knowledge, convinced by his intellect that independence is the best armour for this life which can be nothing but a battle; certain that the small room of his own mind should be kept inviolate of all outside opinion; sure above everything else that to live in the world and love in the world is to be hurt. And his heart will deny the policy of his brain. He will be kind—and suffer for it. He will

love—and love will wreck him. He will fight somebody else's battle—and get his nose broken. And he would like to be able to think that he is living thus dangerously to a logical purpose.

His Holy War to-day is the fight between his faith and his intellect. He has the feeling of impertinence when he rejects Christianity. And still he cannot accept the whole of it. For him it is, literally, too much of a good thing.

His problem is my problem. The accepting of a moral code, an instinctive reverence for the Bible, the Church and the name of God—together with the gravest doubts of their significance, these are the ingredients of my attitude towards Christianity. Again, I am pulled up short by the size and majesty of the creed which I doubt. Since I began to write this article I have felt impertinent. Towards what?

The answer, to quote Herbert Spencer, is "The Unknowable." It should be possible to accept the unknowable in religion as in science. It is accepted unhesitatingly by all truly religious people—a mystery whose esoteric quality is its power. Why should one

want to know? And still the intellect hammers persistently after truth.

The wise accept their ignorance. I could do that. But I should accept ignorance as a merely comfortable stage of no-thought. I should push the problem to the back of my head, saying : " I don't know, and I never shall know, and here's an end of it." Faith would phrase the decision, " I don't know, and while I live I shall not know, but I believe." Therein lies the difference.

E. L. B. HAWKIN

E. L. B. Hawkin was educated at Westminster and Wye Agricultural College. His mother is the sister of the late General Louis Botha, Premier of South Africa. She lost two brothers in the Boer army in the South African war, and then married an English barrister. Louis Hawkin went off by himself to Canada in 1927 and worked on a farm. After many adventures he came back to London and is still working in the City.

they are quick to see that to commit themselves definitely to Atheism is going too far, and might land them on dangerous ground. They usually agree that the universe is governed in a mysterious and indefinable way by some Law or Principle, but are extremely vague and seldom have any well-defined opinions as to the nature of this Law or Principle. They do not like believing in a God because no one has ever proved His existence in the same conclusive way as, for instance, the roundness of the earth has been proved. And the modern generation, being pragmatic, are inclined to doubt and even frankly to disbelieve in anything that cannot be proved beyond question.

Now let us examine some of the major problems which are always closely allied to religion and try to discover how modern youth views them. Take the question of life after death. After much investigation I find the majority of young people either believe in complete extinction after departing this life, or else refuse to express any definite opinion—ending the discussion with a hopeless “How can anyone really *know*?” They are very impatient with the popular beliefs of the devout, *i.e.*, that the life after death is somehow more

pleasant than this one. They regard this as merely smug speculation, and quite often state the story of the Resurrection to be a symbolic and mythical legend. They feel that complete extinction is the safest assumption in the long run, and that they are less likely to be disappointed if they rely on this hypothesis.

Again, they have no patience with the religious people who assume that it is a good, pleasant, and desirable thing to prepare oneself for everlasting life. Many young people are emphatic that this one life is enough for them. Young men and women trying to live and keep up an appearance on 35s. a week are particularly clear about this.

I have met people who regard the Burial Service as a joke. They find it impossible to take the whole episode seriously, and there is nothing so destructive to a dignified ceremonial as cynical mirth.

(For some reason or other which I have not yet been able to fathom, a military burial does not fill young people with the feeling that they are watching a ludicrous performance. On the contrary, they are often deeply moved, often to very genuine depths of emotion, especially when a trumpeter plays the "Last

Post" in his best style over a corpse in a coffin bedraped with the National Colours. One of the better Guards' bands playing the "Dead March" will also greatly help to squash any feeling of ribaldry.)

There is a strong feeling among young people that a clergyman, or anyone officially connected with the Established Church, is of no use in times of trouble and stress. This does not apply in the case of young Roman Catholics, with whom I shall deal later; but young people consider that a parson is singularly unsuited to the giving of sound advice on financial, sexual, or spiritual matters. "What can *he* possibly know of life?" they say, and either think out their problems for themselves or discuss them with their personal friends. The Church has lost its grip and the confidence of the people who want practical help with their daily problems.

Let us examine for a moment the Church's attitude to marriage, divorce, and sexual matters generally. Young people, at some time or other, feel the need of guidance on these matters, but they would not think for a moment of even mentioning them to a clergyman. A young friend of mine who

regularly attends church informed me some time ago that he was troubled by a certain sexual problem, and I suggested that he consult his local padre. His contemptuous reply was, "I'd rather consult a street-walker." And indeed, this cynical answer is typical of the modern attitude, in that it regards matters relating to sex and marriage as entirely divorced and separate from the Church. Sex and sects don't mix, they say.

The enormous increase in the number of divorce cases speak for themselves. People no longer regard marriage with the same reverence as before. The bride goes to the altar feeling that the guests are only present for the purpose of drinking her champagne afterwards, and that the ceremonial with its vows has very little or nothing to do with the serious business of matrimony. In fact, I know young people who fail to see any point at all in monogamy (although the young women are fairly clear that there is a good deal to be said for it, despite all their jabbering about "free love." The flower of English womanhood is far too hard-headed and filled with enlightened self-interest to put her "modern" theories into practice:

they all get—or strive desperately hard to get—married respectably in the long run.)

But young men and women all stand on common ground in considering sexual matters as entirely and completely outside the scope of the Church, which they feel has a bigoted, old-fashioned, impractical, and narrow outlook on these vital subjects.

I have discussed these points with clergymen friends, who are often ready to admit that the Church has failed hopelessly in giving a lead to the youth of the country.

So far we have been dealing with young people who have been brought up under the wing of the English Church, but who have, for some reason or other, lost touch with it, or nearly so. Many readers will now be saying, "These are an extraordinary lot of young men and women, who surely cannot be representative of the fine, upstanding, virile youth of England to-day. They are all horrid young disillusioned cynics who have lost or never had any ideals."

On the face of it I admit it looks as if this criticism were justified. They are cynics because they need tangible proof of anything

they believe in. "But," say the critics, "they believe in nothing and laugh at everything." Yet when I ask these people, who apparently are always sneering and jeering, what they *do* believe in, I nearly always receive a considered and definite answer. They put a very high premium on the fundamental human emotions, such as love and kindness. Essentially practical people, they are fully aware that modern life cannot move smoothly without these two qualities, but they fail to see that religion increases either love or kindness. The Protestants have never and never will see eye to eye with Roman Catholics, and *vice versa*, and Mohammedans do not exactly jump with glee when they see a Hindu mob coming down the road.

Opposing religious bodies have abused, killed, and tortured one another ever since the world began, so some young people think that they can safely cut out religion on that score alone. And, whether one likes it or not, one is bound to agree that there is a lot in what they say.

Modern young people seem to dislike the idea of any religious prejudices, taboos, or speculative deities and fantastic rituals affecting

their life and judgment of men and affairs in any way.

From what I have written, the reader may think that modern youth is aggressive in its attitude towards the religions of other people. This is not true. As long as they are left alone to think for themselves they are very tolerant towards others, but any attempt on the part of religious zealots to proselytize or uplift them will be met by a stream of cynical eloquence. So much for the youthful agnostics, whose numbers are growing rapidly.

Now we come to the large number of young people who are definitely attached to some Church other than the Church of England.

We will begin with the Nonconformists, the majority of whom are Wesleyans and Baptists.

The younger followers of these two Churches have almost everything in common. They are very definite in their views. Like their elders, they are Right, Moral, Prohibitionists (at least, in theory), anti-birth control, anti-vivisectionists, anti-Sunday cinemas, anti-theatrical (unless it be educational.) One and all, they loathe Romanism with exceptional frenzy. The smell of incense terrifies them

as much as the smell of alcohol nauseates them. Both sects found many of their doctrines on the teachings of St. Paul. One is quite unable to argue with them, and, in the main, they are narrow, bigoted, and filled with a sense of their own uprightness. The Pharisees of old were tolerant in comparison. They deliver long perorations on drink—all of which they sum up in one word—"alcohol"—without a decent drink ever having crossed their lips. The average suburban typist knows more about sex at sixteen than a Nonconformist minister of the Gospel does at sixty. In the United States, the young Nonconformists are even more aggressive and intolerant than they are here. There, the young people, especially the men, go in for "muscular Christianity." The place simply abounds with tough, hearty clerics who play American football and run Y.M.C.A.s. The latest figures, however, show that their ranks are diminishing annually, and that the new scepticism is penetrating their ranks. Figures also show a decrease in Nonconformist church-members in this country, and the part of the church which shows the greatest decrease is the Sunday School, *i.e.*, the younger crowd. This indicates that

even in this intellectual morass, the younger generation are questioning their religious instructors, and find them wanting.

There is a growing disinclination to accept blindly the beliefs of parents. I know personally a young Wesleyan who goes to church "to please his family." I questioned him about this, and suggested that his family would not be pleased unless they thought he was a genuine supporter of their Church. "No, I simply must go," he replied; "it would hurt their feelings terribly if I stayed away." This case must be typical of many. The day when parents will appreciate intellectual and spiritual honesty in their children is apparently still far-distant.

The Nonconformists are united and emphatic on all the major problems of life. The young people have definite convictions and usually try, at any rate, to have the courage of them. There is no wobbling on questions of God, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, Marriage, Divorce, and Sex. One and all are tremendously concerned about the spiritual well-being of other people, including hordes and hordes of black and yellow men and women in barbaric distant lands, whom

they classify together in two words, "The Heathen."

Although I have found young and enthusiastic members of these Churches, I have also met youthful members who are extremely unhappy under its rather dismal wing. They feel they are missing a lot of the good things in life—good literature ; good wine and food ; laughter, drama, music and gaiety. They feel cramped by their religion and are often pathetic and wistful.

Now let us look at the Roman Catholic youth of to-day. To my mind, they are the same as they always have been. Their attitude towards their Church changes less than that of any other religious group—if it changes at all, which I doubt. They are mostly punctilious in their observations of the prescribed ritual, and in most cases attend Church services as regularly as possible. Their attitude to the problems of marriage, divorce and sex are all quite clear cut, dried and official ; they are never assailed by furtive doubts.

