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University of Kent at Canterbury

Two Apologists for Catholic Christology:

Henry Parry Liddon and Charles Gore.

Thesis presented by T. Mervyn Willshaw  
for the Doctorate of Philosophy.

Summer 1984.

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### Abstract of the Thesis

On going up to Oxford in 1846, Liddon came under the influence of Pusey and formed a lifelong devotion to him. Liddon gained an early reputation as a preacher and an analysis of his sermons suggests the particularly determined character of his apology for Catholic Christology. Alarmed by current theological developments, he used his Bampton Lectures to refute the new Socinianism, and his appointment as Canon of St. Paul's in 1870 provided occasions for a more popular influence. His work constitutes, therefore, the exemplar of later Tractarian orthodoxy and of what was thought useful to reassure believers amidst growing scepticism. That the theologian whom Liddon had proposed to continue his work of opposing 'rationalism' should have seemed to Liddon to have so signally departed from that orthodoxy is thus a matter of some interest.

Gore certainly seemed to Liddon and others to belong within the same High Church tradition. Liddon secured his appointment as first Principal Librarian of Pusey House. Only by a careful reading of Gore's larger theological work can we come to assess how far Liddon was justified in seeing a betrayal of Puseyism in Gore's contribution to Lux Mundi. Gore used the Bampton Lectureship to clarify his position and to develop an imaginative restatement of it and any subsequent assessment of his concept of orthodoxy must take these and later writings into account.

From the examination of the Christological apologetics of Liddon and Gore, it is possible to open upon the large questions of the relation of scientific, historicist culture to the doctrinal structures of Catholic Christianity. The elucidation of the differences between Liddon and Gore, which have been both exaggerated and underestimated, may, therefore, be expected to exhibit not only the peculiarities of their theologies, but also the difficulties inherent in any attempt at Catholic apologetics.

Abbreviations

(Full particulars are set out in the Bibliography)

- Divinity Liddon, H.P., The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
- Examination A Clergyman of the Church of England, An Examination of Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
- Incarnation Gore, C., The Incarnation of the Son of God
- Johnston Johnston, J.O., Life and Letters of Henry Parry Liddon
- Prestige Prestige, G.L., The Life of Charles Gore

## Chapter One - Introduction

Dean Cupitt describes Liddon's Bampton Lectures as 'the last really able defence of a fully orthodox doctrine of Christ in Britain.' But he follows this by saying, 'The leader of the next generation, Charles Gore (1853-1932) found himself unable to continue the tradition.'<sup>1</sup> Cupitt continues:

Somewhere between Liddon and Gore a view of Christ which took shape in the fourth and fifth centuries began to collapse; and to collapse, not just in the minds of rationalist critics, but in the minds of the leading Churchmen of the day.<sup>2</sup>

That he should link Liddon and Gore at all seems to me significant. It implies some common bond between them, something which would have ensured close continuity of thought between the two men had not other factors intervened. But they did intervene and the line of tradition was broken.

Desmond Bowen suggests something similar, but without the explanation that external factors were responsible for the break, when he says that Liddon, along with Denison, looked upon Pusey as 'The great champion of orthodoxy and represented his school of thought in 1889 - a theological position which was abandoned by Gore and his companions.'<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this study will be to examine the work of Liddon and Gore and to enquire whether such judgments as these about their relationship are true. Did Gore depart so radically from the tradition handed on to him through Liddon or was the real situation more subtle and complex than these bald statements indicate? Has the rift been exaggerated and oversimplified? Were the differences between them greater than the similarities?

I shall begin with a brief biographical sketch to introduce each man.

On the Sunday following his death in September 1890, his friend, Henry Scott Holland, preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral, said of Liddon:

<sup>1</sup> Cupitt, D., The Myth of God Incarnate, p. 134

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 137

<sup>3</sup> Bowen, D., The Idea of the Victorian Church, p. 183

..... he has bequeathed to us the solace and the succour of some imperishable memories - memories that you and I shall carry with us to our dying days, uneffaced by all that the coming years may bring us.

He spoke of the two major spheres of Liddon's influence and dealt first with Liddon in his university setting:

To some here, it will be perhaps some memory of St. Mary's, Oxford, crowded with the black mass of gowned men, thick packed in gallery and on floor, the out burst of organ and of hymn, the quick passage of the preacher up the pulpit steps, the low Bidding Prayer with its delicate articulation, and then across our life, our young life, giddy with light gaieties, glittering and bubbling with all the fleet gossips of the changing hours, we shall for ever remember how there shot the voice, alive with passionate insistence, that told of the Eternal things that can never fade away!

Then he turned to the metropolitan preacher and to Liddon as a Canon of St. Paul's:

To others - to most who are here - it will be the memory of the motionless crowd of upturned faces in this great house of God, as the yellow lights flickered and shone through the illuminated haze of some heavy December afternoon, while all the walls were yet tremulous with the lingering music of the Service. And they will never forget how up and up there rose, higher and higher, filling all the misty hollow of the Dome, the piercing tones of that most beautiful of all voices, as with kindling figure and flashing eye, he "reasoned of Righteousness and of Temperance and of Judgment to come".<sup>1</sup>

Such a description is not to be dismissed as the conventional hyperbole of a memorial oration from a devoted friend. Its accuracy is borne out by what Liddon achieved and by the testimony of others who could claim no such personal closeness.

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, J.O., Life and Letters of Henry Parry Liddon, pp. 389-90. Hereinafter referred to as Johnston.

St. Paul's in 1870, when Liddon accepted a Canonry, was 'a magnificent architectural monument, waiting, in a dignified renown, for the discovery of its activities. Its main bulk lay practically idle, except for special occasions, such as the Festival of the Charity Children, or on great public functions, such as the burial of a hero. At all other times, over the length and breadth of its large area, cold, naked and unoccupied, mooning sightseers roamed at large. Its Daily Services had always been hidden away in the Choir, behind the thick organ screen against which Wren had so vehemently protested. There, in seclusion, a tiny body of cultivated musicians sang to a sprinkled remnant of worshippers . . . . An eloquent preacher could, of course, make a difference at St. Paul's, as well as elsewhere, and no one would wish to forget the stir caused by the beauty and nobility of sermons like Henry Melville's. For him the small space of the Choir, which alone could be used, would be thronged. But any such momentary stir came and went with the preacher. It had no relation to the Cathedral as such; it had no bearing upon its corporate worship, nor did it affect its ordinary existence, except for the one afternoon Service on Sundays, when this or that preacher was in residence.'<sup>1</sup>

But Liddon made a difference to St. Paul's which was more than a 'momentary stir'. His preaching 'carried the ordinary Sunday service out of the choir into the dome'<sup>2</sup> for the simple, but good, reason that the crowds came to hear him.

He could manage a similar impact in Oxford even when he was delivering a lengthy academic sermon. E.A. Knox recalls the impression which Liddon made upon him as an undergraduate:

The morning sermon was usually preached by someone conspicuous in the University, such as Dr. Pusey, or one of the great preachers of the day, an Archbishop, Bishop, or other Church dignitary. Of such discourses the most memorable in my time were Liddon's Bampton

<sup>1</sup> Mary C. Church (Ed), Life and Letters of Dean Church, pp. 208-9  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 215

Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord, when St. Mary's was crowded for each of the eight lectures from gallery to floor, wherever standing room could be found, and that for a whole hour or hour and a quarter.

Liddon's personality - resembling Augustine in Ary Scheffer's Augustine and Monica - his silvery voice - his forceful gestures all added to the eloquence of his speech and gave to his arguments their full weight and perhaps a little more.<sup>1</sup>

By common consent, Liddon was one of the greatest Anglican preachers of the nineteenth century. His sermons may not be as easily read as those of Newman or Robertson but they are models of ordered construction and lucid expression. More than that, they are powerful expositions of Catholic faith dealing with great themes. This popular preacher was no intellectual lightweight. With careful scholarship and wide erudition, he expounded the doctrines of the creeds. In the process, both a skilful communicator and a serious theologian were revealed.

It is true that Knox, with hindsight, wonders how far the presentation and personality of the preacher made the arguments of the Bampton Lectures, Liddon's major work, seem more persuasive than they really were. He thinks that Liddon 'too easily took for granted the historicity of the Gospel narratives.'<sup>2</sup> But a man whose work did not give rise to some questions sixty years later would be remarkable indeed. What is impressive about Liddon is the fact that assessments of his Bampton show such unanimity. Cupitt's comment was noted above. To that may be added the statement of Horton Davies that 'The best Victorian re-statement of the orthodox two-natures Christology was Liddon's Bampton Lectures of 1866.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Knox, E.A., Reminiscences of an Octogenarian, pp. 71-2  
Cf. Russell, G.W.E., Leaders of the Church 1800-1900  
Dr. Liddon, p. 24

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 72

<sup>3</sup> Davies, Horton, Worship and Theology in England, From Newman to Martineau 1850-1900, p. 196

But as well as expounding doctrine, they also defended it. Dr. Owen Chadwick has described them as not only 'the finest Bampton lectures of the century' but also 'the best defence of conservative Victorian religion.' He adds, "Edition after edition showed how the public valued these lectures as the most cogent defence of traditional beliefs."<sup>1</sup>

This assessment is confirmed by S.C. Carpenter who says of Liddon, 'In his Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord (1867) he used every argument that a consecrated intellect could suggest, which eloquence could clothe in language of commanding power, to restate the full orthodox belief. He claimed too much. He used evidence that was too slight to bear the weight attached to it, and his object was to prove that our Lord acted, spoke, and thought of Himself as the Christ of subsequent orthodox theology. And it is the book all through rather of the advocate than of the judge. Yet never was there a more eager, more eloquent, more devoted pleading by a gifted disciple for belief in the divine majesty of the Redeemer.'<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere he says, 'Liddon's Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of our Lord were genuinely learned.'<sup>3</sup> As a theologian, Carpenter places Liddon in high company. Speaking of the threat of materialism and scepticism to the Christian faith, he says, 'As the attack became more specialised and fiercer, and developed into a confident rejection of Christianity, the Christian theologians, Maurice, Westcott, Hort, Liddon, in their several ways, with more help given on the wing of the battle than most of them at the time suspected, by the Broad Churchmen, Jowett and Stanley, and by the amateur lay theologians, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson and Browning, restored the figure of Christ to the centre of the picture. When they had done their work it was not possible to pass Him by.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chadwick, O., The Victorian Church, Part II, p. 75

<sup>2</sup> Carpenter, S.C., Church and People, 1789-1889, p. 512

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 143

<sup>4</sup> Carpenter, S.C., Church and People, 1789-1889, pp. 534-5

Within the English Church of the late nineteenth century, Liddon was a major figure. Delicate in health, and, despite pressure from men like Gladstone, almost always refusing preferment, he exerted considerable influence and was the most accessible spokesman of a particular tradition and churchmanship.

