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leads, not to negative results, but to the negation of some fact in the Christian religion or the life of Christ." The essentially supernatural elements of the gospel story are "falsified accounts." The crucifixion story is made up of elements borrowed or invented. The evangelists seem to have had singularly little conscience, moral or literary. Luke is peculiarly culpable. "He knew very little of what he was writing about, committing blunder after blunder, and thus discredits the Christian message as a whole." Thus the primitive Christian documents, proven so very corrupt, can no longer serve as the basis of our faith. "Until we learn better, then, it would seem our duty to base our religion on the safe and simple practice of wisdom and goodness, rather than on the uncertainty of anything come down from above."

Exactly one-half of the book is given up to a reprint of the author's *Consecutive Life of Christ*, a fusion of the four Gospels into one continuous narrative, which originally appeared in 1911. The text has been revised.

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### GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER'S LECTURES ON THEOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

At the time of his death, December 22, 1918, Professor Foster occupied the chair of the Philosophy of Religion in the University of Chicago. Some years previously he had been professor of Systematic Theology in the Divinity School of the same institution. A comprehensive statement of his theological views was never prepared for publication by him but, fortunately, extensive notes of his classroom lectures were left in manuscript. These, supplemented by student notes taken substantially verbatim by the editor, are now made accessible to students of theology in the work under review. The preparation of this work for publication by the editor is a labor for which all the old students of Dr. Foster will be profoundly grateful. It is true that this work represents his interpretation of Christianity some twelve years prior to his death and one must presume that such a keenly inquiring mind as his must have moved forward beyond some of the positions taken here. But Professor Macintosh, who had singular opportunities to know his opinions, says in the Preface, after referring to Dr. Foster's confession of the deepening of one's faith in God through the experiences of tragedy in one's life:

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity in Its Modern Expression*. George Burman Foster, edited by Douglas Clyde Macintosh. New York: Macmillan. xii+294 pages. \$3.75.

With all allowance for such modifications of opinion as are to be expected from time to time in the mind of so eager and incessant a thinker, I believe it may be said that this book as it stands represents in the main those moral and religious convictions to which in the various vicissitudes of life this sincere lover of truth was ever wont to return after all investigation and reflection.

The work comprises two treatises, dealing respectively with the dogmatics and the ethics of the Christian religion. Both are incomplete, particularly the second. The procedure in both is the same, from a discussion of the "Foundation" to the "Superstructure" of each. The separation is not altogether natural to one inclined to pragmatism, the ethics being really a continuation of the dogmatics. It seems to me, however, that in spirit the work belongs to apologetics rather than to dogmatics, since it is evident from the outset that the author is much less concerned with the task of elaborating a body of specific Christian doctrines or beliefs than with the prior question of the possibility of a truly scientific theology and the method of doctrinal formulation that shall be in accord with the character of the Christian religious experience, on the one hand, and the actual processes of the real, objective world, on the other. Throughout the author is the student, the inquirer, rather than the dogmatician. Formal doctrinal statements there are, but they are distributed through the book rather disconnectedly and mingled with expressions of personal feeling and conviction or startling questions and surprising digressions. It is doubtful that a modern theologian can be found who is more thoroughly aware of the supreme issues theology must face today because of the tremendous changes that have recently come over the spirit of the thinking public, or who is more modestly aware of the imperfect character of all those formal statements that attempt to exhibit to intelligence the inner movement of the modern Christian spirit Godward and manward. Dr. Foster was evidently in search of a theology when he wrote these notes and his work tends to *awaken* the minds of young men rather than to *satisfy* them. For him, as thinker, Christianity was not so much a solution of mental difficulties as it was a prodigious problem and in spirit he was more a mystic than a rationalist.

The opening sentences are indicative of the attitude throughout the entire work:

The dogmatics of the Christian religion *seeks* [italics mine] to give a scientific exposition of the Christian faith. It is a doctrine of faith, of the content of faith, and therefore of the world of faith, i.e., a world which faith affirms to be reality. But it is precisely on this account that the fundamental difficulty of dogmatics arises, viz., How can the invisible spiritual *reality*

[italics the author's] affirmed by faith become an object of scientific investigation and exposition?