In times of trouble they consult their priests freely and with confidence, and treat them like human beings instead of clergymen. They all seem to obtain some real and genuine

spiritual benefit from their Church. In this country, I find that the young people who throw in their lot with the Roman Catholics are of an intellectual turn of mind—young authors, musicians and painters, who turn to it after a considerable period of cynical agnosticism. Perhaps they feel that here, anyway, is a cut and dried religion where the thinking is done for them, which has a broad-minded and tolerant outlook on all the human weaknesses, and which need not affect their mode of life too much, but which has a real solid foundation and a steadying influence. They are exceedingly proud of their Church with all its historical associations, and they seem to derive a large amount of spiritual comfort from it. In the main, they are not aggressive towards the beliefs of others, and are usually a cheery, easy-going crowd who never try any “uplift” stunts so beloved by the Nonconformists.

There is another religion which is growing rapidly and has a considerable hold on many of my own friends to-day, and that is Christian Science. This religion aims at being essentially practical so that it will, if practised in the correct manner, cure our ills and make us successful citizens with sound bank-balances.

Simplicity is the keynote of all its services and there is almost a complete absence of ritual. The chief doctrine is that Mind is supreme over Matter and that if you put your thinking straight, life will be much simplified. They are extremely tolerant towards most religions, but eye the Roman Catholics with a certain amount of disapproval. Essentially a Protestant organization, it appeals chiefly to Saxon Nordics, and as yet has made little headway in the Latin or Mediterranean countries.

There is no disease or disability either physical or surgical that they do not claim to have successfully cured at some time or other. These young devotees genuinely believe in their newly-found faith and are really trying to put it into practice. The numbers of this Church are comparatively small in this country, but show an increase every year. In the United States it is growing with rapidity especially on the West Coast, while Southern California is a veritable hotbed of Branch Churches and Societies.

Members of this Church are, for Protestants, strangely devoid of any desire to convert other people to their way of thinking. "It is here,"

they say, "for those who want it ; let them come and get it for themselves."

The younger members believe that brightness and optimism should play important rôles in religion and daily life : they have no use for saintly expressions and gloomy faces, and, when in church, they look like human beings.

In spite of this note of optimism, I am forced to the conclusion that organized religion is rapidly losing its hold on the youth of to-day. The modern young man or woman sums up the question in the following manner.

There have been religions ever since the world began—hundreds and thousands of different gods, creeds, beliefs and rituals. All did their utmost to propitiate and appease their particular God or Goddess. They brought them gifts—no sacrifice was considered too great. Whole races have been wiped out in religious warfare. In Africa, India, and China, the white man has always known better than to interfere with the religions of the natives, for to the superstitious and uneducated, religion is a far more important and vital thing than it is to the modern educated Westerner, and to butt in means trouble.

In view of all this strife and chaos which has been caused in the past, either directly or indirectly by religion, is there any good reason why I should throw in my lot with any particular group? Why should Christianity be more permanent than any of the other religions long since dead?

Modern youth does not feel inclined to side with any formalized religion, but prefers to work out its own salvation and paddle its own spiritual canoe. The youth of to-day inclines to think that religion has cheapened itself by the continual wrangling, bickering, and fighting over trivialities, although, as I have shown earlier, there is still a large minority of young people keen and enthusiastic about their Church.

But modern youth in the main simply refuses to accept any given statement, doctrine, creed, or sect without first examining it under a mental microscope. { It is Reason that dominates life nowadays rather than Belief. Belief, say the young, is the comforter of fools. If anyone can put a logical argument before me why I should become religious, I am quite open to give it a hearing, but for the moment I see no reason.

The Church will have to do some very hard thinking if it is to win back the hard-boiled modern youth of to-day. Like the Chicago gangster who is "taken for a ride," modern youth "knows too much," and will have to be convinced that it is not making a fool of itself if it is to desert its golf course on Sunday mornings.

Laughter and Reason are beating religion, and it is therefore up to religion to rise and smite these its two most deadly enemies. Otherwise the rot will continue and the godless doctrines of Soviet Russia will soon succeed in completely wrecking our spiritual machinery.

The main question, therefore, which now confronts us is this: What is the real reason for the decline of religion to-day? I think the answer is very simple—that it has ceased to be practical. I feel convinced that the Founder of the Christian Church intended the healing of sickness and disease, both physical and mental, to be a very important factor in the life of the Church. This power to heal has apparently been lost, although the Christian Science Church makes a great point of it, and puts it into practice with startling success.

The Churches must all apply themselves to this problem. After all, Jesus never represented Himself as holding the monopoly of the power to heal. "The works that I do shall ye do also" is a phrase that speaks for itself. Therefore, if the Churches desire to be refilled they must hold out some practical inducement on these lines.

One of the many reasons which induced me, personally, to throw over religion was that I was always hearing about the "Brotherhood of Man." Surely there is less brotherhood among men to-day than ever before, in spite of all the earnest endeavours of the ladies and gentlemen at Geneva? The countries of Europe are still armed to the teeth, which are perpetually chattering with the fear of one another. Does a German feel brotherly towards a Frenchman? Or an Austrian towards an Italian? Or a Mississippian towards a Negro? Ask them!

It is my honest conviction that no religion of any kind will ever solve these fundamental problems of racial antagonism, and that cheap facilities for travelling so that people can easily mix with each other is the only thing that will.

It has always seemed to me that the attitude

of the Churches in time of war is extremely inconsistent in regard to this question of brotherhood. When a war is started the Churches cease talking about brotherhood and begin to preach the doctrine that "God is on our side." The religious leaders of every country engaged in the late war felt that it was up to them to convince the soldiers that the Government which led them into wholesale slaughter was divinely inspired, and conversely, that the fiendish activities of the enemy had the personal support of the devil. In war time the Christian God of Love is quickly transformed into the fiery Jewish Jehovah of the Old Testament.

The only sect in the Western World, so far as I know, who completely refute this attitude is the Quakers, with whom non-violence is a fundamental doctrine. It seems to me that this is the only doctrine consistent with genuine Christian principles, and that the Quakers are the only group who have the courage of their convictions. The Church's attitude to war is an important problem, and should be clearly defined. Obviously the Christian Church should be prepared to back their Founder's attitude of non-violence, or to throw it over

openly and frankly. Any inconsistency is damaging and hypocritical.

What always annoys me is that the Churches attempt to reconcile fighting for one's country with Christian principles. Surely it would be more honest to admit candidly that the problem is too great for them to handle.

If they were really consistent they would say, on the outbreak of a war: "Members of the Church must, of course, support the Government and enlist at once; but don't let them imagine for a moment that their noble sacrifice has anything to do with Christianity. They are doing the only possible thing in difficult circumstances."

What it really boils down to is that men fight because they love and are willing to protect their families and their country more than their religious principles, and willingly sacrifice the latter for the former.

It seems to me that the Church of England has more ground to recover than the other Churches in this country, because it falls between two stools. Its appeal to the emotions is not strong enough for those who desire impressive ritual, and it does not possess sufficient driving power to attract those

who are drawn into the Nonconformist ranks.

As I felt compelled to throw over my allegiance to organized religion some years ago readers may care to know what I have substituted. I have tried to form a personal philosophy which carries me along very well, based on the following lines :

I believe in moderation and a sense of balance in all things.

I believe that it pays to be honest, though this depends, to some extent, on the country you are in. Honesty pays better in England than in a mining camp in Alaska.

I believe that a sense of humour is vitally important to a happy life.

I believe in never worrying until it happens, and then it is too late to worry.

If I worship any God, it can be best expressed in one word—"Genuineness." I have a horror of anything that does not ring true. This partly explains my dislike and mistrust of anything metaphysical. That hard-hitting American critic, Mr. H. L. Mencken, defines metaphysics as "an attempt to explain the unknown in terms of the not worth knowing." So it has always seemed to me.

I think that the clergy of the future will be trained consultants who have a specialized knowledge of mind psychology, fitted to render sound advice on all difficult modern daily problems. Already the Christian Scientists have their authorized "practitioners" who are often very helpful to their clients.

Many of my young friends are enthusiastic about them, and I think that other Churches would do well to study their methods with a view to development on similar lines.

Modern youth will soon go back to the Churches if they really feel they are going to obtain practical results. Until then Sunday mornings will continue to be the most crowded time at the Golf Clubs.

SUSAN LOWNDES

Susan Priestley Lowndes is the youngest child of Mr. F. S. A. Lowndes, of 'The Times,' and Mrs. Belloc Lowndes, the novelist. Her maternal uncle is Mr. Hilaire Belloc and she is descended from Dr. Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, whose name she bears. She was educated at St. Mary's Convent, Ascot. Susan Lowndes' first short story was published while she was still at school. So far, it is also her last short story. But she has since contributed to various magazines.

IV

SUSAN LOWNDES

IT does not often occur to the born Catholic to write down what he thinks of God, for he feels, and I think justifiably, that what God thinks of him is more important, and one of the claims of the Catholic Church is that she can teach her children what God does think of His creation.

Some of the other contributors to this book will, no doubt, give us the benefit of their individual discoveries about religion. I am not such a pioneer. I can only add my own witness to the witness of countless millions who have found and still find in the Catholic Faith a completely satisfying answer to the eternal questionings of humanity.

I am a Catholic because I had the good fortune to be born into the Church, and the good sense to remain in it; and I remain a Catholic because I prefer to have a philosophy

of life which is based on reason, and not one that is based on sentiment or vague humanitarian aspirations.

I accept the idea of a Purpose in the Universe. God is objective, not subjective. The changing fashions in belief do not affect Truth. Absolute Truth is ever the same. For instance, Australia is not affected by our ideas of it. A madman might say that Australia did not exist, because he had never been there.

The world must have had a first cause and the world itself is sufficient evidence of a creative mind. There is a unity and a pattern and an interaction in the whole of nature, that only gets warped and distorted when man interferes.

God being the Creator, He must be all powerful, all knowing and infinitely wise and good. If we put limits to His power and goodness, that pre-supposes the existence of another power that has imposed such limits. Such an infinite God could not act fortuitously. There must have been a purpose in the creation of man, in the vast design of the Universe. Each one of us has a part to play in that design. It depends on each individual if they fulfil that part to the uttermost and help others to

fulfil their parts also. Every choice in our lives has constant repercussions on those about us. We cannot act as isolated individuals ; the whole human race is closely knit together.

If we were going to live on this earth for ever, or if there were no survival after death, then we could afford to disregard the Divine Purpose. But as we shall all die, and as we shall survive after death, then our business is to discover what this Divine Purpose is. Some say it is discoverable by man's unaided effort, but how few of the people who say this ever make that effort ? They put it off and find themselves on their deathbed no nearer to knowing why they have lived or why they are dying. If people do concern themselves with the Divine Purpose they are only too apt to be led astray by sentiment, and to cease to be governed by reason. How many of the freak religions of the past and of the present day have been founded on a sentimental conception of life as it is not lived ? Human nature being what it is, fallible and easily influenced, we need to be told unmistakably as much as we can comprehend with our finite intelligence of what God's purpose is. That inner voice of conscience is not sufficient ; we need

a direct message from God—a Divine Revelation.