Liddon articulated and defended the thought of later Tractarianism, amidst all the challenges of the Victorian age, in a manner unparalleled by any other preacher. In an article in the Theological Review, C. Kegan Paul wrote:

What Newman was to the men of his time in his University, that is Mr. Liddon to those of the present.<sup>1</sup>

It was an assessment about which Liddon himself felt some embarrassment. He wrote to protest at such an identification but Kegan Paul replied:

I have been several times in Oxford lately, and from undergraduates and dons I hear the same story. You are looked on as practically the great influence in the reaction against Liberalism which is so marked just now in Oxford. This I hear from Liberals and High Churchmen alike, and leading men on the Liberal side consider you their most dangerous opponent. I only mention this to show that I have not, as I think, exaggerated your influence.<sup>2</sup>

In his day, Liddon was clearly recognised as a man of genuine stature. His work demands closer examination than has usually been accorded to it.

Henry Liddon was born on August 20th, 1829, into an evangelical family in North Stonham, Hampshire. His father, Matthew, was a captain in the Royal Navy. His mother, Ann, and his aunt, Louisa, who was also his godmother and his father's sister, both devout evangelicals, saw to it that Henry had a sound start in the faith and influenced him

<sup>1</sup> Theological Review XIX (1867), 589, quoted by Bowen, D., The Idea of the Victorian Church, p. 191

<sup>2</sup> Johnston, pp. 80-1

profoundly throughout the first half of his life. His mother died in 1849. His biographer records:

Many years afterwards he notes in his diary on the anniversary of her death, "My dear mother's death seventeen years ago. Requiescat in pace, dulcis anima! How often do I think of her words during the last Oxford vacation that I spent with her! - "You may become a great scholar, but will you become a true Christian?"<sup>1</sup>

Louisa Liddon died in 1859. Liddon wrote of her to John Keble: To me she had given all that is best worth having.<sup>2</sup>

One fruit of the influence of the two ladies was that at the age of fourteen he was already writing sermons with an Evangelical flavour with such titles as 'Reading the Scriptures', 'The Danger of Procrastination', and 'Preparation for Judgment.'<sup>3</sup> Traces of these early Evangelical influences remained with him all through his life. For instance, compared with some of his Tractarian contemporaries, he had a strong Biblical emphasis.<sup>4</sup> There was also a pronounced anti-Roman streak in him.

Liddon went up to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1846. Already he was a very serious young man but was beginning to display the charm which attracted so many to him in his adult years. There he came under Tractarian influence quickly. Soon after arrival, he made the acquaintance of Pusey and began frequent visits to his house. By this time the Oxford Movement was past its height. Newman had gone to Rome and public opinion had turned against the Catholic revival. Liddon himself says:

At no time in his life was Pusey so largely cut off from human sympathy as during the ten years which followed Newman's secession. During this time he was an object of widespread, deep, fierce

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 11

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 41

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 5

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A Clergyman of the Church of England, An Examination of Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures (1871)

suspicion.

As evidence, Liddon cites the fact that:

Some Heads of Houses would not speak to him when they met him in the street.

Liddon regrets that:

Not a few of the younger and more brilliant minds, shocked by Newman's secession, yet unprepared to follow him, were already drifting away, under the stress of an unbalanced logic, towards this or that form of infidelity. His intercourse with junior members of the University was more restricted than in former years; acquaintance with him was regarded by the governing authorities in the University as a reason for viewing those who enjoyed it with suspicion, or as at heart possible converts to the Church of Rome.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly it cost Liddon something to enjoy the friendship of Pusey and to belong to the Catholic movement. Unfortunately he does not refer directly to the manner of his meeting with Pusey nor explain how or by what quality he was so strongly attracted. But there is no doubt that he became firmly committed to Puseyism and it resulted in a measure of alienation from his family.

Liddon was ordained deacon in 1852. For a very short time he served as curate under W.J. Butler in Wantage, where his reputation as a preacher was immediately established, but his health rapidly proved too delicate for the rigours of parish work. After only two months he had to leave, and a further brief trial in the parish of Finedon in Northamptonshire was all he was to know of the work of a parish priest. Ordained priest in December 1853, he became Vice-principal of Cuddesdon Theological College the following year.

His enthusiasm for ritual, though by no means as pronounced as some of his successors in the Catholic movement, necessitated his resignation in 1859 and, after a period of great uncertainty as to what

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Life of E.B. Pusey, D.D., vol. iii p. 137-8

he should do, he became Vice-principal of St. Edmund Hall. Here he became more widely known for his preaching but his poor health again forced his withdrawal in 1862. He went into rooms in Christ Church and once again became strongly associated with Pusey. Together they planned to write a Bible commentary, partly to meet what both saw as the negative criticism of the day and partly to deal with Evangelical criticism of Tractarianism. It was a project about which Pusey was rather more enthusiastic than Liddon and, in fact, it was never completed. But, during the next eight years, Liddon read widely and his concern to combat Rationalism, Germanism and Liberalism deepened.

In 1870 Gladstone offered him a Canonry of St. Paul's. Pusey and others were anxious to keep him in Oxford and were keen that he should become Ireland Professor of Exegesis. In the event Liddon managed to do both, arranging his times of residence in London to fit in as far as possible with University vacations. Consequently many of his published sermons are concerned with the great Christian festivals of Advent, Christmas, Passiontide and Easter. His dual role continued for twelve years until he resigned his Oxford chair in order to have the time to write his massive biography of Pusey.

His publications were many; mostly volumes of sermons but also commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans and the Pastoral Epistles, his biography of Pusey and, most important of all, his Bampton Lectures on 'The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

His career was free from the burdens of higher ecclesiastical office and continued in the same even manner over a long period. His association with Oxford lasted for forty four years and with St. Paul's for twenty. But his influence was enormous.

He died quietly on Tuesday, September 9th, 1890, at Weston-super-Mare. The fatal bout of illness had begun in Oxford that summer. His biographer records:

On July 3, although feeling very ill, he went to Highclere for the funeral of Lord Carnarvon, and only managed to get back from Oxford

with the greatest difficulty. He had to put himself at once into the hands of Sir Henry Acland; and, in spite of all remedies, for a fortnight he suffered such intense pain from acute neuralgia in the neck that he could only call it "agony" and "unspeakable distress." "If it should please God that I should ever again preach at St. Paul's," he said one day, when speaking of that pain, "I shall try to tell them what life would be like without God."

Johnston continues:

He could see very few people. When he was first taken ill, he used every day to ask one of those who was allowed to see him if he had been to Pusey House; and, if he had been there, he would add, "And did you see Gore? How was he?" One day, when he asked that question as usual, he was asked, "Shall I ask Gore to come and see you?" "No, dear friend, I cannot bear it now. But give him my love when you see him again." Then, after a pause, he added very slowly, "Will you tell him that I am too ill to talk to him? But if he will come down and let me see him without speaking to him, I shall be very glad." From that day the Principal of Pusey House was one of his most regular visitors.<sup>1</sup>

In his will Liddon left his manuscripts and copyrights to Gore and two others and charged them with responsibility for the completion of the publication of his biography of Pusey.

Charles Gore was some twenty three years younger than Liddon and was expected by many to take over the mantle of Liddon and the leadership of the later Tractarians. Liddon was chiefly responsible for Gore's appointment as the first Principal Librarian of Pusey House. This Oxford centre was to be a memorial to Pusey in which his library would be stored and which would serve, in Liddon's own words, as a 'Home of sacred learning and a rallying point for Christian faith'. He went on:

It will form a centre of moral and intellectual and spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Johnston pp. 383-4

enthusiasm, in which all that is solid in inquiry and learning, and all that is lofty and aspiring in moral effort, shall find encouragement under the consecrating shadow of a great name.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Gore was, at that time Fellow of Trinity College and, like Liddon before him, Vice-principal of Cuddesdon Theological College. G.L. Prestige recalls a contemporary joke that 'Cuddesdon is more celebrated for its Vices than for its Principals.'<sup>2</sup>

Preaching to a congregation which Gore had once served as curate, Liddon said of him:

You know something of his devotion to truth and duty, of his high and varied capacity, of the unstinted charity which has spent, in the service of your souls, year after year, the few weeks of leisure which could be spared from exacting labours. To others who have had opportunities of studying his mind and character, he has seemed to combine a lofty simplicity of purpose with that insight and knowledge of the things of the Faith which makes him not unworthy to represent, even in Oxford, the great name of Pusey.<sup>3</sup>

For his part, Gore had no less admiration and affection for Liddon. He had been attracted to his sermons as an undergraduate. From that moment his respect for Liddon never varied. He valued his counsel and when he founded his religious community which eventually settled in Mirfield, it was Liddon who suggested the name Gore adopted for it.

Liddon said:

Do not call it the Society of the Christian Hope; make it objective; call it the Society of the Resurrection.<sup>4</sup>

So strong was the bond between the two men that it is a supreme irony that it should often have been suggested that it was Gore's work which

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, pp. 372, 375.

<sup>2</sup> Prestige, G.L., The Life of Charles Gore, p. 39  
(Hereinafter referred to as Prestige.)

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, pp. 376-7

<sup>4</sup> Prestige, p. 86

aggravated Liddon's final illness. Gore's essay on 'The Holy Spirit and Inspiration', in the volume of essays entitled, Lux Mundi, first published in November, 1889, so grieved Liddon that it is said to have hastened his death. Provost Edwards, for example, says simply:

When it appeared, it broke the heart of Pusey's biographer, Henry Liddon, who died within a year.<sup>1</sup>

The reasons for this need to be closely examined.