Subjective, personal faith is what he is thinking of. He desires to find a way of regarding it as more than subjective, that is, as constituting a world of reality in which believing spirits live. But his problem, which remains unsolved, is, how to relate this inner world of faith to the world of historical occurrence and external observation. Is the faith-world to be affirmed in spite of the other real world, or alongside of it but equally true, or because of it, or must one or the other be declared illusion? It seems to me that, on the whole, the second of these positions is the author's. Science *is* and so is faith. Science must be free and so must faith. If possible, they must be reconciled and unified, but that remains a problem still awaiting solution. The work labors under the disadvantage of the Ritschlian effort to secure religion against the dangers of scientific investigation by assigning to it a separate realm where it may reign, no matter what science may discover, instead of finding in religious faith the unity of our whole life and seeing in science one of the forms in which it operates. What is the world of faith but that same world which is the object of scientific investigation and exposition?

The author seeks to lay the foundation of Christian dogmatics in a discovery of the essence and vindication of the truth of the Christian religion. The fundamental distinction of religion from other sides of the spiritual life lies in "the certainty of a supramundane power on which we, together with the world, are totally dependent," toward which there is a surrender of will and a feeling of confidence, and with which there is an effort to obtain personal communion (pp. 11, 12). This definition is evidently drawn from Christianity itself rather than from a generalization of religions. Religion is said to be one of man's spiritual activities, essentially different (pp. 18, 19) from the aesthetic, the scientific and the moral, though allied with them. But does not this attempt to protect religion against the entanglements which these involve, deprive it of its dignity by limiting it to one phase of life instead of making it the whole? Its dignity and supreme worth seem thereby endangered.

Classifying religions as nature religions, folk religions, and redemption religions, Christianity is placed among the last. In distinction from mystical and pessimistic redemption religions, "Christianity is historical redemption-religion *par excellence*" in that its faith centers in the historical Jesus who lives through history as the "abiding ground and immediate object of personal faith." It is ethical redemption, whose good consists in unity of character with the perfect God and with

all the children of God (pp. 29, 30). Well said, indeed, but is it not thereby too negatively conceived? Is not Christianity creative firstly and redemptive secondarily? Is it not deliverance from the lower because it is attainment of the higher? Is not the "trustful surrender to Jesus Christ" in the first instance an identification of the purpose of our life with his? In places the author seems to turn to this view. For example, he says (p. 41), "Eternity is the persistence of the worthwhile through the mutations and illusions of the temporal; it is essentially continuation of values. Eternity is thus not a gift, but an achievement."

When it comes to the question of the truth of the Christian religion it is pointed out (p. 35) that "the collapse of all efforts at proof is grounded in the character and limits of theoretical cognition." The reality of the faith-content of Christianity transcends these modes of knowledge. The standard orthodox proofs are outlined and shown to culminate in the affirmation that we know the Scriptures are divinely inspired "by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, who, as we read in the Holy Scriptures, recognizes his own work therein." "Good again," says the author (p. 37), "but how shall we be certain that this really originates from the Holy Spirit, and not from our own spirit? Here the thread of the orthodox view snaps." Is there anything fundamentally different offered in its stead? For answer we are referred (p. 39) to the Christian's inner "certainty" of a supreme goal of filial communion with God as "unconditionally worthwhile and obligating," of a free uplift above guilt and weakness, pain and death. What guarantees the certainty of the absolutely worthwhile? The answer is (p. 45), "a disclosure belonging to human history . . . the person and spirit-work of Jesus Christ." That which was "inexpugnably certain to Jesus on the basis of his inner experience" becomes ours as the effect of "the impression" which his person and work make on us. Thus we pass to the idea of revelation. Our certainty rests on the "central revelation of God" in his (Jesus') spiritual person and effectiveness. Thus we become certain of God. "It is God in him that does it. The object of faith is God himself; but the disclosure of God is in the spirit and disposition of Jesus. Not Jesus with God, but God in Jesus is the object of religious faith." This is a very different thing from certainty of the historicity of the career of Jesus (p. 46). It is a value-judgment. "The certainty we need is religious as against historical certainty. Its basis is not an historical inquiry, but a moral and religious experience." The truth of Christianity is thus assured by revelation. "Revelation is an historical phenomenon which is yet super-historical in content and kind." How then do we know that the revelation is real? We know it because we

experience it, that is, we feel and esteem it to be such. Thus the author makes the great leap into the transcendent, as do the orthodox and the mystics.