I believe that we can only know this Divine Revelation and discover what the Purpose of the Universe is, by belief in Christ and by the practice of His teaching. But to-day so many people who say that they are Christians do not believe that Jesus Christ was God made man. Thousands who profess and call themselves Christians seem to be satisfied with whatever appeals to them personally in the moral teaching of Christ in the New Testament. Influenced, no doubt, by current notions of science and philosophy, they try to pass over the fundamental dogmas of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, on which the validity of Christ's teaching depends, and for which the historical evidence is at least as good as the historical evidence for most of the great facts of the past history of the world ; and they concentrate on vague ideals of the Brotherhood of Man and the like. Much popular Christianity is not, to my thinking, Christianity at all, for it preaches Christ merely as a great ethical teacher, and even so adopts only selected portions of His teaching. It seems to be thought that the Christian Religion must be

made as easy as possible for modern men and women ; it must be whittled down to avoid offending their sense of personal freedom and their individual pride. And yet there are few souls who have not to pass through the Valley of Humiliation before they attain the peace and certainty of a firm faith.

On the other hand there is much in popular Christianity which is not at all vague. The Salvation Army, we all know, preaches with all its strength the doctrine of the redemption of the world by the sacrifice once made upon the cross. But it stops there ; it does not go on to insist on those sacramental graces which can alone make the sacrifice effectual to the individual soul.

The sacramental teaching of the Catholic Church is based on the plain words of the New Testament, and is confirmed by tradition handed down from Apostolic times. May I not claim, too, that it is confirmed by the spiritual experience of countless myriads of Christians of every kind and race, from the fugitives in the catacombs to the faithful living at this moment, who have all found in it light and peace, a sure foretaste of heaven ?

I believe that Jesus Christ was true God and true Man. He claimed in a unique way to give this Revelation of the Divine Purpose :

“ All things are delivered unto me of my Father : and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” (Matthew, xi, 27.)

He was fully recognized by His followers as making this claim :

“ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts, iv, 10, 11, 12.)

Jesus Christ had to show that He was justified in making this tremendous claim of being the sole revealer of the Divinity. He did justify Himself by the unique quality of His life and doctrine, by the many miracles that He worked that cannot be explained in human or scientific terms, and finally by His raising Himself from the dead.

History sustains Christ's claim. The Roman Empire was profoundly influenced by the coming of Christianity. Persecution has never triumphed over it. It continues through the centuries under conditions which would be the death of any religion which was not of divine origin.

The Mar Thoma Syrians in Malabar were undoubtedly converted to Christianity in the fourth century. They themselves claim that their forefathers were evangelized by St. Thomas the Apostle. Be that as it may, they have continued with their own rites up to the present day. Through sixteen centuries of persecution, difficulties and often isolation, that part of South-West India has remained Christian. What other of the great religions of the world could show the same powers of survival? And, most surprising of all, Christianity has triumphed over the sometime wickedness, worldliness and apathy of its own leaders.

If, then, Jesus Christ had Divine Authority to teach, how are we to know what He said and what He meant? Again conscience cannot tell us for certain. We have all experienced the fact that conscientious persons differ

profoundly over their theories of life and behaviour. A collection of consciences is of still less use ; “ . . . in the several parts of nature there is an infinite variety,” as Burke says with truth.

Some people say that if you believe all that the Bible teaches you cannot be wrong. The Bible cannot be wrong because it is inspired by God, but man’s interpretation of it may be false. Think of the great number of Christians who all profess to teach the truth according to the Bible, and who yet disagree upon the most fundamental points.

Turn to the Church of England prayer-book and you will see that in the ordination of priests what is called the Power of the Keys, that is the remission and retention of sins, is conferred by the bishop ; and yet many Anglicans disagree as to whether their clergy do possess this power or not.

So, too, theoretically the Church of England teaches that baptism is essential to salvation ; but how many Anglicans really believe that the unbaptized will not enjoy the Beatific Vision in the next world ? Some Nonconformist sects also either reject baptism, or regard it as not essential.

I am amazed that there are still people so blind as to say that the Bible alone can tell us all that we need for the conduct of our lives. Being a written book, the Bible can be interpreted in different ways. How, even, do we know what is the New Testament? The New Testament never said or implied that we were to learn about Christ from a book, nor did the Apostles ever refer, as far as we know, to the New Testament as such.

The Church had been organized, as we can see from the Pauline Epistles, before the canon of the scriptures was settled, and indeed it was the mind of the Church which settled it, choosing what should be preserved from a great mass of documents of varying authenticity.

Probably some of my fellow contributors to this book do not believe in the need of an organized religion. They will no doubt have clearly explained why they prefer to do without it.

The word religion means a bond or tie, and yet so many people in these days who consider themselves religious seem to be terrified of the bond of dogma which is the necessary foundation of religion.

I believe in the need of an institutional

religion, because if we want to know what Christ said and what He meant, we need a teacher contemporary with each generation who speaks with a superhuman Authority. The only body now existing which claims to have this Authority—because it claims to have been instituted by Christ, to have continued ever since, and to be safeguarded by Christ from teaching falsehood—is the One, Holy, Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church. But how can we know if that terrific claim is justifiable?

We can find out on the evidence at our disposal, which consists of the New Testament and Tradition, whether Christ did found an authoritative, teaching Church. If He did, that Church must be somewhere now, for if it had vanished His work and His claims would be discredited.

The New Testament tells us that Jesus Christ collected around Him a number of followers. Some of these were sent out to represent Him directly, and He guaranteed that their doctrine and rulings would be His, even as His were God's.

“He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.” (Luke, x, 16.)

Christ gave a head to the Apostles when he said to Peter :

“ And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew, xvi, 18, 19.)

This teaching and governing body with a head, was to be a permanent institution.

“ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew, xxviii, 18, 19, 20.)

The constant tradition of the majority of Christians has always been that Christ did found a Church to continue teaching, after His ascension into Heaven. I believe, therefore, that Jesus Christ created a certain, permanent, and universal society that cannot teach false doctrine and that can and does bear witness to the Truth that makes us free.

All religions have been founded by historical figures. The Church of England by law established owes everything to Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth. Even those members of the Church of England who think least of the Reformation, say that the modern Anglican Church is a *branch* of the Catholic Church, not that it is the Catholic Church itself. The Lutherans were founded by Martin Luther, the Salvation Army by General Booth, the Christian Scientists by Mrs. Eddy, the Mahomedans by Mahomed, and many more names could be added. But the Catholic Church is the only religion that goes back historically to Christ and to the New Testament.

Apart from the fact that I believe the Catholic Church to be the divinely appointed religion for everyone, my sense and my observation both tell me that there is a deep need in human nature for a definite background to life. Without a frame, humanity is apt to spread itself and squander all its powers; but with a frame, life can be lived to its fullest extent. A river has to be dammed to produce its maximum power, so human nature has to have a set background or foundation of belief to fulfil itself to the uttermost. And as the

essentials of human nature do not change, we shall always need the Divine Revelation.

The contrast between Catholics and non-Catholics seems to me to be primarily the contrast between people who think and people who feel. The Catholic believes because the proofs of the Catholic religion seem to him valid and incontestable, and because he has received the gift of faith. Human nature is an incalculable thing ; our reason may be satisfied ; and yet it is still possible not to believe. Having believed because he has thought, the Catholic then realizes that God is a personal God, that the Sacramental System is designed to bring Christ into our lives and into our hearts, that the love of God is not a vague idea, and that Christianity is a life and not only a system.

On the other hand, the typical modern man or woman often dismisses the fundamental beliefs in God and in Christ without inquiring as to why these beliefs have persevered for so long, often under such unfavourable conditions. He does not trouble to satisfy himself whether the classic proofs of the existence of God are true or false—whether the evidence for the Resurrection is worth considering or

not. He does not even trouble to find out what kind of religion shows the most vitality. Which churches are full on Sunday morning? Are they the churches which preach a dogmatic creed, or are they those that extend a welcome to all forms of non-belief? Which is the religion by which the vast majority of Christians live and die?

As a Catholic I am intolerant, not because I regard myself as any better than anyone else, but because I believe that the Catholic Church is the sole mouthpiece of God. People no doubt do have personal revelations from God, but no other Church has that supreme consciousness of infallibility; and her children, of whom I am thankful to be one, share in that reassuring knowledge of security of belief, however far short they fall of the ideal of holiness that the Catholic Church holds out to all.

GILES PLAYFAIR

Giles Playfair is the eldest son of Sir Nigel and Lady Playfair. He was educated at Harrow, and is at the present moment an undergraduate of Merton College, Oxford. Although he intends to make the Bar his profession, he has already shown that he inherits his father's capacities. He played Sir Giles Overreach in 'A New Way to Pay Old Debts' for the Merton Floats, and the name part in the O.U.D.S. production of 'Hassan.' He is co-editor of 'The Cherwell.' A one-act play of his was produced by the Arts Theatre Club in London two years ago.

V

GILES PLAYFAIR

THE subject upon which the contributors to this book are asked to write is Youth and Religion, and I propose to attempt to answer three distinct questions: "Do I believe there is a purpose in the Universe?" ; "Do I accept the Christian Claim?" ; "Do I believe in the continued need for an institutional Church?" I shall endeavour to treat these questions separately and to answer them in turn, for I do not think the connexion between them is an obvious one. Indeed, I am doubtful if there is any connexion between them at all.

But let me say something first of the general attitude of youth towards religion, or rather towards Christianity. I am afraid we cannot call this an age of Youth. The opinions of youth are to-day only sought as freak opinions. They are read for diversion, and then set

aside, possibly in a spirit of distaste, possibly of anger. Anything we may write now is really ahead of its time. Its only interest is one of anticipation, or, if you like, of past history. For what we are thinking now is what the accepted world will be thinking in thirty years time. The beliefs and convictions of man are fixed and certain at the age of twenty-five, and they remain fixed and certain until he dies. That is one of the tragedies of human existence. The last Labour Government was a Government by the Youth movement of 1890.

The post-war generation has just about reached its years of discretion. It is rather ridiculous to continue blaming the Great War for all its misfortunes and all its difficulties. It is time to admit that the Great War was the beautiful excuse for each and every sin, and it is an excuse which is rather outworn and very shabby.