Charles Gore was born in Wimbledon on January 22nd, 1853. His father, the Honourable Charles Alexander Gore, belonged to the house of Arran but his aristocratic origins were not accompanied by wealth. His comfortable settling in a pleasant house, off Wimbledon Common, came only when he was appointed Commissioner of Woods and Forests. His mother was Augusta, Countess of Kerry. Like Liddon, Gore always felt an enormous devotion to his parents. Writing, towards the close of their lives, a birthday letter to his mother, he said:

I do indeed feel, whenever I think, that I owe you almost anything that is worth having in me. I hope I am grateful to God, as I ought to be, for it all, and pray the best prayers I can pray for you and my father.<sup>2</sup>

He was brought up within the Church of England and attended Low Church services but at the age of eight or nine years, he discovered a book called, Father Clement, written by a Protestant author. It told the story of the conversion of a Catholic priest to Protestantism. Its effect upon Gore, however, must have been very different from anything that author intended or hoped to produce. He read the description of Catholic religion, about which he knew nothing, with its confession and absolution, fasting, the Real Presence and the use of incense and immediately he said it was 'the religion for me.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edwards, David L., Leaders of the Church of England, 1824-1944, p. 259

Cf. Ramsey, A.M., From Gore to Temple, p. 7

Knox, E.A., Reminiscences of an Octogenarian, p. 125

Vidler, A.R., The Church in An Age of Revolution, p. 193

<sup>2</sup> Prestige, p.3

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p.4

From a very early age, it seems to have been taken for granted by Gore and his family that he would be ordained. This was not because the family was narrowly religious. His interests were probably wider than Liddon's and his environment gave him a broader outlook and an interest in wider culture. One of his brothers became a lawyer. Another played both cricket and tennis for England. Gore went up to Balliol College, Oxford, during the mastership of Jowett. It is said that his study walls at Cuddesdon were hung with two portraits. One was of the saintly Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln and the other of Benjamin Jowett 'to remind him when he was pressing an argument too far.'<sup>1</sup>

Now his friendship with Henry Scott Holland, whom he had known all his life as a neighbour in Wimbledon, developed and the two became very close and remained so until Holland's death in 1918. When he died, Gore said of him:

For the last forty years and more, there was no question, speculative or practical, which has presented itself to my mind, on which I have not found myself asking, "What will Holland say?" and been disposed to feel that I must be wrong, if I turned out to be thinking differently from him.<sup>2</sup>

In 1875 he was made a Fellow of Trinity College and in the following year was ordained deacon on December 21st. Two years later he became a priest. Vacations were spent serving in parishes in Bootle and Liverpool end, in 1880, Bishop Mackarness of Oxford offered him the position of Vice-principal of Cuddesdon in succession to Edward Willis.

When Liddon suggested that he become the first Principal Librarian of the new Pusey House in 1883, Gore's acceptance was influenced by Holland's judgment that:

You could do in Oxford what no-one else at all could do.<sup>3</sup>

It was during his time in the Librarianship that Gore did his most

<sup>1</sup> Chadwick, O., The Founding of Cuddesdon, p. 122

<sup>2</sup> Prestige, p. 18

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 52

formative work including the essay in Lux Mundi and his Bampton Lectures on The Incarnation of the Son of God in 1891.

In September, 1893, Gore was inducted to the benefice of Radley, just five miles from Oxford. But, although he was still within such easy reach of the university city and friends, the move was not a success. He seems not to have understood the ordinary country folk to whom he ministered and the work wore him down quickly. He wrote to his friend, E.S. Talbot:

I am very doubtful whether it was not a dire mistake coming to a country parish - not that I can see what other course was open, practically. The responsibilities of a country parish are to me at present crushing and its refreshments not great.<sup>1</sup>

The result was that, as was also true of Liddon, his experience of parochial work was very limited. Gore remained only eight months after which his health broke and he was forced to take a holiday. Fortunately for him, he was then offered a canonry at Westminster, a position very much to his liking. His contribution to the life of the Abbey is described in terms very reminiscent of those used of Liddon's work at St. Paul's:

In those few years he had altered the very nature of the Abbey's great appeal to Englishmen. He, more than any in our time, helped to make that memorial to the illustrious dead a place once more of hope and comfort for the living. The mists of the dead past yielded to the sunlight of present comfort and hope for the future. Men and women of every class and type, busy men, sick men, men who rarely went to church, were drawn to those Lenten services, attracted to a man who practised what he preached and preached nothing beyond the compass of ordinary men to understand and do. They would spend precious half-hours in the waiting queue rather than risk the disappointment of being turned away.

And when the doors opened, every available space from which the

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 156

preacher's voice could be heard was quickly and silently filled.<sup>1</sup>

Again, as with Liddon, it was his preaching that had the greatest effect upon people. The scene in the abbey is recalled in these words:

The choir-boys in their pageantry of white and red, the clergy following, and last, the preacher whose conviction and magnetism had brought the great congregation together. And when evensong was finished and he went up into the pulpit, there was in his eyes a hint of perplexity, of wistfulness, almost of doubt, as he looked down on that sea of upturned faces; till, with a characteristic twist of his shoulders, he shook off a momentary mood of contemplation, and his clearly enunciating and penetrating voice broke the silence. He said nothing that the youngest could not understand nor the wisest fail to appreciate as essential truth and the refined ore of intense labour and research; and behind every simple statement of faith he put the force of his own triumphant conviction. Before that argument, that plain tale told so plainly (and yet with such consummate art), difficulties of faith seemed to vanish and even workaday anxieties to fade.<sup>2</sup>

Gore became Bishop of Worcester in 1902 and when that diocese was finally found to be too unwieldy as urban areas expanded, Gore moved to become Bishop of the new see of Birmingham which was created out of it. He was translated to Oxford in 1911 where, sadly, his final years of episcopal office reveal him as a rather tiresome hunter of heretics, several times threatening resignation in defence of what he thought was orthodoxy. Liddon had travelled extensively in Europe and Egypt. Gore travelled even more widely, notably to India to see the work of the Oxford Mission. Prestige reports that when Gore went to the United States of America in 1918 they had never met such a voracious reader nor one

<sup>1</sup> Gore, John, Charles Gore, Father and Son, p. 80

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 81-2

who was acquainted with so wide a field of literature.

He says:

On his journey to Washington, he was found in the railway coach with a pile of books beside him on the floor. He was actually engaged on a novel of Arnold Bennett, but among the other books were a new Greek commentary on the New Testament, volumes of economics and theology, and a treatise on the social and political adjustments required after the world war.<sup>1</sup>

When, in 1919, Gore retired from the see of Oxford, his work was by no means finished. He took a lectureship in King's College, London, made his last visit to India and wrote several books, including his three volumes of the Reconstruction of Belief. In his final years, he remained remarkably active despite deteriorating health until he died on January 22nd, 1932.

Gore merits careful consideration more than fifty years after his death on several counts. His influence within the Church of England of his day was enormous. Speaking first of Randall Davidson, Canon Lloyd says:

There were, however, at least two other men of whom it could be said that every word they uttered was widely listened to, and really counted. They were Charles Gore, bishop first of Worcester and then of Oxford and Hensley Henson, first canon of Westminster and then Dean of Durham and Bishop of Hereford and later of Durham. No one else, not even Talbot of Winchester, or Percival of Hereford, or, among the laity, Lord Halifax, counted as these three men did.<sup>2</sup>

Hensley Henson himself, whose appointment to the see of Hereford, was bitterly opposed by Gore, graciously said of him:

I judge him to have been the most considerable English Churchman of his time, not the most learned, nor the most eloquent, but so

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 413

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd, Roger, The Church of England 1900-1965, p. 77

learned, so eloquent, so versatile and so energetic that he touched the life of this generation at more points, and more effectively, than any of his contemporaries.<sup>1</sup>

Gore's rise to prominence came quickly and Dr. Chadwick claims that he exerted more influence in the Church of England by the end of 1894, six years before he became a bishop, than did most of the bishops.<sup>2</sup>

Horton Davies asserts that William Temple:

admitted his indebtedness to Gore as a paramount influence.

In his dedication to Studies in the Spirit and Truth of Christianity (1917), Temple acknowledged his gratitude to Gore as "one from whom I have learnt more than any other now living of the Spirit of Christianity."<sup>3</sup>

Davies also says that on many occasions in Temple's public life, when he had to decide whether or not to accept preferments or appointments, Gore was consulted as a second father.

Prestige concludes his biography of Gore by saying:

Last of all come the words of a distinguished theologian who was never a blind disciple of Gore, and not infrequently criticised his judgment: "Though I have had many tutors in Christ, he was perhaps above all others my father; and so far as I can picture Jesus Christ, I picture Him as not unlike the father whom I have lost!"<sup>4</sup>

Horton Davies identifies the unnamed distinguished theologian as William Temple.<sup>5</sup>

But for this study the most important fact about Gore is not his influence as churchman or counsellor so much as his significance as a

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Albert Mansbridge, March 25th, 1932, in Letters of Herbert Hensley Henson, ed. E.F. Braley, pp. 68-9

<sup>2</sup> Chadwick, O., The Victorian Church, Part II, p. 106

<sup>3</sup> Davies, H., Worship and Theology in England, 1900-65, p. 151

<sup>4</sup> Prestige, p. 538

<sup>5</sup> Davies, H., Worship and Theology in England 1900-65, p. 151n.

theologian. Here again Davies is in no doubt. He describes Gore and Temple as:

the two leading theologians of the Anglican Communion in the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

The assertion is somewhat bold for a writer who is only covering the period up to 1965.