The body of the work, so far as it is a coherent whole, elaborates these positions under the rubrics of traditional theology. It is evident that the principal factors which co-operate in these lectures are four: First, the traditional Christian dogmas as respects both their form and their content; second, the conviction that the worth of any theological dogma reposes on the manner in which it springs from religious experience and ministers to the spirit of religion; third, the necessity of satisfying the claims of the scientific and philosophic spirit by exhibiting the genuine knowledge of reality inherent in faith; fourth, the feeling that the ultimate test of the truth of any doctrine is found in the guidance and strength it furnishes for the practical issues of life. These, it seems to me, are to receive emphasis in any theological effort of the present day. Of this Dr. Foster was well aware and he approached his problem with courage, though he was probably conscious of having done less in the end to solve his problem than he hoped for at the outset.

As respects the first of these factors, he follows the main traditional order, namely, God and the world (Man is subsumed under the world), God and Jesus Christ the Lord, God and the Holy Spirit. (The last, as the editor points out, does not here appear under that head but much of the material pertaining to it is supplied in the ethics.) It is to be kept in mind that his acceptance of the revelation of God as in some sense trinitarian was not based on its supposed origin from an authoritative source or on the belief that it was truly biblical. On the latter point he says (p. 99), "the ecclesiastical doctrine of the trinity is not a synthesis of the content of the Scriptures but rests upon violent interpretation of single sayings in the Scriptures." "At the same time he says (p. 99), "the religious basic views of Christianity gave impulse to its formation in the old church," and, "in the Reformation the evangelical knowledge of salvation was interpreted in the use of the traditional doctrine of the trinity." His interest in the doctrine rested on his interest in the progress of the Christian religious spirit. The doctrine expressed, though defectively, the life of Christians in the spirit. The soul of Dr. Foster's theology is to be found in the second of the factors named above. It was because he loved and lived the religious life that he theologized. He regarded the older life with reverence because the higher life of the present grew out of it but also transcended it. And it must, therefore, seek more adequate expression than the older formulations supplied. He says (p. 102):

The vital essence of trinitarianism is the idea of world-upholding holy love, with its self-revelation in history and its self-communication to the individual. . . . But in distinction from the ecclesiastical doctrine of the trinity, we have not reached three hypostases, but only three sides (modes of operation) of the Divine Being actively disclosing himself.

The author persistently seeks by the aid of science and philosophy to set forth consistently the knowledge-content of Christian faith but he does not entertain for a moment the supposition that faith must wait upon either science or philosophy for its right to live. They are, rather, its servants. But one could wish that, instead of giving to religion, as he seems to do, a self-guaranteed place beside them, he had sought to set forth the wholeness and unity which all the spiritual capacities of men find in the exercise of religious faith. It would be in entire keeping with the spirit of the author. He was profoundly a religious man, held to his faith amid all the trials of life and made it his purpose to impart that faith to all, though it was done in a way which most of his contemporaries who heard of him failed to appreciate duly.

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#### PRINCIPAL GARVIE ON PREACHING<sup>1</sup>

The long-expected volume in the International Theological Library from the hand of Principal Alfred Ernest Garvie of New College, London, is entitled *The Christian Preacher*. This applies strictly to only the second part of the volume; the first 271 pages being devoted to a survey in large outline of the history of Christian preaching. This serves as a desirable introduction to the second section, and may seem to many readers as the more interesting and profitable part of the book. This first part contains ten chapters. Large obligation to Hering, Ker, and Dargan is recognized. The names chosen are selected with fine discrimination. The quotations are given with excellent insight. For example, the excerpt from the sermon of Bernard of Clairvaux in preaching the Second Crusade is more valuable than pages of description would have been. Fuller quotation would have increased the value of the book. The example of spiritualizing a text, given from Thomas Aquinas (p. 113), is better than many paragraphs describing the method and warning a preacher against it as a homiletic habit. This touch upon sources is a valuable factor in Dr. Garvie's work. The method in this first section is topical rather than chronological, although the larger divisions of history are generally regarded; this adds to our interest,

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Preacher*. Alfred Ernest Garvie. New York: Scribner, 1921. xxvii+490 pages. \$3.50.