But the Great War did one thing for our generation. It determined our attitude towards religion and the Church.

Before the war, during the era of Victorian and Post-Victorian complacency, the law of inheritance was as applicable in religion as

it was in any other branch of life. Children as a general rule took their faith from their fathers. But this generation has not been able to follow the example of the last. We were not conscious, when the force of a sham, or, at any rate, an ill-founded patriotism destroyed all subtler senses in the country.

For four years Christianity in England (and by that I mean church-recognized Christianity) was virtually wiped out. Politicians, clergymen, and even sociologists, put all their beliefs behind them, and recognized a single and a common issue. They had to kill or be killed; they had to defeat the enemy or the enemy would defeat them. It was a question of life or of death. There was no time for the worship of the Christian ideal of peace. There was time only for fervid and primitive prayers that the foe might be destroyed. The religious conscientious objectors were the only true Christians left in the country. The rest honestly believed that if the great battle were won it would mean the beginning of an era of new life, new freedom, new happiness. They did not believe with Siegfried Sassoon that the war was nothing but a fight for existence. The Church blessed the army with

the same zeal, and for the same reasons, as God was supposed to have blessed the Jews of old.

And when it was over, what then? The remnant of the army came home to find prices higher and no employment. The mass of humanity soon recognized the Great War as a Great Evil. Before many years had passed Mr. Lloyd George, the national hero, then and now our greatest living statesman, was relegated to the political rubbish heap. Those, who had prayed for victory, cast aside the man who had won it for them. It was not ingratitude, it was inevitability. And the Church (as representing Christianity), which should have acted as a greater deterrent from war than any league of nations, had failed, and failed without a struggle.

Those who returned from the front had been violently deprived of all the convictions which the last century had bequeathed them. We, of the new generation, looking at these things impartially, have had to find our purpose and our beliefs in life for ourselves. If we have succeeded in finding them, they are our own; they are individualistic; they are new; they are signs of what the world may soon be.

The wild and purposeless drift of the last twelve years, the hopeless slogan: "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow ye die and know not what shall come after" has inevitably given way to a new spirit of inquiry which our own generation has initiated: "Is there a purpose in anything?"

We have noticed, of late, an unprecedented demand for books dealing simply and comprehensively with astronomy. Sir James Jeans has captured the imagination of the reading public. His method is straightforward; he has comforted the harassed human being by telling him how insignificant he really is. He has shown the earth to be an infinitesimal speck, as minute in space as it is brief in time. He has pointed out how unlikely it is that there are any other rational beings in the universe besides man. And to add to our confusion Professor Eddington has attempted to prove that the vast universe is itself disintegrating, and will, in its turn, share the fate of man in annihilation.

It is impossible for an unscientific person like myself to contemplate such facts with equanimity. They leave me in a state of

mental intoxication. I cannot reason with their truth. The question "Is there a purpose in the Universe?" seems no longer to admit of a doubt. Apart from ultimate annihilation there can be no such purpose.

But life itself calls for a more sober examination of the scientific case. To believe in a purposeless life is to believe in a permanent death, even while we think we live. Science can tell us to some extent how things happen. It can never tell us why things happen. It makes no such attempt. We may face the scientific case as it stands. We may grant that mankind has but a short time to live on the earth, that the Universe itself will soon have disintegrated, and that everything (as the human conscience is capable of realising it) will have vanished. Yet the admission need not alarm us. If we believe in an after life (and such belief is subject to the dictates of our own reason and of nothing else) the fact that the world, as we know it, and the Universe, as we are trying to comprehend it, must also pass away, should not affect our belief to the slightest degree. Because life ends in death, does life hold no purpose while it lasts? Lamartine put it in three lines :

*“ Mais vous ne pouvez, O Nature,
Effacer une creature.
Je meurs ; qu'importe ? J'ai vecu ! ”*

The ways of God are inscrutable. . . .

Is the presence of unhappiness in the world a proof that God does not exist ? For this is parallel to arguing that the Universe is purposeless, because one day it must be destroyed. It is like a man, who, standing on the pavement of a fog-veiled street, insists that there is no traffic passing in front of him for the reason that he cannot see it. If he acts on that assumption he does so at the risk of his life. In the same way the man who acts on the assumption that there is no purpose in the Universe does so at the risk of his happiness.

To believe that there is a purpose in the Universe is to believe in a divinity of some sort. It is the basis of every religion, be it Christianity, Buddhism, or even Paganism. It is a belief in the value of life. If the people of the world ceased to hold such belief, the world would soon drift into a state of anarchy. But such a belief does not commit a man to acceptance of any part of the Christian creed. A man can believe in a purpose in the

Universe without believing in Almighty God.

I have answered the first question to the best of my ability. Do I believe there is a purpose in the Universe? Yes.

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When I think of Christianity I do not connect it with the Church of England or any other Church. I wish to look at it impartially and almost historically. I know it only as revealed in certain teachings of Jesus Christ, which were recorded by His disciples. Christianity ; and, looked at from this point of view, it is primarily a way of living. Christ demanded of His followers that they should live as He lived. And that seems to me to be precisely what Christianity means—to live like Christ lived. And if I am right in thinking so, I am not a Christian : and what is more I do not know anyone who is.

Let us examine the way of life that Jesus preached and try to separate it from the story of Christ—which is the most dramatic in history—and the character of Christ, which is the most fearless.

This way of life took no account of the physical world as we understand it. It existed

in terms of the spirit, renouncing and scorning all worldly power, wealth and fame. Jesus Himself was unique among men for the subordination of His body to His will and all that the body came to connote in His philosophy. Flesh, indeed, was identified with evil and the spirit with good, so that the soul's departure from the body was regarded by Christians as man's ultimate triumph. The true Christian ideal is personified in the early Christian martyrs who went cheerfully to their death at the stake or in the arena for the greater glorification of the spirit.

The Christian way of life, then, had its essence in asceticism. It was a way of life which brooked no half measures. It reached an extreme, and for that reason it induced admiration and a childlike happiness in those who followed and sacrificed themselves for it.

Moreover, the Christian belief is, above all, a comfort to the down-trodden. That is why it has always been the religion of slaves. It enables the humblest among them to look on the favourite of Mammon as he looks on his fellows. The hierarchy of the world means nothing to him. He does not live in the

world, he lives in the spirit, which is without connexion with the world. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. . . ."

The whole life of Jesus Christ shows its essential strength by a complete refutation of compromise. His followers knew that they must accept all His teachings or none of them. Give up everything and follow Me, the basis of Christianity is to be found in that one thought.

It is possible to hate and it is possible to love the Christian way of life, but it is impossible not to admire it. It must be admired for all the qualities that make for true greatness. Nothing like it had ever been known before, and nothing like it has ever been known since. That is why the shadow of its influence still hovers round the world. Yet I cannot believe in it as having ever been more than a way of life, which, if followed without reserve, gave pride to all those who were humble, and rest to all those who were tired.

I can explain better what I mean if I ask you to look with me, for a moment, at the antithesis of the Christian Ideal. Just as the potency of the life of Jesus and the early Christians lay in its unadulterated refutation of

all that the world holds dear, so the potency of the life of Napoleon lay in its unadulterated acceptance of it. Napoleon was Nietzsche's *Uebermensch*, renouncing all pity, morality and gentleness. His way of life was as uncompromising in its devotion to the world as Jesus Christ's was to the spirit. He personified material power as Jesus personified spiritual power. He has been well named Antichrist.

There are, it seems to me, two essentials, in the characters of Jesus and Napoleon, that are identical. I mean a purity of ambition and an uncompromising attitude towards life. And it is these two essentials that make for greatness. For we call Napoleon a great man as we call Jesus a great man. And though in my heart I agree with public opinion that Jesus Christ's way of life was the good way of life, yet I know that it would be as difficult for the average man to follow Napoleon as to follow Christ.

I have tried to explain what Christianity means to me. I repeat that I think of it primarily as a way of life, that must be embraced without reserve or neglected without thought. It has its essence in lack of compromise. It cannot welcome half-hearted adherents.

It is for these reasons that I have wished to draw so clear a distinction between Christianity and the Church. For the force of Christianity does not appear to have increased with the years but rather to have diminished. It has been found incompatible with modern civilization. For the world soon forgot the maxim that we cannot serve both God and Mammon.

The Church has tried to keep the ideals of Christianity before the world. But in so doing it at first misinterpreted them, and later forgot them. It has mistaken a way of life for certain rules of life. The Church purports to answer all the problems that confront a modern man or woman by the mere application of dogma. But no such answers can be found in the original Christian doctrine. Christ never attempted to solve isolated difficulties in another man's life. And none of the problems of twentieth century existence will be found in the bible. Christ said "Give up everything and follow Me"; in effect He said no more and no less.

In other words Churchianity (as I have heard it described) is based on a compromise between God and Mammon. The Church has

evolved a comfortable method whereby man may call himself a Christian and give up very little in return. He may keep his worldly possessions, he may enjoy them, but he must devote a fractional part of his time to worship. The Church confers a positive right in return for a negative duty. Christianity, it seems, was too stern a creed for mere mortals to obey, when the direct influence of its Founder had ceased to be felt.

In discussing Christianity, therefore, I would dismiss a discussion of the Church as having served only to perpetuate a compromise. I would say that Christianity in its origin was the greatest power for good that the world had yet known: but as the years passed by and the influence of Jesus diminished, it became rather an anachronism. I would say that at its inception Christianity rendered a magnificent service to humanity. But with the birth of modern civilization it necessarily lost its force, because the two were incompatible. It is time that a new power for good should rise up among us, and I am one who believes that the dawn of that new power will soon be breaking.

I come, then, to the question of the continued need for an institutional Church. I need waste no time discussing the break with Rome and the consequent religious persecution, for such remarks would only serve to strengthen the arguments I have tried to maintain in order to emphasise the divergence between Christ's teachings and the teachings of the Church. I would rather lay stress on the word institution and assume that the institutional Church has always been guided by the same faith. For I can find no place for discussing ecclesiastical differences in the limited scope of my case.

It does not follow that because I think the Church has failed to perpetuate the Christian ideal in its essential purity of outlook, that I also consider it to have failed as an influence for good. Such a statement would be as rash as it would be foolish and fallacious. Such a statement would mean complete neglect of the many fine characters and lofty ideals which it has typified. Such a statement would mean neglect also of the millions of good people who have worked for the Church and who have found peace and happiness in their devotion to it. In effect, it is needless to

elaborate the early influence of the Church. But it would be idle to pretend that, of late, this influence had not been gradually diminishing. There was a time when the Church attracted the finest brains in the country and when church worship was well-nigh universal. But nowadays the unfortunate fact stares us in the face that church worship has become pre-eminently associated with a self satisfied section of the middle classes. They look on the parish church as something to be maintained in very much the same light as they look on the public library. Modern Christianity, as represented by the Church of England, includes in its ranks the business man, the charitable lady of fashion and the school teacher—an equally uninspiring crowd, equally unappreciative of what the Church once stood for. The Church now personifies a one-day-a-week religion.