Dr. Alec Vidler is more precise when he calls Gore:

the most prominent and influential Anglican theologian of the first quarter of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup>

As with Liddon, the area of theology in which Gore's most vital work was done, and for which he is most remembered, is that of Christology. The following assessment of it is given by Dr. Michael Ramsey:

Of Anglican works on the Incarnation none had a more formative influence than Charles Gore's Bampton Lectures, delivered in 1891, with the title, The Incarnation of the Son of God. In this book we see what were to be the chief characteristics of Gore's teaching throughout his life, and we see also the opening up of a line of exposition of the Incarnation which was, in the main, to be followed in Anglican theology for many years to come.<sup>3</sup>

There is clearly no lack of support for the view that in Liddon and Gore we are confronted with two men of great interest, whose influence on the English Church has been very significant. In their separate generations they were representatives of and spokesmen for an important wing of the Church of England. The closeness and intensity of their involvement with one another adds a peculiar interest to their work, especially if, despite all their affinities and similarities, judgments such as those with which this chapter began are made about

<sup>1</sup> Davies, H., Worship and Theology in England, 1900-1965, p. 150  
<sup>2</sup> Vidler, A.R., The Church in an Age of Revolution, p. 193  
<sup>3</sup> Ramsey, A.M., From Gore to Temple, p. 16

their respective theological positions. Those judgments hint that the times in which the two men lived and worked were challenging ones for Christian theology. Liddon was profoundly disturbed by the ferocity of the onslaught on orthodox faith of which he was aware, especially from German Rationalism. In 1865, he recorded:

November 14 - Read some of Strauss's new Life of Jesus, and felt wretched. His cold infidelity chills one's soul to the core.<sup>1</sup> Gore was no less aware of the challenges in his day. He began his Reconstruction of Belief by saying

The world in which we live today can only be described as chaotic in the matter of religious beliefs ..... wherever men and women are to be found who care about religion and feel its value, and who at the same time feel bound, as they say, "to think for themselves", there we are apt to discover the prevailing note - not the only note, but the prevailing note - to be that of uncertainty and even bewilderment, coupled very often with a feeling of resentment against the Church or against organized religion on account of what is called its "failures".<sup>2</sup>

Neither could be accused of living in an ivory tower, out of touch with the real world. One thing they had in common was that they were incredibly well and widely read. Lord Acton writing to Gladstone in March, 1844, could say:

Liddon is in contact with all that is doing in the world of thought.<sup>3</sup>

Prestige comments on the speed and comprehensiveness of Gore's reading:

He perused with savage swiftness each new book of importance, and gutted it in his mind of all but its essential practical utility.

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 82

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 1

<sup>3</sup> Johnston, p. 309

A characteristic if exaggerated comment was made by Gore to one of his correspondents on the publication of the third volume of Hastings' immense Dictionary of the Bible, which contains 1,792 columns: "I read it all through last night! There is nothing interesting."<sup>1</sup>

Their reading led them to recognise that the challenges to the Christian faith, whether from Biblical criticism, science or wherever, were not concerned merely with peripheral matters but with the fundamental doctrine of the Christian gospel. Consequently, their concentration was with the doctrine which both held to be central to Christian truth, the doctrine of the Person of Christ.

The opportunity to give the Bampton Lectures in Oxford came to each of them somewhat unexpectedly and each chose to use this major apologetic opportunity to expound Christology as it is expressed in the creeds and conciliar definitions and to defend it. The respective titles they chose, namely The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and The Incarnation of the Son of God indicate a difference of approach to the subject but for each this doctrine was the linchpin of the faith and both sought to commend the Catholic understanding of it. The examination of these lectures will form a major part of this study.

My aim will be to see how each went about the vindication of orthodox Christology, in their respective contemporary situations, and at the same time to trace any development or movement of thought which took place between them.

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 222

Chapter Two - Liddon's Early Writings

In 1861, Liddon was invited to become the first Vicar of St. Albans, Holborn. He consulted Pusey and found him less than enthusiastic at the prospect. Pusey wrote to him on the 5th August saying:

We want a dam against all this wild speculation on Holy Scripture and the Faith; and your calling is to do what lies in one man with most of life, please God, before him. It is amazing what with God's help may be done by one concentrated energy. The Westminster Review speaks of one who, not without effect, gave thirty years of life to oppose Voltaire. Mr. Hubbard would sympathise with you if you tell him that you think your calling to be, or that your calling is thought to be, to concentrate yourself in resisting Rationalism.<sup>1</sup>

In the outcome Liddon accepted Pusey's advice and there is good reason to think that the role which Pusey saw for him was both natural and congenial to him. Certainly, if he did not entirely please Pusey since he became a pulpit apologist rather than the writer of commentaries for which Pusey hoped, he largely accepted the role. That it was a conscious choice is evidenced by the title and preface of his first volume of sermons. It was published in 1865 under the significant title, Some Words for God, which was later changed to University Sermons.

Liddon explains his aims and purposes in selecting the sermons. His original intention had been to produce a volume with a common theme. He wanted to show that what was usually, though vaguely, described as 'Liberalism' in contemporary thought could be traced to a Christian source. But, he goes on:

The plan of attempting any thing like a course of Sermons was abandoned in deference to what seemed to be a higher duty in a Christian Preacher, that namely, of dealing as well as he can with such misapprehensions respecting truths of faith or morals as he

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 62

knows to be actually current among those whom he has to address.<sup>1</sup> He firmly opted, therefore, for a variety of topic. A glance at the index confirms that his intention was realised. The sermons covered a wide range from 'God and the Soul' to 'The Law of Progress', from 'The Lessons of the Holy Manger' to 'Immortality'. Liddon's own assessment is that:

The sermons contained in this volume have little in common with each other beyond a certain apologetic character, such as is suggested by the title.<sup>2</sup>

The roots of his apologetic concern should probably be traced back to his earliest environment and the atmosphere of Evangelical piety in which he was nurtured. Both his mother and her sister-in-law, Aunt Louisa Liddon, had been trained in the Evangelical school and impressed upon the young Henry the full seriousness of the Christian religion. For them sound faith and true devotion were the results of constant vigilance against the enemies, within and without, who would lure the Christian from the straight and narrow path. That discipleship involved a kind of warfare against evil and error was a fact of which Liddon was made aware from the first and what he learned at home was confirmed when he went away to boarding school at the age of ten. His biographer says:

The only religious instructions which he received were the vigorous and impressive anti-Roman discourses with which Dr. Hodges, the Vicar of Lyme, tried to protect his flock each week from one of the least imminent of their dangers.<sup>3</sup>

The mood of watchful self-defence encouraged in his earliest years was just as necessary when he exchanged his Evangelical earnestness for the similar intensity of Tractarianism. There was more at stake, however, than the protection of his own churchmanship from

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., University Sermons, Preface to the First Edition, p. viii  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. vii  
<sup>3</sup> Johnston, p. 5

critics within the Church. He was concerned with the presentation of the gospel and its commendation within the world in general. He was convinced that its neglect imperilled a man's soul eternally and went about trying to influence people towards its acceptance with energy. Entries like the following appear in his diary in May, 1859, immediately after he took up residence in St. Edmund Hall:

Dined at Ch. Ch.; -----'s room afterwards. A conversation in which I tried to persuade him that we are really answerable for the souls of the undergraduates.

A painful feeling that I have done no real good today to any one. If my Oxford life is to be like this, I cannot go on. It is not saving souls. It is a waste of strength.

Entries of this kind occur again and again in his diary at this time. He devotes himself to anyone with whom he comes into contact. On one day, when he had taken the train to Wantage to see a dying man, he notes about other people whom he met:

Gave X a "Steps to the Altar", an "Invitation"; and a porter at Didcot a copy of the Vicar of Wantage's sermon and a Ridley's "Holy Communion"; and a "Lyra Innocentium" to ----- . O Lord, I thank thee..

As Pro-proctor he avails himself of the opportunities of his office to speak to those whom he arrests about their souls, as he did to all others about him. He records:

Saw the messenger and had a talk with him about his prayers etc., which led me to see how very much there is to do.

A long talk with our Hall messenger boy about his soul. He is sadly ignorant of Divine Truth.<sup>1</sup>

His motivation in accosting men about their souls in this fashion is clear from a sermon he preached on the 'Aim and Principles of Church Missions' in which he said:

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, pp. 50-1

All with whom we pass our daily life, all whom we meet when travelling, all who pass us in the street, all who are at this moment in this crowded church, are seen of God to be written among the living in Jerusalem, or among the dead. The division lasts from age to age; it is not softened away by possible cases of what looks to us like spiritual neutrality; it is absolutely exhaustive of the race of men. The line may be passed on this side of the grave; those who have lived may lapse into death; and those who are counted dead before God may rise to newness of life. But in another world there will be no such passage across the gulf that is fixed between the place of torment and the bosom of Abraham. There is no repentance in the grave or pardon offered to the unholy dead. The tree will lie as it falls; and God's love will not falsify those threatenings against sin which it, no less than His justice, has so often uttered in the ear of the sinner.<sup>1</sup>

A man who believes that human response to the Christian message in this world is as decisive as that passage suggests and who is convinced that he possesses the truth to which response must be made cannot be indifferent when he feels that attacks are being made upon it or that it is being misrepresented. For him theology is no academic pastime but a matter of life and death. Apologetic concern is simply the natural accompaniment of evangelistic passion.

Precisely because of the seriousness of what is at stake in the Christian religion, doubt and speculation are unacceptable and amount to trifling with the truth. Careless educated folk and strong, buoyant young people may be able, Liddon says:

to speak of religious truth as versatile and impalpable; to depreciate or ridicule the prophetic office of the Church of Christ; to insist on the equal claims of contradictory interpretations; to indulge in feats of ingenuity which make the sacred

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Special Occasions, p. 37

words of Holy Scripture mean anything or nothing; to hazard the false and humiliating paradox, that in the things of God faith befits only the infancy of mankind, and that doubt and speculation are the higher and more intellectual notes of maturer years and of a more advanced civilisation; and so at length to volatise the Divine message, that, while God affirms that He has made a Revelation, they can bring themselves to believe that hardly any one nameable truth has been certainly revealed.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon is sure that the sinner concerned with his eternal security can afford no such luxuries. He says:

But that broken-hearted, desponding sinner, - but that poverty-stricken, homeless wanderer, - nay your educated man himself, when he comes to lie, face to face with eternity, upon his bed of death, needs something stronger and better than the residuary probabilities which may perchance have been suffered to escape from some crucible of a destructive criticism.<sup>2</sup>

Liddon offers certainty in place of probability. He shares with Newman the conviction that religion and dogma are inseparable<sup>3</sup> although he recognises that the dogmatic approach causes offence in some parts of the contemporary Church. Describing this anti-dogmatic point of view, he says:

"But at least", it exclaims, "revelation shall not be dogmatic. If she is still to meet with public acceptance, Christianity must abandon the pretension to offer a fixed, sharply-defined body of truth to the acceptance or rejection of the soul of man." Let the religion of Jesus only come to the men of our time as a finished poem; and they will read, they will learn, they will love it. They will not inquire too accurately whether it be literally true. Nor will it put such force upon their thought and will as

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, pp. 109-10

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 110

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Newman, J.H., Apologia Pro Vita Sua, pp. 109-11, 132

to make any violent or serious change in the natural current of their life. They will indeed be much as they would have been without it. And yet, it will exercise a kindly, gentle sway over thought and society. It will breathe upon human character a soft, yet elevating influence. And if it exacts little intellectual homage, and exerts no tangible moral force, it will at least have the merit of provoking no keen resistance. Such, we are told, must be the religion of our day. Intellect has condemned the principle of religious dogma; and religion is accordingly bidden to accommodate herself to the changed circumstances and imperious necessities of the time.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon has no sympathy with such an approach. He suspects it of insincerity. He says,

On close inspection it will probably be found that the dislike of clear doctrinal statements is only a disguised form of opposition to the truth which those statements embody.<sup>2</sup>

He is often apt to suspect that those who experience doubt do so because they lack seriousness in their concern with religion. They could believe if only they would. The task of the apologist is, therefore, to defend and commend the truth given, once for all, by revelation in Christ and transmitted through Bible and Church. To be a "dam" against opposition to the faith, as Pusey suggested, would be an entirely appropriate image for the apologist as Liddon conceived him.

In his own day Liddon was recognised as a man of great intensity and conviction. During the time of his Vice-principalship of Cuddesdon Theological College, Bishop Wilberforce noted that he possessed:

a strength of will - an ardour - a restlessness - a dominant

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 183  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 183

imagination - which makes him unable to give to the young men any tone save exactly his own tone.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, if his earnestness was in large part the result of his religious experience and theological style, it was also an intrinsic element in his psychological make-up. He was a man of fierce loyalties. Committed to a cause or a person, his allegiance rarely wavered. His energetic support could be relied upon. If he was sometimes depressed by the growing force of opposition to orthodoxy, it never resulted in a paralysis of effort. He took on the enemy with energy, courage and robustness and used the opportunities available to him to refute those movements of thought which threatened the faith as he saw it. When, in a sermon, he describes the attitude of St. Paul, it is difficult to avoid the impression of some self-projection. He writes:

He is invading the region of human thought; and as he fights for God, he is sternly resolved upon conquest. He sees rising before him the lofty fortress of hostile errors; they must be reduced and razed. Every mountain fastness to which the enemy of Light and Love can retreat must be scaled and destroyed; and all the thought of the human soul which is hostile to the authority of Divine truth, must be "led away as a prisoner of war" into the camp of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The Bishop of Oxford, in a final chapter he contributed to Liddon's biography, suggested that perhaps Liddon was too fond of controversy. Francis Paget, who had known Liddon since coming to Christ Church as an undergraduate in 1869, wrote,

While he was too good a man to love anything more than truth and peace, there were elements in his character which made him peculiarly unlikely to hang back when the claims of truth seemed to make it necessary to forgo the enjoyment of peace. When he

<sup>1</sup> Russell, G.W.E., Dr. Liddon, p. 11  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 166

was a small boy, there was a feud - if the story is rightly recalled - between his school and another. It was agreed that the feud should be fought out by champions from either side; his school fellows discreetly chose him their champion, until further notice; and day after day when morning school was over, he went out, ready to do battle with any boy who might come from the other camp. The choice, and the acceptance of it, and the indefatigable fulfilment of the task which it involved, all seem to find some representation in his later life. And the consequences of a perpetual championship when one is grown up, though they may be less obvious, are more serious than those which attend the office at a preparatory school.<sup>1</sup>

Again here the appropriateness of Pusey's choice of Liddon as the champion of orthodoxy is borne out. Russell, on the other hand, in his short life of Liddon, denies that there was any untoward readiness for controversy in his personality. Nevertheless he says:

When a sacred cause was imperilled, he flung himself into the thick of the fighting with absolute and calculated self-surrender. He did not stand aloof to see which side was going to win. To imagine that he loved controversy is ridiculously to misconceive the man. He simply regarded it as a duty which could not be shunned with unfaithfulness, when the Honour and Truth of God was at stake.<sup>2</sup>

This combativeness influences his preaching style in these early years even when he is not dealing with the more controversial issues. He has one ear constantly open to his critics and is ready to answer them. He anticipates questions and objections which may be raised against what he is saying.<sup>3</sup> For example, in an essay on 'The Priest

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 398

<sup>2</sup> Russell, G.W.E., Dr. Liddon, pp. 192-3

<sup>3</sup> His method here is reminiscent of that of St. Thomas Aquinas and William Paley.

in His Inner Life",<sup>1</sup> he makes the innocuous statement that the Church of England requires the priest to read the office twice daily. Liddon commends the practice and explains its value and then immediately turns to a consideration of the objections which may be raised introducing each with a phrase like 'It will objected that' or 'It will be asked'. Similarly, in the sermon on the Whole Counsel of God, he discusses the certainty that everlasting punishment awaits the sinner. If Christ has made anything sure, Liddon thinks, this is it. But he goes on:

Brethren! I seem to interpret to myself the thought of your hearts: men are won, you say, by the mercies rather than the terrors of the Lord.

And so he proceeds to deal with the objection.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes the objections are actual rather than simply imagined. His Christmas sermon on the 'Lessons of the Holy Manger'<sup>3</sup> is not allowed to progress very far until he has refuted naturalistic accounts of the story of the shepherds. Surprisingly, he calls Strauss to his aid in doing so but then has to go on to deal with the fact that Strauss himself offers the theory that the story is a myth, the creation of the after-thought of the Church.

Liddon was an instinctive apologist. He would have been one in any age. But there were strong factors in his current situation which he saw as demanding that he should make this his particular task. Although his life up to 1870 was mostly lived in the comparative seclusion of Oxford, he was in no way insulated from events and movements in the wider world. Even his opponents had to admit that he had taken the trouble to acquaint himself with developments in the world of thought and was remarkably well-informed. C. Kegan Paul said of him:

We admit that the opposite side to our own is put

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 145

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 189

most forcibly, that the writer does not inveigh as do so many others, against that of which he is ignorant, but that, as a man of culture and deep and varied learning, he has looked the problems of our modern life in the face and deliberately adopted the Catholic resolution of them.<sup>1</sup>

Whether Liddon actually arrived at the Catholic position in such a cool, reflective manner is questionable - it seems to have been more the result of the personal influence of Pusey - but it is a fair description of Liddon's awareness of the contemporary intellectual climate. His early writings reveal Liddon as possessed by a growing sense of the menace of the forces opposing not only Christianity but religious belief in general. Indeed, he appears to develop something of a siege mentality. A letter to the Bishop of Peterborough, in 1867, says:

Some years ago, at Oxford, you said to me that "with infidelity around us, Christians ought to understand each other." And since then, although public attention has been given to other matters, this reason for union has not become weaker. The questions raised year by year appear to me to be more and more fundamental - to strike at almost Theistic as well as Christian truth.<sup>2</sup>

His sermons give clear indications of his feelings at this time. In one on 'Our Lord's Example the Strength of His Ministers', he says:

Let us not forget that the emissaries of error, ever watchful and active, stand by to make the most of our shortcomings.<sup>3</sup>

This was in 1860. Three years later, he writes:

Theology is a focus of intellectual activity: it is ever being attacked; it is continually adapting its terminology and its literature to the successive phases of human thought; it is

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 80

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 85

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 113

always and jealously guarding the integrity of that Divine deposit which was committed to the Apostles.<sup>1</sup>

In 1864, he contrasts the progress of science with that of religion when he says:

Never before in the history of the world were the lower districts of human knowledge so wonderfully enlarged, as has been the case in our own day, through the astonishing triumphs of the natural sciences. Never before in the history of Christendom has it seemed as if those higher summits of thought, which can only be reached by faith, were shut out from the view of so many noble souls by a cloud of almost Pagan darkness. And when in the imperishable creeds of Christendom, essential dogmatic truth, like the lightning flash playing around the mountain peak, discovers for a moment to some enthusiastic experimentalist the existence of a higher world than that in which he so meritoriously pursues his observations, he is sometimes rather irritated than delighted and cheered by the discovery.<sup>2</sup>

Liddon identifies a number of enemies whom he regards as responsible for reducing the world to its state of 'almost Pagan darkness' in these early writings.

Chief among them are those who he links together under the inclusive term 'rationalist'. Here are included Bishop Colenso for his work in Pentateuchal criticism, the contributors to 'Essays and Reviews', a volume of writings published in 1860 and intended as 'an attempt to illustrate the advantage derivable to the cause of religious and moral truth, from a free handling, in a becoming spirit of subjects peculiarly liable to suffer by the repetition of conventional language, and from traditional methods of treatment',<sup>3</sup> and, above all, Germans like Hegel, Baur and Strauss. Liddon saw

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 208  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 91-2  
<sup>3</sup> Essays and Reviews, Prefactory Note to the reader

Rationalism as guilty of creating spiritual anarchy through its throwing off of authority. He complained that it rejected all ideas of revelation and the supernatural and surrendered any notion of fixed truth.

He describes the spirit of Rationalism as follows:

In human opinion all is true and yet nothing is true.

All truth is partial and limited; all statements of truth are true and false at once. Contradiction is essential to real knowledge; you only complete an assertion when you have stated its contradictory. Truth does not admit of simple positive statements; "its real utterances must perforce flow in a ceaseless rhythm of antitheses." Name this temper of mind as you will; it is in truth the genuine spirit of Hegel. And such a form of intellectual activity is necessarily hostile to the Christian principle of dogma.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, Liddon asserts, although Hegelian philosophy may relativize truth, its exponents are not above exalting their assumptions and prejudices practically to the level of fixed axioms. Strauss, for instance, objects to the story of the shepherds and the angels on the grounds that it involves the admission that angels exist and perform a ministry for God. Strauss argues that angels appear late on the Old Testament scene and are no proper part of Jewish thought but are imported from Babylon. In any case, there is no useful purpose served by their appearance in this story. Liddon, however, believes that:

the real objection lies not merely against angels, but against the whole principle of the supernatural. No evidence of particular facts can make head against the force of an invincible prejudice which has already condemned them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 91  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 192

It is, first and foremost, this refusal to countenance the supernatural in any form and thus a tendency to set limits to God's activity which offends Liddon about the Rationalists.