Let me express this thought in another way. The State subsidises the Church, but the Church (so it seems to me) is not repaying the subsidy. It attracts only a small proportion of the population because it lacks vitality and because such vitality as it boasts is misplaced. For the Church is fifty years

behind the times. The hall mark of Victorian respectability is still upon it. And it was during the Victorian era that the Church least represented Christianity.

The Church of to-day frowns at those things which of old it encouraged. Where are the great works of art like those which Catholicism created in the past? For was not the beauty of these only symbolic of the spirit which inspired the builders? Now the Church appears to be mildly shocked at any manifestation of art. I have even heard the theatre condemned from the pulpit, although the Church was responsible for the theatre's birth.

Instead of perpetuating this great mission of encouraging beauty and art, the Church spends its time meting out effectless correction. It shows intolerance where Jesus taught the lesson of tolerance. It has degenerated from a great patron into a petty schoolmaster. For what right after all has a Church to deliberate on an arbitrary regulation of the morals of the world, when, but a few years before, it encouraged and allowed the people of this country to kill and be killed under a Christian banner?

And this leads me to my final word which is but a repetition of what I said at the beginning of this paper. The effect of the Great War must be realized by the Church, as it has been realized by those who came through the ordeal, and by those who were born into it. Otherwise the Church, like many another great institution, will pass away. No one has a greater respect than I for many of its present leaders. It is for them to build a new Church suitable to modern conditions, a Church that appeals to energy and not to self content, a Church unhampered by puritanical misgivings and Victorian traditions, a Church that may encourage and assist in all that the nation is striving for.

W. A. FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL

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VI

W. A. FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL

THE problem before me is "What the younger generation thinks of Religion and the Church generally."

This question implies that there is a real and fundamental difference between the views of the younger generation and the older generation upon the subject, and that youth holds religion and the Church to be of less value than did their fathers and grandfathers before them.

Yet it would be hard to prove this contention satisfactorily. It is not the creed of religion that the younger generation hold to be of less value than did their fathers, but it is the disciplinary measures that they regard with less respect.

As for that, who can blame them? The bishops are quarrelling amongst themselves as to the correct and proper discipline to be

pursued. The papers and the parsons complain of empty churches, and the papers put the blame on the dullness of the sermons, and the clergy and the elder generation put the blame on the irreligious attitude of the younger generation. They are both wrong. The reason for empty churches does not lie in the dullness of sermons nor in the flippancy of youth. If people wanted to go to communal worship the sermon would be the last of the devout reasons that would urge them. If youth were really irreligious the ideals of public service would perish instead of becoming more universal, as I think they are to-day.

The reason is that with the older generation church-going was, in the main, a social obligation and a convention: and youth has abandoned most social conventions, such as visiting-cards and Sunday morning prayer, without necessarily losing either the instincts of courtesy or of religion.

Candidates for ordination are slightly increasing in number. Recruits for home and foreign missions are by no means few, and many young men and women of the richer classes give up their time to a dozen forms of social service. I am not praising them for

it: it is the least that they can do. But it does illustrate that Christianity can be served in other places than the squire's pew.

As for the poorer classes, the sacrifices they make are many times greater; sons and daughters cheerfully give their mothers seventy-five per cent. of their weekly wages and help their poverty-stricken friends on the remaining twenty-five per cent. What change they get they may spend on dances in the village hall, or in 'bus rides on a Sunday morning. Are they to be called irreligious? I think not. It is the observance of religion that has changed, and not the standard.

Youth is not so religion-conscious as was the older generation, and, whether this is because they are more natural or more reticent, the result is that there is a complete lack of understanding between the two generations on this point.

It must not be thought that I am praising the younger generation for having thrown away the old fetters that once bound its ideas and gripped its prejudices.

Youth has not by its own merits flung aside the shibboleths and risen triumphant from the ashes of hypocrisy. The present

situation has been achieved by stages. We were taught the propriety of religious display and of church-going ; we were told of the virtues it would produce, and of the vices that neglect would engender.

And then came the motor-car, the charabanc, and the 'bus : golf and country clubs. The world became less parochial. The modern means of conveyance put friends and relations ten or twenty miles distant almost at one's doorstep ; modern opportunities of entertainment produced a new attraction in which the desire for social intercourse plays a prominent part. Youth has come under the influence of the change, and having come under its influence youth has encouraged it and enlarged its attractions.

There are more interests, more liberties and more sensations. The fashion of incessant movement has made meditative leisure a forgotten feature, and without meditation the appearances of religion are hidden. And so, youth is thought to be irreligious : for the world judges by appearances.

It is hard to generalize. The very question—What does the modern generation think of religion ? is almost impossible to answer.

The modern generation is composed of many different sets, some of whom never think at all, let alone think of religion. It is harder still to defend a generation that is misrepresented.

The "Gossip" columns in daily newspapers are no longer the searchlights on the movements of great and useful men and women, nor yet of young men and women who represent the serious element of this rising youth.

When one talks of the younger generation one's mind visualizes the affected young men and women depicted in the society columns, who have plenty of recently-acquired money and no landed responsibilities, and whose antics and fatuities are gushingly portrayed in the press; or one thinks of the poverty-stricken miner's son who sings the "Red Flag," who would rather live on the dole at eighteen shillings a week than risk his limbs for less than twice that sum, and who is made the subject of a leading article anathematizing Bolshevism and attacking idleness.

Neither the gilded graduate nor the draper's daughter who throw balloons in restaurants, nor yet the idiotic young Bolshevik, are cases

in point, nor in any way a fair exemplar of youth.

Let us for a moment forget both types : the papers will fawn on the one and frown on the other to-morrow. So let us forget the press also.

Away from both these sets there stands a vast mass of growing men and women who are fond of pleasure, who love companionship, who enjoy work and whose weaknesses are manifold, and in between their weaknesses and their virtues they sometimes think about religion and wonder whether it is true.

They question whether the religious faith of the older generation has not been rather more of a profession than a power.

Owing to the War this is the first generation of universal candour, and in all the turmoil of doubt to which this candour has given birth, the old ethic of pagan despair "eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die" has regained a certain amount of influence. It is difficult to know whether this ethic is the result of belief in modern philosophy or the result of doubt as to the reliability of modern philosophy. On the one hand, youth is persuaded that this life is not the end of the individual. And then we

hover on the brink of faith and listen to the plausibility of arguments which make us wonder whether eternity is not, after all, the outcome of man's vanity in thinking himself too individualistic to be destroyed. Whichever of the two emotions may really predominate in the particular mind, people feel that they have responsibilities for the way in which their lives are spent; and that, if there is a continuance of life beyond the grave, its progress is determined not so much by the faith held by the individual but by the works he performs.

"No man," says Dr. Johnson, "can wholly rid himself of fear before the thoughts of future judgment."

This generation, however, relies, perhaps, too much on an ideal of not injuring others, rather than on living a life that conforms to the canons of the Gospel. It does not reject, but it neglects, the claims of religious observance. The tendency to-day is to regard Christ in the light of a great example rather than of a symbol of subservience to a Higher Power.

The really religious and devout man is respected as much by this generation as by any of its predecessors. But youth no longer

connects a religious life or mind with any particular form of faith, and it holds in as much respect the agnostic who practises the Christian virtues without accepting a Christian faith, as it does the devout and religious man.

To the past generation there were only two material alternatives: "Do you accept, or do you abandon the Christian Faith?" To-day that is not the point that seems to matter at all. We are content with less than that, and we believe that if we can "pass muster" with the average of mankind it is enough.

This comes from indolence and sloth rather than from lack of faith, for the life of Christ is universally recognized as the life which sets the standard.

While recognising this, does the young generation admit that the Church is a necessary element, or does it regard the practices of decency and kindness as sufficient by themselves? Personally, I think that the latter thought is the most prevalent and is becoming more prevalent every day.

History has adorned most of its outstanding figures with qualities which at least command our respect. The heroes of the past are

honoured, not for what they believed, but for what they were.

And that is true of contemporary life, with, however, a difference. For we have learned from what we hear of the war that the heroes of to-day are typified by the attributes of Strubes' "Little Man." So great is his heroism, so arresting is his cheerful courage and so uncomplaining is his generosity, that we are fast becoming hero-worshippers of the men who follow rather than the men who lead. The ability to "pass muster" is therefore becoming the criterion of virtue.

Provided a man or a woman responds to the instincts which religious teaching has inculcated in the standard of civilization and citizenship, the rest is taken for granted or not regarded at all. I do not mean by this that youth either encourages or tolerates the principle that, provided everybody does right in his own eyes, all is well. Christianity has for years been struggling to tell mankind that the beauty of life is love. Mankind has, however, done its best to teach the world that the beauty of life is adherence to a code of manners.

And yet this statement seems monstrously unfair when one thinks of the thousands of men and women who have gone through misery, suffered derision, chosen poverty and faced danger, in an attempt to spread their particular faith round the globe. On the other hand, this statement seems fair when one contemplates the social ostracism that the people of the nineteenth century inflicted on their religious inferiors ; the quarrels and sneers between the Chapel and the Church, the enmity between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant, the hatred between the Eastern castes, to say nothing of the blood that has been shed and the cruelty that has been practised in the name of religion in every country in the world.

Perhaps youth feels triumphant in the birth of a new kindness which has descended upon the minds of men.

The older generation would teach that God was no respecter of persons. Youth goes further than that. Rightly or wrongly it believes that God is no respecter of religions. I do not suggest that the young Christian thinks that it does not matter whether he accept or discards the Christian

Faith; but he does believe that, if this life is not the finish of his existence, then, whatever power it may be that perpetuates his soul, that power will treat the good Jew, the good Christian, the good Hindu and the good Agnostic with equality.

In other words, we believe that the commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" is the greatest message and the one that gives everybody a fair chance. Whereas, to obey the commandment "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God"—and meaning by that the Christian God—must be a matter of opportunity, environment and circumstance.

Surely this is the explanation of that favourite saying which has been attributed to the present Archbishop of Canterbury, that Religion attracts, but the Church repels. This *bon-mot* holds all the truth, but it is, at the same time, possessed of exaggeration.

Religion does attract. It attracts because all courage attracts. All high ideals find their followers. And Religion demands courage and ideals. The Church does not repel, but it disappoints. It disappoints because we want more leadership and more understanding from the clergy. Religion is not sufficiently

topical. The difficulties of to-day are immense; the temptations are vast, and youth looks for strong and helpful leadership.

The Church has not faced with real courage this one question: How does the obedience due to the Church impinge upon the practical questions and considerations of to-day? The Church seems to concentrate too much on the personal advantages of religion to make a real appeal to youth. In the first place, we are not convinced that individual faith is really the great criterion; and in the second place, the uncertainty of the present social order has made people think that the physical welfare of the community, and not the spiritual triumph of the individual, is the ideal for which to work.

I once asked a devout Christian, who believed in the strict word of Church law, what happened to a man who lived a life of piety and perfection, but who, unknown to himself, had not been baptized owing to the atheism of his parents. He replied, "Oh, he will go to Limbo: he will never share the glory of the baptized soul, but on the other hand, he will be perfectly happy." The same, I was told, applies to the child

who dies unbaptized before it knows the meaning of sin. Such monstrous self-satisfied conceit invokes the light of laughter and contempt, and if youth really imagined that these were really the official doctrines of the Church, then the power of the Church would entirely disappear. For the human mind to dare to assert all the ways of divine Justice is an impertinence that arouses derision or anger according to one's mood. Such a doctrine as this is to interpret God as a conceited monomaniac. Such a teaching does much to make the modern mind work out its own philosophy rather than accept the philosophy of the religious teaching.

Archbishop Temple has written that "the danger of the present day lies in our thinking that we can do the right and be in the right without God." This tendency has grown up amongst us because we are ceasing to believe that God is a Supreme Egotist to whom sycophancy is an agreeable narcotic. While this truth is becoming clearer, the reaction from the standpoint of the older generation has forced the contrast which has prompted this wise verdict of Archbishop Temple's book. Sooner or later the contrast will

become less sharp, and the future will show that men and women do not think that they can decide the philosophies of life by the standards of civilized manners or economic ideals. When the Church has appreciated this weakness in our thoughts, but has understood that this thought possesses some little wisdom, it will once more be able to educate and to lead.

I do not suggest that youth is perpetually introspective, that it is daily thinking in terms of religious philosophy. Far from it. But character to-day is being built by the subconscious workings of this line of thought, and when these questions are thrust upon us, and introspection is demanded as the means of solution, it is then that we discover the arguments and instincts which prompt and generate our mentalities and our modes of life.

It must, however, be obvious that the Christian Faith has a future as great as its past. The Two Minutes Silence on Armistice Day makes its magnificent appeal to our minds because the individual realizes the common love for mankind which exists right round the globe.

This is the real lesson that Christianity has taught the world. Its different creeds, its party squabbles, its social prejudices disappear as does smoke in the wind when the heart is moved by the impulse of universal sorrow or individual sacrifice. Nothing can curb the growing tendency to be kind : nothing shall stop the countries of the world from moving on to a better understanding between themselves. The earthquakes of one country, the famine of another, bring forward the generous help of the rest. And so with the individual.

If this common impulse to help each other, if this common instinct to be grateful for the sacrifices of past generations is part of the ideals of Christianity—then in spite of our thousand faults, in spite of the thousand hardships that must inevitably come to us and our sons, it can with confidence be known that Religion has not failed, and that it is now and will always be the dominating influence in Youth.

PETER WINCKWORTH

Peter Winckworth was educated at Westminster, and is training to be a solicitor. He is president of the Kensington League of Nations Union Youth Group, and a member of the Youth sub-committee of the League of Nations Union. His political sympathies have led him to take an active part in Sir Oswald Moseley's New Party, and he was only prevented from standing as a candidate in the 1931 Election by the imminence of his final law examination. He has contributed poems and articles to the press, and has also taken a prominent share in the work of the Boy Scout Movement.

VII

PETER WINCKWORTH

SIX tall candlesticks, with burning candles, stand on the high altar. Lesser candlesticks are symmetrically arranged on either side, for it is a festival of the Church. In their midst is the domed Tabernacle, the throne of the Blessed Sacrament. Above rises a giant crucifix.

The three priests of the High Mass stand in file before the Tabernacle, robed in the gorgeous vestments of their office. Acolytes, neatly uniform in white cottas, are ranged at their places within the sanctuary. The celebrant turns towards the faithful, and for the last time intones the bidding—"Dominus vobiscum." The choir lead the response. Then the Deacon also turns, and intones "Ite, missa est." "Deo gratias" respond the choir. The faithful have heard their Mass.

A blessing is given, and a last Gospel is read. Out from the mystic gloom of the church stream the worshippers, into the sunshine. They are free. "Ite, missa est."

Thus ends, in the most institutional part of the Christian Church, its chief act of worship for each Sunday and Holy Day of obligation. Thus is completed their supreme act of religion, their practice of a sacred rite. Has it a future? In this essay I am primarily concerned with the Church of England. But in every form of organized or institutional religion, from Rome to the Quakers, there is a marked decrease both of priests or ministers and of worshippers. Is Christianity failing? Has its Church, its organized and esoteric institution, begun to crumble? Many would say "Yes." In a short essay I would defend myself for answering "No."

It is true that institutional religion is a very unfashionable thing to-day. Among many of one's friends, at most house parties, at camps or other week-end gatherings, an intention to go to church on Sunday causes surprise. And the surprise is usually quite genuine, not mocking. The sons and daughters of English gentlemen receive a travesty

of religious training at most schools. The sons and daughters of every Englishman inherit a sensation of Sunday's rest, but not of Sunday's obligation. That is only modern !

Yet, at the same time, we are continually reminded that men and women of to-day are more genuinely religious than many of their ancestors, who paid the lip-service of convention to the practice of a faith that should admit neither lip-service nor convention. There had to be a reaction. Is it just temporary ? Will the future show us a practising Christian country ?

Again, religion is still a consideration poignantly uncomfortable with most men and women. Ask any of them about it, ask them their convictions, ask them their reasons—they are immediately uncomfortable. It is story for the press, but, for comfort's sake, it is vetoed in the drawing-room. Why ?

In tracing my reasons for a belief in institutional religion I would like to keep, as a background, these three aspects—the unfashionableness of church-going, the religious sincerity of many men, and this, as it were, guilty conscience about religion that is almost

universal. These three factors are the modern setting.

Belief in God is always a matter of faith. Now, faith I would define as the projection of reason's line beyond reason's realm. That is to say, reason or thought leads me to certain conclusions ; and as those conclusions become more unprovable, as they enter farther beyond the realm of reason, my sole defence is my initial stage of thought, which began within the realm of reason and which, I am satisfied, has merely been projected along its original direction. Thus it comes that defence for belief in God is primarily a matter of defending one's process of thinking upon certain elemental subjects. And, at once, I would plead that faith, if we use this definition, is not *per se* credulous, but is, by its essence, the result of a mental effort to think, whether that faith resides in a doctrine about God or about something quite otherwise.

I think. That is the first sign of mental independence. The first actions of a child are instinctive. The mind is not used. So the child possesses no mental independence, it possesses no ability to choose. Then, with development, there enters this function of

thought. The child considers. It weighs possibilities and probabilities. It is pulled by an inclination, possibly an instinctive inclination. But because its mind has begun to function, because it can think, it can also resist the inclination.

Thus, with thought there enters the moral choice. Because I can think, because I can realize good and bad things, because I can act or refuse to act, so I can make a moral choice. Of course our first choices are usually ones of inclination. Moral considerations imply a consideration of merits. The alternative merits are thus weighed, and related to my own set of values. My will gains its strength from the relative height or baseness of these values, and my will, according to its strength, influences my choice. By this process I come to re-value my standards, and to strengthen or weaken my will, or my character. By this process I come to think, and to think more deeply.

The basis of it all is one's idea of the good; because this governs the orientation of one's moral and ethical values. If you place force upon a pedestal and worship its expression, its mightiness, you must acquire a sense of

ethical value rather similar to Nietzsche's. If sportsmanship is your prime criterion of the good, you must feel more at home among the minds of modern Englishmen than you would have felt in conversation with Socrates. And the basic thought about God, in most religions, is that God is good.

By thought I can apprehend life. By instinct, I think, I am forced to call life good, because by instinct every man and creature will try to avoid death. By thought I can prize life as a period for more thought.

By thought I can apprehend the universe. This is more remote from myself. I am forced, by thought, to view it more or less objectively. But, because I think life is good, I must think the universe good, too. Also, with the universe, I must realize the limitation that abounds to man's will. Yet, I feel there must be some alternative influence, and by thought I am immediately driven to wonder if that influence, related to the highest ethical standard that I know, is good or bad.

In spite of much that seems bad and purposeless—suffering, pain, earthquakes, and the apparently wilful self-destruction of nature—in the flow of life I am compelled to see a tide,

a direction. I suppose in everyone's life there does quite clearly appear this conspiracy of circumstance, and its pattern can only be seen as we recede further from that moment of time.

And this, I think, brings us up against the problem of the first cause. There seems to be some plan that logically relates so many of the phenomena that men cannot control, some force that generates our force, some first cause of which the universe was merely the effect.

Admittedly we are beyond the realm of reason, because this presence of a first cause, pre-existent to the present order, implies an order pre-existent likewise to reason. But my reason compels me to believe that the plan of the universe does imply a first cause, a creator, and thus I come to be a theist, believing in the existence of God as the necessary hypothesis. And God, because I must thus ascribe to Him power—the great Architect of life—I believe to be good. And God, the highest expression of the good that my mind can conceive, God must be worshipped. This becomes the orientation of my set of values.

The step from belief in God as a hypothesis

required by reason to a belief in God as a revealed certainty is perhaps more difficult. In defending my belief in that particular form of theism called Christianity, I cannot help being rather personal. It is always difficult to explain one's religion to a sceptic, but it is especially difficult when it has been one's religion from childhood. So few English Christians have been converted in their later life and to the satisfaction of their more mature thinking : so many have been brought up in their faith, and have accepted it without question and without the ability to understand the keen inquisitiveness of a modern sceptic.

The whole basis of Christian theology is the divinity of Christ. The fact that Jesus Christ lived is historically established. The fact of His crucifixion is likewise accepted. But the Resurrection ? In the very earliest teaching of the Christian Church the doctrine of the Resurrection was always stressed, and it is, I think, the corner-stone of Christianity. In this short essay it is impossible to enter into all the arguments that are involved. But remembering the facts of our Lord's life that are recorded in the Gospels, remembering the fact of the empty tomb, remembering the

apparently little confutation that was offered against the early preaching of the Apostles on this point, I believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. That He rose from the dead because He was God.