The disparagement of revelation and the supernatural encourages a criticism of Scripture which Liddon finds abhorrent. For him, the Bible is 'the very voice of God.'<sup>1</sup>

The Rationalists in indulging in the kind of criticism which questions the historicity of some parts of Scripture and traditional ideas about such matters as the authorship of the Pentateuch or the Psalms and the literal truth of many passages are not merely mistaken but, in Liddon's eyes, even guilty of moral failure.

They refuse to put themselves under the authority of God and with arrogant presumption challenge his word. Liddon's dispute with the Rationalists is, therefore, much more than an academic one. Their assertions have serious implications for the nature of God's dealings with men and the method of his self-revelation to them. The Rationalists strike at the very basis of the Gospel and Liddon finds it hard to believe that they are other than wilfully anti-Christian.

Materialism receives less attention from Liddon than Rationalism but he is no less hostile to it because it too refuses to countenance the supernatural and because of its denial of the existence of any reality beyond the physical, or, at least, its agnosticism about any such reality. Liddon says:

It accepts what it sees, touches, eats and smells. It is sceptical of all that lies beyond. Of course it will shrug its shoulders when you speak of a world, of movements, of beings, inaccessible to sense . . . . Those who do not seriously believe in the existence of a Personal Living God, unfettered and all-powerful in His action, are in no position whatever to understand,

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 204

I will not say the precise definition of the supernatural, but the bare possibility of any thing which could deserve the name. They "believe" in nature; and the frontier of nature is the boundary of their creed.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon finds the tendency towards materialism encouraged by the growth of science and empiricism. Here too he notices a refusal to allow for the possibility of the operation of the supernatural. He objects:

The prevalence of experimental methods of inquiry leads many minds among us tacitly to assume that nothing is real, the truth of which cannot be established and tested by observation.<sup>2</sup>

The challenge of Darwinism does not yet receive any specific mention in Liddon's work but he does sense a threat in the growing prestige of the scientific method which he already sees as imposing a veto on metaphysics and theological claims to knowledge. His remark about the irritation experienced by the 'enthusiastic experimentalist' who stumbles across some pointer to a higher world was noted above.<sup>3</sup>

An older enemy than science identified by Liddon is Pantheism. In his sermon on 'The Risen Life', he shows how seriously he regards it. He says:

Pantheism confuses and crushes those great distinctions with which metaphysical science reverently surrounds and fences the idea of God, throned, in His majestic separation from creatures, at the summit of human thought. It huddles together in the entanglement of a hopeless intellectual disorder the finite and Infinite, Substance and the phenomenon, Cause and its effect. Instead of seeing in natural order the manifest imprint of Creative Intelligence, it can even suppose that intelligence itself is the unaccountable product of a still more inexplicable

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford,  
pp. 265-6

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 91

<sup>3</sup> see above, p. 31

order. With perfect consistency Pantheism does not tolerate a distinction between natural life, or natural intelligence, and a sphere which transcends them. For such a distinction presupposes the idea of God, the absolutely free and Almighty Creator, inflicting His Will upon a passive creation by the establishment of two distinct conditions of intelligent and conscious being. And the very idea of God Himself is destroyed by the annihilation of those distinctions which guard, to our apprehensions, His incommunicable nature and creative energy. Pantheism cannot distinguish between nature and that which is above it; because to Pantheism nature is everything. To Pantheism nature is God, or God is nature. And in order to believe in the supernatural, we must first of all believe in the existence of a Being, Who is distinct from, and superior to, the work of His hands.<sup>1</sup>

If Pantheism is true, the supernatural which is so fundamental to Liddon's thought disappears again and, although he does not develop the point in detail at this stage, the ideas of a divine incarnation and of a uniquely divine Christ become impossible. His opposition here too, therefore, is to a philosophy which undermines the Gospel as he understands it.

Finally, in these early years of his ministry, Liddon is very conscious of an attack upon one particular area of Christian belief, namely, the doctrine of the last things. In 1864, he was invited by Dean Stanley to preach in Westminster Abbey. In February of that year, the judicial committee of the Privy Council had heard the case against Rowland Williams and H.B. Wilson whose contributions to Essays and Reviews were alleged to be inconsistent with the formularies of the Church of England. Liddon replied to Stanley's invitation, declining to preach. He wrote:

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 265

The recent judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has thrown not a few minds among us into the greatest complexity ..... There is a current report that you will ask Professor Jowett, Mr. Maurice, and other clergymen of the same school to preach at the abbey ..... If, at the present serious juncture, I should involuntarily range myself side by side with men who notoriously rejoice at the recent disastrous Judgment, such conduct on my part would be understood by not a few people to mean that, after all, I believed the questions at issue to be of little real importance.<sup>1</sup>

On February 21st, 1864, in a sermon preached at the Ordination Service of the Bishop of Salisbury, Liddon made clear one of his major objections. He said:

That judgment would seem, among other points, to have ruled, that it is permissible in law for a clergyman to express a "hope" for the final restoration of the lost. No man can know anything of his own sinful heart who does not know how much there is within him which is ready to welcome such a permission; but the question is a question not of the inclinations of a sinful creature, but of the Revealed Will of a Holy God. May we, consistently with that Will, indulge that "hope"? Assuredly not. For nothing is more certain than that by the terms of the Christian revelation any such hope is delusive and vain, since it is opposed to the awful Truth, that they who die out of favour with God and are lost, are lost irrevocably, lost for ever.<sup>2</sup>

All matters relating to death, judgment and punishment Liddon took with the utmost seriousness and preached on them with great severity. In a collection of private meditations entitled The End of Life, which he

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, pp. 72-3

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 135

compiled in 1858, Liddon considers both the nature of punishment and its consequences for himself in the context of the punishment of the rebel angels. He notes that God's wrath was not stayed by considerations of the number or rank of those who had sinned against him, nor by the possibility of his glory being advanced if he allowed them to repent, and he reminds himself that God punished the rebel angels for a single sin only and did not consider his former relationship of love with them. All this Liddon takes as sign of the severity with which his own sins will be treated. In hell, Liddon reflects:

there are probably souls condemned for single unrepented sins, and there may well be thousands.<sup>1</sup>

Taking so literal and personal a view of Biblical teaching about eschatology, Liddon could not regard attacks upon it lightly.

When Pusey expressed the wish that Liddon should fulfil the role of 'a dam against all this wild speculation on Holy Scripture and the Faith', Liddon would both feel it to be a congenial task and recognise a clear need for it to be undertaken in the contemporary situation. Any hesitation he showed would only concern his personal adequacy for the task. This becomes clearer still when the precise content of 'the Faith' and the impact of the various attacks upon it, as Liddon understood them, are appreciated. Until this point, Liddon's theological outlook has been mentioned only in the most general terms. His early writings must now be searched in order to find whether he had yet developed any personal emphases or a doctrinal focus of his own so as to be able to understand what he was anxious to defend and why he felt the sceptical, critical and empiricist thought of his day to be so acutely menacing.

It has been shown that his earliest volume of sermons had a unity of apologetic concern rather than theological content. Style

<sup>1</sup> Rowell, Geoffrey, Hell and the Victorians, pp. 109-10

rather than subject matter dictated the selection. Other early sermons were published separately and later most of them were collected in two volumes, published after his death. The first, entitled Clerical Life and Work, emphasised the responsibilities of ministerial vocation and contained a large proportion of sermons preached at Ordination and Consecration Services. The second, Sermons Preached on Special Occasions, 1860-1889, was a collection of sermons preached in a variety of churches for such bodies as the Church Penitentiary Association and St. George's Mission in East London.

The selection of the earliest sermons to be preserved was not, therefore, in any way dictated by any theological concern. Had Liddon or his later editors been anxious to choose works intended to sum up the essence of his thought, they might have chosen differently. But, if a common thread can be discerned in sermons chosen for publication on the basis of other criteria and without aiming at a deliberate presentation of the core of his thought, this must be significant. If a common theme can be identified in sermons whose publication was even somewhat random or fortuitous this is a surer indication of where his real interests and convictions lay than any self-conscious presentation of the 'essential Henry Liddon.'

A theologian or preacher who has thought his way through to a personal theology will usually be found, however all-embracing the range of topics he discusses, to depend upon a few key concepts in the light of which he interprets everything else.

In Liddon's case, there is good reason to think that such basic beliefs would show themselves early in his work. A school friend, Frederick Harrison, said of him:

What was Canon Liddon like as a boy of seventeen?

Well, so far as I can remember, he was at seventeen just what he was at twenty-seven, or thirty-seven, or forty-seven - sweet, grave, thoughtful, complete. Others perhaps recall growth,

change, completeness coming on him in look, form, mind, and character. I cannot. To me, when I heard him preaching in St. Paul's, or heard him speak at Oxford of more recent years, he was just the same earnest, zealous, affectionate and entirely other-world nature that I remember him at seventeen . . . . His interests even then were entirely with Theology, the new Church Movement, and the preaching and teaching of the day. At seventeen Liddon was just as deeply absorbed in Dr. Pusey and his work as at twenty-seven.<sup>1</sup>

The most significant word there is 'complete'. Even Liddon's earliest works give the impression of wide erudition, comprehensiveness of thought and solid conviction. In a young man of such maturity it would not be surprising to discover some basic frame of reference, some pivotal doctrine which he has made his own and which is there from the moment at which he begins to make an impact on the Christian world. His life was spent within two brands of churchmanship which pride themselves on both their orthodoxy and comprehensiveness in Christian doctrine. Even so, in finding personal conviction within a party, he might well establish a fixed point within his thought around which satellite doctrines cohere and by which they are held together in a system or pattern.

A clue to what it might be ought to be found in his religious experience and especially in his conversion from the Evangelicalism of his family to Puseyism. Converts are naturally often more zealous in their adherence to the tenets of their adopted party than those who have grown up within it. It would be odd if Liddon did not exhibit clearly the marks of the Tractarian movement in his thinking.