And because He was God I believe in the doctrine of the Incarnation—the interruption of the natural because the Creator was coming to live with His creatures.

So far religion has been considered objectively. But the Christian Religion is a personal religion. With a reaction against evangelicalism this has become a rather unfashionable side to stress. There is a strange delight in speaking only of the goodness of God, of the beauty of church services, and there is an abhorrence of considering sin. It is supposed to be morbid.

That religion profits by an impersonalism in church I admit. The practice of a sacred rite should not allow the intrusion of personal emotion. But sin is personal, and sin remains. Sin is, to me, a wilful action that is contrary to the Will of God, which Will I have come to believe the highest motive of goodness. And sin can only be expiated by repentance and by a firm resolve to give up sinning, that

is by a volitional conversion back to the Will of God. Also, because of the power of sin in lowering one's set of values and one's sense of the good, sin does need to be faced. It is not morbid to put, or to attempt to put, one's life in order.

This act of repentance and of contrition we make by prayer. Prayer is an act of will by which we try to subordinate our will to what we believe to be the Will of God. It is an attempt to relate our thoughts and actions to God's Will. And I believe that the supreme act of prayer is the Mass.

For in that Jesus Christ died as an expiation of man's sin and as a means of man's redemption, I believe that the Mass was established for a continual and effectual re-offering of that expiation. And in this sacrament He comes to dwell with us, for by the power of the sacrament and in the mystery of the rite I believe that God is present, to be worshipped, to be adored, and to feed our souls.

The existence of sacramental worship does, I believe, necessitate an esoteric institution. For only a priesthood can keep conserved and protected the power of sacramental adminis-

tration. And the institution is necessary to be the organized exterior of the Church's mission and to be the worldly medium for her dealings with men. Why then, we may well ask, should this institution seem to be failing?

There are, I think, many reasons. First I would put lack of faith. Most emphatically that does not mean a beneficial lack of credulosity, as so many people will say; it means a lack through laziness of the energy to think. Faith is not a question of how much you can swallow. Faith is a question of how deeply, how honestly and how sustainedly you can think. So that the emptiness of our churches may well point to a general facility in swallowing.

Although much that is modern is virile, is more keenly inquisitive than in Victorian days, yet thought about God, which is just faith, is most reluctant. Men and women who read well, study deeply and think hard, are unwilling to approach the ultimate book, the deepest study and hardest thought, man face to face with God. Undoubtedly much unbelief is the result of such a battle with thought. These men have pondered, and by their

decisions have felt forced to accept another or no religion. But I believe that they are relatively few. The majority of non-practising Christians and unbelievers, although they may like to shelter themselves behind the intellectual struggles that other men have fought, have in fact no more thought about God than they have probably thought about space-time. These men and women are everywhere ; they have no faith, they know not how to think. Of course I do not wish to suggest that the Christian Religion sets any premium on the intellect ; but so many people suggest that only fools and simpletons are attracted by religion, and these forget that a greater mental effort is required to embrace a religious faith than to talk of the credulous and to enjoy an open-air Sunday. The mental effort is a call on intelligence not on intellect.

This reluctance to think about God is, I think, the result of two main causes. First their education, secondly fashion.

Of education, I would quote a few lines from Abbe Dimnet's *Art of Thinking*. " The notion that masterpieces are boresome, school books interpreted by dull teachers, examination stuff, is a marvellous product of education. Ignor-

ance is assuredly less dangerous, for it can create no such inferiority complex as the schoolboy's notion of his lack of kinship with the best literature." Change the phrases "masterpieces" and "the best literature" for religion, and you will see one cause of the lack of religious thought. For it is the direct result of the wisdom of so many of our parents and school-teachers that most children or pupils feel a great lack of kinship with what religion they may be taught. Can one be surprised?

Then fashion. To-day the most fashionable thing is respectability. Slavery to the respectable holds us all. And religion, true religion, is not respectable. It is because, as I said earlier, it makes men and women feel uncomfortable. Everyone seems to have a guilty conscience about it. The very mention of religious talk, unless it can easily be scoffed off, makes them blush or fidget. And respectable people don't blush, they don't feel uncomfortable: and if they think they are going to, they change the subject, they paint another coat of cant over their mental vision, they remain at the very highest price respectable. So this vicious process extends, ever

making more remote any possibility of men and women thinking of God, of having faith.

The other two reasons for this threat to institutional religion that I want to discuss are the priests and then the people of the Church.

Unfortunately the priesthood used to be looked upon as a respectable profession for a gentleman's son, if he didn't go into the army. There was, therefore, little or no emphasis on the vocation of the priest, and much insistence on the respectability of the profession and on classical education. When one remembers the Gospels, when one remembers the lives of such saints as St. Francis of Assisi, this would be almost amusing were it not the tragic travesty of something most sacred. It is difficult to conceive how the urgency of a religious creed could have been kept aflame by these university graduates with their equally respectable past, present and future.

Later it became less profitable to be a priest, and, therefore, I suppose less respectable. But the harm is done. And many of the more recent ordinands have admittedly not been

distinguished by their brain-power. Which is a pity because brains are not *per se* respectable.

Lastly, the people of the Church. It is, of course, one of the tragedies of life, that, in an institution that lays a premium on personal sanctity, its own members must ever be its worst advertisement. Yet this is implied by the idealism of its code and the natural human weakness that must be common to its members. And for this reason, I myself confess, that the individual or corporate failure of Christians to live up to their ideals, used as an argument by non-Christians against Christianity, has always seemed to me rather more than usually futile. Still it goes on ; an invidious comparison of A, a very good sort, and probably good at games, with B, a pious sinner, bad at games and probably rather untruthful. What does it prove? Little more than that A, B and the Critic are human, the last probably most in need of religion's help because of an over-eagerness to judge his fellows.

But these two aspects stand out. There is an immense amount of natural goodness. The Church has always taught that. And natural goodness, like most natural things, is

very attractive. Yet it can hardly satisfy. It has its sense of futility.

And again, many practising Christians are, to say the very least, extremely tactless in their external display of faith and precept. The world has grown more tolerant. I think it is a sign of civilization, of progress. But, in recent history, this increase seems to come in bursts, as a reaction. Unfortunately the Church as a whole hasn't burst onward quite as quickly. She has so often been less tolerant of thought than the world.

Let us remember here our background, the unfashionableness of church-going, the religious sincerity of large numbers of men and the guilty conscience about religion. The first and the third I have elaborated. They would seem the chief elements of the case against institutional religion. But what of the second?

The religious sincerity of which I speak is the modern reaction against the conventions of our ancestors, who went to church because it was the thing to do. Remember that that is not yet all over. It is still the thing to do to go to church for baptisms, weddings and funerals, but hardly ever at any other time.

The mockery continues. But it is much less. In its place many men are questioning, wondering, thirsting. Still aghast at the emptiness of conventional religion, they have not yet found what they seek. And they haven't been helped very much by the Church.

But the fact of this widespread desire for a religion is significant. It is now almost a truism to say that our country needs a religion. Newspapers often publish authors and sportsmen's suggestions on this subject. I suppose these effusions are widely read. I suppose that they are good copy. I think it is quite certain that such men will not find a new religion. But such tendencies as these do lead one to believe that many will eventually find their way to a live and practising Christianity. Christianity will quench their thirst, though it is not, or should not be, a comfortable religion. It will shock them out of their respectability and enable them to think and see more clearly.

Finally, there is, I think, an inherent need in man to worship. Man has always worshipped. And with the progress of thought and the revelation of Christianity, man's sense and need of worship have been focussed to their

highest expression, the worship of God in His Most Holy Sacrament.

Now many men have turned away. Some take their cars and worship the open-air, or a golf ball. Most of them worship money, success and respectability. They worship because worship they must. But their worship is expended on lowly objects ; it is unsated and unhappy.

That is the rub. The worship of God is joyous. Some people think that their piety increases with their unhappiness. No : it is only their conceit and self-pleasure that grows apace. The worship of God, the worship of the Mass, the practice of religion, are joyful, and they alone can satisfy the craving of the soul. They alone can say, and truly say, "Ite, missa est."

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

Dr. William Temple became Archbishop of York in 1928. Previously he had been Bishop of Manchester for seven years. He is himself the son of a famous archbishop, and, indeed, he was born in an episcopal palace. His career has been exceptionally distinguished. He was president of the Union in his last year at Balliol, and he became Fellow and Lecturer in Philosophy at Queen's College, Oxford, from 1904 to 1910, when he was appointed headmaster of Repton. It would be impossible here to make a selection of the many important books which he has written. But it may be relevant to emphasize that he is one who speaks with authority and is listened to with peculiar interest by the younger as well as the older generation. The mission which he preached at Oxford in 1931, when, each evening, undergraduates of all types crowded in to hear his addresses, was one of the most remarkable experiences in the recent history of the University.

A REPLY

By THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

THE Great War has left in every department of life a new situation in relation to which pre-war methods of action are largely irrelevant and ineffective. This is nowhere more sure than it is in connexion with the presentation of the Christian Gospel to young folk. The war, and the so-called "peace" which up till now has been a continuation of the war by other methods, have seemed to the more thoughtful and idealistic of the younger generation to involve in one all-embracing condemnation the whole set of conventions and institutions which were characteristic of the period of history that culminated in that great catastrophe. It seems to these observers perfectly manifest that the world must have been managed wrongly through all that time. So far there is agreement ; but here the divergence begins. Some say in effect (though this group is not represented in the essays contained in this volume) :

“All the old ideals and restrictions proved futile ; let us throw them all behind us and follow our desires, whatever they happen to be, so far as circumstances allow.” Some set out deliberately to discover or construct alternative principles. Some search among the old institutions and are ready to discriminate—seeking the cause of the calamity not in all that existed before it came, but rather in the essence of some and the abuse of others.

It is to be remembered that so far as this detachment of youth is grounded solely or mainly in the war, it tends to disappear. At the universities it is commonly said that each year's Freshmen are now more like the pre-war Freshmen than were those of the year or years before. Those who wish to be in touch with the youth of to-day on the ground that it represents the adult mentality of the future should allow for this process of reversion to an earlier type. But the distinctive “post-war” mentality exists ; and when it is already old-fashioned, that will not mean that we have gone back in every respect to a pre-war outlook.