In some ways the differences between the Evangelicals and the Tractarians were not great. The latter gave greater stress to the Church and Sacraments, of course, but in other areas of doctrine there was a basic unanimity of belief. Both were based on the Creeds and the

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, pp. 6-7

Thirty Nine Articles. Both would express many of their doctrines in precisely the same language. Peter Toon points out that Evangelicals did not criticise Liddon for his Bampton Lectures.<sup>1</sup>

Where Tractarianism did differ from Evangelicalism was in some of its emphases. For the latter, for example, the Atonement dominated their thought and spirituality rather than the Incarnation. Liddon himself says:

In its earlier days the Evangelical movement was mainly if not exclusively interested in maintaining a certain body of positive truth. The great doctrines which alone "make repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" seriously possible were its constant theme. The world to come, with its boundless issues of life and death, the infinite value of the one Atonement, the regenerating, purifying, guiding action of God the Holy Spirit in respect of the Christian soul, were preached to our grandfathers with a force and earnestness which are beyond controversy .....

But the Evangelical movement, partly in virtue of its very intensity, was, in respect of its advocacy of religious truth, an imperfect and one-sided movement. It laid stress only on such doctrines of Divine Revelation as appeared to its promoters to be calculated to produce a converting and sanctifying effect upon the souls of men. Its interpretation of the New Testament, - little as its leaders ever suspected this, - was guided by a traditional assumption as arbitrary and groundless as any tradition which it ever denounced. The real sources of its "Gospel" were limited to a few chapters in St. Paul's Epistles, perhaps in two of them, understood in a manner which left much else in Holy Scripture out of account; and thus the Old Testament history, and even the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded by the Evangelists, were thrown, comparatively into the background. The needs and

<sup>1</sup> Toon, Peter, Evangelical Theology, 1833-1856, p. 9

salvation of the believer, rather than the whole revealed Will of Him in Whom we believe, was the growing consideration.<sup>1</sup>

This was written towards the end of his life but it indicates some of the gaps which Liddon was aware of in Evangelical doctrine. He goes on to emphasise the lack of any developed doctrine of the Church and Sacraments. Nevertheless the omission of the Incarnation from the list of great doctrines preached is significant as is the alleged lack of interest in the life of Jesus in the Gospel record.

That the Atonement was so central to Evangelical faith, and that the focus of attention was Christ crucified rather than Christ incarnate is clear from Evangelical statements such as the following from William Wilberforce:

If we would love Him as affectionately, and rejoice in Him as triumphantly, as the first Christians did, we must learn like them to repose entire trust in Him, and to adopt the language of the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

Dr. B.M.G. Reardon confirms Liddon's assertion that what mattered to Evangelicals was individual salvation and claims that this led them: to disparage man's inherent moral capacity, although without it the preaching of repentance itself could hardly have much meaning; as also to lose sight of the wider significance of that incarnation of the Son of God whence the death on Calvary necessarily drew its efficacy.

On the other hand, he goes on to show, again underlining Liddon's suggestion, that it was precisely from the stress given to the Incarnation that the Tractarian movement drew so much of its inspiration. He says:

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Life of E.B. Pusey, D.D., vol. i, p. 255

<sup>2</sup> Wilberforce, W., Sermons (1820), i, p. 207, quoted in Reardon, B.M.G., Religious Thought in the Victorian Age, p. 27

This incarnationalist motif in Tractarian thought was to reveal its broader implications in the work of a subsequent generation of High Churchmen; but its immediate result was an enhanced appreciation of the sacramental means whereby the divine life is communicated to the believer and an insistence upon his gradual conformation to the moral pattern of Christ's own supreme example.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon's earliest sermons provide evidence for the point Reardon is making here. His first published sermon was preached on Good Friday, 1859, in Christ Church, Oxford. He entitled it, 'The Divine Victim'. In it he said:

this our Saviour, Who was judged and crucified as on this day, is "The Son Which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, Very and Eternal God". He is "the Only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God". His oneness with the Father, of Whom He was begotten before all worlds, is imaged by the connexion of the ray of light with its parent sun, from which, to the eye of sense, it seems to stream down to earth in unbroken continuity ..... And just as the impression of a seal is co-extensive with, yet distinct from, the seal which produces it, so is the Son at once equal with, yet hypostatically distinct from, the Person of the Everlasting Father, Whose Image and Impress He is.<sup>2</sup>

This is the first reference to the divinity of Christ in Liddon's writings and it is typical of him that he should be careful to state it fully with the help of the second of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Nicene Creed.

In 1860, in a sermon entitled, 'Christ's welcome to the Penitent',

<sup>1</sup> Reardon, B.M.G., Religious Thought in the Victorian Age, p. 110

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 232

he says :

It is God the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Who receives the penitent; it is "the Death and Passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and Man", which secures our reception. Nay, more, it is our Saviour, Who, besides announcing to our race the welcome which awaits sinners at the Hands of God, administers that welcome in His own Human Nature, since "God was in Christ reconciling;" administers it whether in the days of His flesh, or through the ordinances and ministers of His Church; administers it with a love which is as Divine as it is human, and as human as it is Divine.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon is saying here that the sinner's reception would be somewhat different if Christ was merely a human agent, acting on behalf of God. Christ would then be an intermediary declaring acceptance on the part of God. But, in fact, he is more than this. He is God himself, not merely communicating God's acceptance but effecting it. Liddon does not argue with the Evangelical affirmation that the needs of humanity are met by Christ and atonement made between God and man. The difference between his view and theirs is a subtle one of emphasis and approach. For the Evangelical the need for atonement demands a divine Christ. For Liddon the divine Christ makes atonement possible. Given his divinity, the death of Christ must be significant and must change the relationship of men with God. If Christ were not divine, there would be no reason to think that his death had achieved more than that of any martyr.

Liddon says,

Those who deny the Incarnation naturally do not admit that Jesus Christ offered on the Cross "a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world". But any thoughtful man who seriously and intelligently believes that God was really manifest in the Flesh,

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached on Special Occasions, p. 8

would at least have great difficulty in believing that the Incarnate Victim could die, yet with no results distinct in kind from those which follow upon the death of His own missionaries and martyrs. Christians who adore the self-humiliation of Infinite Charity in the manger-cradle at Bethlehem, will almost expect some new insights into the Mind and purposes of the Supreme Being on Mount Calvary.<sup>1</sup>

The conviction that Christ is God incarnate leads Liddon to a very high view of the Atonement. The importance of the Cross for him does not lie in its moral appeal or even its revelation of the divine love. It is a transaction through which a new situation is created, a new relationship between God and man effected. He says:

What wonder that when the Only-begotten Son " has truly suffered to reconcile His Father to us and to be a Sacrifice, not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men", the relations which previously subsisted between earth and heaven, between God and His creatures, should have been changed, and that a New Creation should have entered into History.<sup>2</sup>

He is quoting here from the second of the Thirty-Nine Articles and the unscriptural reference to Christ reconciling the Father to us is allowed to pass without comment. Elsewhere in the same sermon, when he is expounding the New Testament view of the atonement, he is careful to correct the statement by adjusting the direction of the reconciliation. Nevertheless this does not detract from the thoroughgoing and decisive nature of Christ's work.

He says:

The Apostles teach that mankind are slaves, and that Christ on the Cross furnishes their ransom. Christ crucified is voluntarily devoted and accursed. He is paying the penalty

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 235  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 238

which sin inevitably merits. He is washing human nature in the stream of His own Blood. He is reconciling sinful man to a holy, loving, but offended God.<sup>1</sup>

The satisfaction of the search for the doctrine central to Liddon's thought is now in sight. Most significant for it is the fact that Liddon follows up these words by showing that the doctrine which underwrites them is that of the divinity of Christ. So he insists:

The truth which underlies and illuminates the Apostolical language is the truth of our Saviour's Godhead.

He calls Hooker to his aid and says:

"It is," says Hooker, "the Son of God condemned, the Son of God, and no other person, crucified; which only one point of Christian belief, the infinite worth of the Son of God, is the very ground of all things believed concerning life and salvation, by that which Christ either did or suffered as man in our behalf."<sup>2</sup>

Just as the doctrine of a divine incarnation gives meaning to the atonement so it also provides Liddon with a fixed point of reference by which he can interpret Scripture. For example, he claims:

For us Christians, the whole of the Old Testament is, in different degrees and senses, Christian ground. We see Christ everywhere in Scripture, and we see God everywhere in Nature.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, the Divinity of Christ is sometimes used to guarantee the truth of Scripture. The sermon on 'The Whole Counsel of God' supplies an example. Liddon is discussing the recent judgment in the case of Fendall versus Wilson in which James Fendall brought a suit against H.B. Wilson for his contribution to Essays and Reviews. It was alleged that Wilson had said that the Bible was not in all parts the

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 236

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 236

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 197

Word of God and had in effect denied a future judgment and an eternal state of rewards and punishments.<sup>1</sup> Liddon is appalled that a temporal court has ruled 'that it is permissible in law for a clergyman to express a "hope" for the final restoration of the lost.'<sup>2</sup> The reason for his horror is clear:

If Jesus Christ has told us anything certain about the other world, we cannot doubt that the Penal fire must last for ever.<sup>3</sup>

The implication is that no serious Christian can doubt that Jesus has told us something certain. The reason is, Liddon says, that:

you can only thus empty the Words of Christ of their native power, if you will consent to forget that they are the Words of One Whose horizon was not bounded by the things of time.<sup>4</sup>

The doctrine of Christ's divinity is presented here as both the guarantee of the truth of Scripture and the starting point for the doctrine of the last things. It can be seen from this why Liddon was so concerned about attacks on the doctrine of everlasting punishment. The denial of this particular doctrine had implications for the more basic doctrine of the Incarnation. As Liddon sees it, if the veracity of Christ's teaching about judgment and the future life is called in question so is the doctrine of his divinity. Liddon puts the same point more positively when he says:

The authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, Divine and Infallible, is the true and sufficient basis of this doctrine in the Christian soul. He sanctions the anticipatory statements of the Old Testament and the dogmatic enunciations of the Apostles whom He sent. His own utterances cover the whole area of what is revealed upon the subject. He thus relieves His servants of responsibility in teaching a doctrine, against which in its fulness the unbelief

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Life of E.B. Pusey, D.D., vol. iv, pp. 43-5  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 135  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 140  
<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 141

and the passions of man would often have especial and fierce prepossessions.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the divine incarnation gives, then, internal coherence to Liddon's theological system. It binds together and gives meaning to such things as the efficacy of the atonement, the uniqueness of Scripture and the hope of rewards and punishments beyond death. To deny any one of these is to strike at the very foundation of the Christian faith because of their relation to this central doctrine and this explains the vigour and seriousness with which Liddon defends points of doctrine which others might be willing to regard as dispensable. It made it very hard for him to understand how a man like Wilson, for example, could continue to regard himself as a Christian. In Liddon's eyes he was trifling with matters of life and death.