For what the war did was not so much to introduce a destructive influence into a firmly established habit of thought and purpose, but

rather to add enormous impetus to a movement of dissolution that was already in process. The re-action against "Victorianism" had begun while Queen Victoria was still reigning. For example, when I went up to Oxford in 1900, I found the fashion of disparaging Tennyson was already in full swing, and the ground of it was very largely the repudiation of "Victorian" conventions not only in taste but in ethics.

Now the basis of that group of conventions was partly to be found in the acceptance of various loyalties—the Empire, the Church, the Professions, the Public Schools, and so forth. Every one of these was defensible; but its defence would have also prescribed limits—and that is disagreeable to the spirit of loyalty. The Victorian era had not been successful in inculcating very widely a loyalty to God, as alone entitled to an absolute allegiance, or to a Universal Church destined to embrace all mankind, as the only fellowship deserving the service of an undivided purpose, in which all particular acts of service might find their inspiration and their appropriate sphere. Consequently, when the critical temper of the twentieth century directed its increasing energies against the existing objects of loyalty, it was the very spirit of

loyalty that suffered ; for it was found in countless instances to be without any object to which it could give itself both justifiably and wholeheartedly.

Of course loyalty itself did not perish ; it is too deeply rooted in human nature to disappear in a few decades ; and the war gave it a worthy object for the time. Quite apart from a deep love of country which then broke into flame, there was an almost universal conviction that during those four years the great issue at stake was whether justice and freedom or force and despotism should have an access of influence in the next period of history. Though the occasion was temporary, an object deserving an absolute allegiance while the occasion lasted had been found.

Then the war ended. The statesmen of the allied nations failed to give effect to the ideals for which thousands, at least in this country, had fought. Partly, no doubt, this was because the problems were so intricate that it was impossible for the wisest to foresee what have been the actual results of their actions ; but partly it was because the nations which had entered on war in the spirit of peace had become infected during the years of

fighting, and entered on peace in the spirit of war. Some of us heard and read speeches made during the General Election of 1918, which will fill us with shame till death.

The generation represented by the essays in this volume began its serious thinking when the disillusionment was at its height. The old objects of loyalty were still there, but the sentiment which they evoked was comparatively mild. The great effort of a loyalty that had seemed (and truly was) noble and right, had issued in a failure to achieve its ideal, if not in a betrayal of it. There seemed to be little in the world that had a valid claim to the homage of its inhabitants ; they must find out the principles of sound living for themselves.

Of course this conviction was not, and is not, held universally by the young folk of any generation ; and those who accept it do so with every degree of completeness and intensity. There are many still whose education has so perfectly fitted their temperament and capacity that at every stage of development they have met the criticism directed against their inherited beliefs with undisturbed serenity of faith. It is right to remember that such people exist now as in the past ; otherwise

we shall have a false idea of the situation. But people of that sort present no problem to the Church, except perhaps the problem how to vitalize a faith of which the very security is a temptation to sluggishness. It seems likely that a main part of the success of the "Group Movement" has been in this direction. The problem and challenge presented by this book is constituted by people to whom the Gospel, as presented, has not made its appeal effective.

It is time to turn from these generalizations to the actual essays before us. The editor reminds us that they do not exhaust the points of view adopted by the authors' contemporaries, and that they do not express any one group of convictions; but he adds that he seems "to detect a certain unity of mental temperament beneath the differences." The chief element in this appears to be an extreme individualism in thought. One of the writers illustrates this by going back to the classical expression of that temper in Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum*. Personally I believe Descartes' method to be logically invalid and psychologically monstrous; but it was the pure expression of the necessary reaction from

mediæval traditionalism and appropriately reappears at the outset of a volume of essays expressing a similar re-action from traditionalism. More symptomatic still is the fact that the representative of Roman Catholicism gives as ground for remaining a Catholic *a preference* "to have a philosophy of life which is based on reason and not one that is based on sentiment or vague humanitarian aspirations." That is a perfectly just statement of the Catholic position, but the word "prefer" is interesting to the onlooker. It would be unfair to press it, but its *nuance* is noteworthy.

With this individualism inevitably goes the suggestion that faith is something that we construct. Of course that is part of the truth about it; but those in whom faith has been most potent agree in declaring that this is the least important aspect of faith. What vitally matters is not that I have in some measure apprehended God, but that He has apprehended me. Such a conviction is, no doubt, incapable of being communicated by argument; it can only be communicated, if at all, by personal impact. Consequently, when one of the more orthodox essayists writes of his faith in God: "It is a personal belief. I believe

because it harmonizes with my own experience. Were the Bible and the whole Christian record disproved to-morrow, it would make no difference to me. The ideals would still remain"—I feel that he is very close to those for whom faith has been a living and driving power; yet the word "ideals" gives me qualms. For ideals remain for us to realise, and faith of the potent sort is faith in realities.

This writer's attitude to prayer confirms my suspicions, especially his dislike of prayers for mercy. Of course these can be the utterance of a self-centred and cringing fear of punishment; if they are that, they are an aggravation of the offence. But the shrinking of the mind that knows its selfishness and meanness before the terrible holiness of the love of God is a very different emotion, though it may be driven by the paucity of human language to express itself in words which the self-engrossed weakling would also use; this shrinking, and cry for mercy, does not so much express the temper of a boy who hopes to get off a flogging as that of an artist who wants to destroy his picture because it has been hung beside a supreme masterpiece; but the spirit that apprehends the holiness of God so as to feel its own

presence as an impertinent intrusion will also know that from that presence there is no escape, nor could escape be desired if it were possible. What then is more natural or proper than a plea for mercy, pardon and sanctifying power?

I think some of these writers would reply : " All right. Only I don't feel like that. So don't make me speak in church as if I did." That brings us back to the individualism. The language complained of is part of Common Prayer—of the Church's worship. If we cannot as yet mean all that is then put into our mouths, it is still good for us to say it, not because we do mean it but because we can see that we ought to mean it, and therefore we can try to mean it more and more. But that is hardly a plea to commend itself to those who take the nakedly individualist standpoint.

For one of the essayists the issue is " between faith and intellect " ; another thinks that " the contrast between Catholics and non-Catholics seems to me to be primarily the contrast between people who think and people who feel." I am disposed to leave these to cancel out. What chiefly impresses me about this statement of the Catholic position in its Roman form is

the fact that the writer has throughout life been gripped by the Christian doctrine of God, and by the claim of a Church which to its infinite honour has never for a moment forgotten that the only true Church must be one capable of embracing, and aspiring to embrace, all mankind. The writer's arguments as such do not seem to me likely to carry conviction to those who dispute the belief which is as much their presupposition as their conclusion.

It may be permitted that we should mention in passing a certain wholesale characterization of Christian Churches and persons which can hardly hope to avoid unfairness. Thus one of the writers says : " The religious leaders of every country engaged in the late war felt that it was up to them to convince the soldiers that the Government which led them into wholesale slaughter was divinely inspired, and conversely, that the fiendish activities of the enemy had the personal support of the devil." Another says : " There was no time for the worship of the Christian ideal of peace. There was time only for fervid and primitive prayers that the foe might be destroyed." No doubt a great deal happened in churches as elsewhere during that time of strain, which was utterly deplorable ;

but one must suppose that these writers have not been to the trouble of looking up the various forms of Prayer actually issued and very widely used in this country, or the utterances of Archbishop Davidson at various stages of the war, or the series of great speeches delivered in the United States by the present Archbishop of Canterbury. The suspicion suggests itself that a similar lack of scientific thoroughness appears elsewhere. One of the writers, indeed, attributes much of contemporary lack of faith to "laziness of the energy to think." And one can hardly avoid astonishment at the degree to which several of these writers, who are determined to stand on their own feet, allow their view of vital matters to be influenced by almost casual conversations with imperfectly instructed Christians or by the conduct of divine worship in particular churches. When one writer says that "the State subsidises the Church" he is saying what every educated citizen should know to be untrue—unless indeed he regards as a "subsidy" that degree of public consideration which is sometimes alleged to attach itself to ecclesiastical dignitaries on account of their relation to the State. Many of them regard

that kind of consideration as a direct hindrance to their spiritual work.

But when all the critical comments are made the fact remains that a large number of intelligent young people hold such views as are here expressed. What is to be done about it?

First, I am sure that the only way to gain their adherence to the Gospel is through the establishment of a direct relation between them and Jesus Christ Himself. The way of partial corporate loyalties is closed—blocked by the débris of collapsed loyalties of the past. The way that is always open is the way of personal discipleship. And that, after all, is the way that the Apostles trod. We must in certain respects go back to the beginning; perhaps with a return to primitive discipleship we may also recover the purity of primitive devotion. Anyhow, it is not the idea of the Church which will recapture the allegiance of these folk for Christ; it is Christ Himself.

Secondly, it must be made plain that an entry on discipleship to Christ is possible without acceptance of all that the Church has discovered to be true about Him. If these critics are to find out that the Church's belief about Christ is true, it must be by the way in

which the Church discovered it—the way of discipleship. For they will believe nothing on authority except such authority as elicits an assent of conscience and reason ; the Church has failed to do this as a body of believers ; it may succeed as a body of followers ; but it is only Christ Himself who wields that authority in full measure.

How to accomplish the formation of a group of disciples who are not yet, at any rate, prepared to say the Creeds (nor were Simon and Andrew, or James and John, when “they left all and followed Him”) is a supremely difficult practical problem. Perhaps there should be established an associate-membership of the Church. But there is only space here to indicate an urgent need, not for the suggestion of ways of meeting it.

Thirdly, it must be recognized that where religious conviction becomes definite and strong it creates a fellowship between those who share it, and that the individualism now so rampant cannot be the last word, even if, from now onwards, it must for thinking people be the first. And while the community of believers should not be allowed to exercise the high authority which properly

belongs only to Him, by faith in whom the believers constitute a community at all, yet of necessity it comes to have very great authority over its own members as against their purely individual perceptions or theorizings.

But, above all, it must be understood that faith is not identical with intellectual belief. It is far nearer to trust in a friend than to acquiescence in a proposition. Certainly it implies belief; and in the formation of that belief every doubt should be sifted and all the powers of reason exercised. But if the focus of interest is fixed in consideration of the intellectual probability of the Gospel, rather than in its claim to allegiance as a glorious venture, that perversion of its true nature will hinder the completeness of a man's response to it. For faith is assurance without logical certainty; and what the Gospel calls for is not only a critical evaluation of its contents but a judgment of ourselves and of the world in the light of it.

No Christian will be made anxious for the Gospel by his reading of these essays; but we may all with advantage be made anxious about our customary presentation of it.