Sometimes this insistence on the interrelatedness of doctrines sounds like a weakness. It seems to be motivated by fear that if one brick is removed, the whole Christian edifice will come tumbling down. Liddon says:

But if it were morally in our power to sacrifice one truth of the creed, we could not thereby insure the rest.<sup>2</sup>

But it would be unfair to see it merely as a negative thing. Liddon can state it more positively. To him it is part of the grandeur and beauty of the Christian faith that it holds together so completely.

He says:

The Faith is, if I may say so with reverence, so marvellously compacted, so instinct with a pervading life, as to resemble a natural organism, I had almost said a living creature ..... so in the Creed, no one truth can be misrepresented, strained, dislocated, much less withdrawn, without a certain, and frequently an ascertainable injury resulting to other truths

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford,  
p. 116

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 146

which are supposed to be still unquestioned and intact. For there are nerves and arteries which link the very extremities of Revealed Doctrine to its brain and heart; and the wound which a strain or an amputation may inflict, must in its effects extend far beyond the particular doctrine which is the immediate seat and scene of the injury.<sup>1</sup>

This is a crucial passage for the understanding of Liddon's thought. Were it not for this view of Christian doctrine as a coherent system of interlocking beliefs, he could have been a little more relaxed in his attitude to at least some of the contemporary intellectual challenges.

The linchpin in this theological system is always the divinity of Christ. This is the article of faith with which he begins and from which everything else follows. He objects strongly to those who make their own need of God the starting point for their thinking. Here again we see the change of focus which his move from Evangelicalism to Tractarianism produced. He speaks disparagingly of those who leave their selfish imprint on 'the sacred structure of Theology'. They make the assurance of the believer, or his satisfaction, the centre of 'a theological panorama, while the revealed Nature or economies of God are banished to its circumference. Thus, for example, the sense of acceptance demands a theory of justification; the doctrine of justification requires a doctrine of the Atonement; the Atonement is insufficient unless the Victim be Divine; the Divinity of the Saviour necessitates the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, if it is to be held consistently with the primal truth of the Unity of God.'<sup>2</sup> Arguments of this kind reduce Christ and his divinity to postulates of the human condition and are in this way derogatory to him. Liddon

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 125

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, pp. 286-7

prefers to begin where such arguments end. He says:

To the Apostolical Christian, the Being of God, the Natures and Person of Jesus Christ, the mysteries of His Human Life, and His seat at the Right Hand of the Majesty on high, are precious, for a higher reason than any which is personal. They open out to his soul the awful and serene beauty of that Existence, in the contemplation of Which he utterly forgets himself.<sup>1</sup>

Here is the characteristic Catholic rejection of evangelical subjectivity in favour of something more objective. The basic truths of the Christian faith are grounded not in human need for salvation but in the revelation of God. The truth which has precedence over all others concerns the person of Christ. Liddon, in the same sermon, says:

The manifested glory, the vindicated honour of Jesus Christ takes rank before all other considerations.<sup>2</sup>

Precisely what Liddon believed about the divinity of Christ is clearly set out in his sermon on the 'Lessons of the Holy Manger', preached in 1863. He writes:

My brethren, Jesus Christ is God. His Divinity is not any acquired decoration of His Human Soul in His maturer years. It is not merely the highest degree of creaturely likeness to the Universal Father ..... It is not a metaphor, it is a fact. The Godhead of Jesus is the great and solemn fact which makes the record of the Life of Jesus in the Gospel unlike any other record in the world. This fact it is which underlies and illuminates the Gospel history throughout. It is as true that Jesus Christ is God, when he lies in the manger at Bethlehem, as when the Resurrection and the Ascension have witnessed to His indestructible Life, and He reigns at the Right Hand of Power. His own references to His pre-existence are as really

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 288

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 288

proofs of His Divinity as are His more explicit declarations of this truth; since, (as was again and again shown by the great Father who, under God, carried the Church through her struggle with Arianism) if you admit Christ's existence before His Incarnation, you must perforce accept the doctrine of His Consubstantial Oneness with the Father, or you must fall back upon a theory which is really polytheistic - the theory of a superior and an inferior deity.<sup>1</sup>

This is strong meat for a Christmas Day sermon but it shows his tone and makes his theology clear. He rules out any form of Adoptionism whether at the baptism or the resurrection of Christ. Divinity is not something added to an already existing human nature. Nor is it enough for Liddon merely to say 'God was in Christ' and certainly not that Christ was godly. He is sure that the language he uses of Christ is literally true. Any suggestion that doctrinal statements are anything other than literal statements of fact, such as value judgments, poetic expressions or metaphors to convey truth by illustration or picture was anathema to Liddon. In Christ God himself has visited the earth. His coming was the incarnation of God. Christ, Liddon insists, is of the essence or substance of the Father. Again and again this is the theme which recurs in the early sermons.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, pp. 200-1

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Liddon, H.P.,  
1860 The Aims and Principles of Church Missions, Sermons preached on Special Occasions, p. 35  
1860 Our Lord's Example the Strength of His Ministers, Clerical Life and Work, pp. 100, 102, 112-3  
1862 Active Love a Criterion of Spiritual Life, Sermons preached on Special Occasions, p. 65  
1863 Apostolic Labours an Evidence of Christian Truth, Clerical Life and Work, pp. 282-3  
1863 Lessons of the Holy Manger, Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, pp. 189ff, especially p. 200  
1864 The Law of Progress, ibid. p. 50  
1864 The Whole Counsel of God, Clerical Life and Work, p. 146  
1865 Immortality, Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 116  
1865 Humility and Action, ibid. p. 163

In his sermon on the Divine Victim (1859), Liddon makes his position even more explicit. He insists that the Christ must be known under the two titles of the Son and the Word since it is the combination of the two which guards against any misunderstanding or one-sidedness. Liddon says:

As the Son, He is personally distinct from the Everlasting Father. As the Word or Reason of God, He is the Father's Equal, the Sharer of His inmost counsels, the Partaker of His Substance and of His Intellectual Life. If He had been revealed only as the Son, the unbalanced phrase might have tempted us to Arianism. If only as the Word, we might have been attracted by the plausible heresy of Sabellius. In their combination, the two words teach and guard the Catholic doctrine, that the Eternal Son is of one Substance with, yet personally distinct from, the Eternal Father.<sup>1</sup>

The early writings, therefore, demonstrate that the cornerstone of Liddon's presentation of the Christian faith is the doctrine of the Person of Christ and that his emphasis here lay upon the divinity of Christ. But if his thought is undeniably weighted in this direction, it must not be thought that the humanity of Christ is not important to him. He took it seriously and needed to for the sake of his total theological system even though his interpretation must seem rather curious to modern minds. He writes:

Christ does not belong simply and altogether to another world, so that we men feel that we have little or no part in Him. He has human Blood in His Veins. He has, let us reverently remember it, a human Countenance. He has taken upon Him not merely a human Body, but a human Soul. His Soul is human

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 231

Similar insistence on this balance in Christology is found in Newman, J.H., Letters and Diaries, vol. xix, p. 335

Maurice, F.D., The Gospel of St. John, p. 411

The Epistles of John, p. 28

in Its endowments of reason, memory, affection, imagination, will. He has pre-eminently and manifestly human sympathies.<sup>1</sup>

But it was not our fallen nature that Jesus took. Liddon says: The Human Nature Which our Lord assumed was none other than the very nature of the sinner, only without its sin.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the human nature which Jesus took lacked individuality or particularity. He says:

The Son of God took on Him human nature, not a human personality.<sup>3</sup> The idea, which was not uncommon in Liddon's day or amongst some of the early Fathers,<sup>4</sup> is that Christ was Man but not a man. Liddon's reason for holding to it is not so much that this makes it easier to see how there can be two natures in one person as that he finds it easier to see Christ as a representative of the human race this way. To regard Christ as another human personality amongst many would, as Liddon sees it, be to restrict him. His argument is that Christ's experience would be his alone and not necessarily typical of that of other human beings and, therefore, he would not be the redeemer of humanity in general. This is Liddon's way of trying to meet Irenaeus's requirement that Christ must become what we are in order that he might make us what he is. He follows up by saying:

He becomes the Redeemer of our several persons, because He is already the Redeemer of this our common nature, which He has made for ever His own. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." As human nature was present in Adam, when by his representative sin he ruined his posterity; so was Human Nature present in Christ our Lord, when by the voluntary offering of His sinless Self, He "bare our sins in His Own Body on the tree." For Christ is the Second Head of our race. Our nature is

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P. Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, pp. 223-4

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 240

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 240

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Baillie, D.M., God was in Christ, p. 85 ff.

His own.<sup>1</sup>

And as well as being diminished in merit, Liddon thinks that the appeal of Christ's sacrifice would be reduced for us were it not for this genuinely human quality in him. He says:

When, then, He hangs upon His Cross in the anguish and in the shame of death, we are not contemplating the strictly unintelligible woe of a Being Who belongs only to a distant world. He appeals directly and powerfully to the fellow-feeling of our common nature. He appeals to its tenderness, to its experimental knowledge of suffering, to its purest, to its most unselfish compassion.<sup>2</sup>

The humanity of Christ is, therefore, vital to Liddon's thought. Yet, even here, he brings us back to his starting point, the divinity of Christ. Humanity by itself would be impotent. The human offering only becomes effective as it is facilitated by the divine power.

He says:

Our nature is His own. He carried It with Him through life to death. He made It do and bear that which was utterly beyond Its native strength. His Eternal Person gave infinite merit to Its acts and Its sufferings. In Him It died, rose, ascended, and was perfectly well-pleasing to the All-Holy.<sup>3</sup>

The early writings, then, introduce us to a theologian of mature conviction. His mind is both firm and informed. He gives no impression of any continuing search after truth. For him most questions are settled on the basis of the historic Creeds and the Councils. His thought is comprehensive and it would be quite unfair to suggest that he was a man with only one string to his bow.

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 240

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 224

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 240

Nevertheless the indications that his prime concern was with Christology are there and as the work of the German critics and of men like Bishop Colenso became more widely known and the implications more clear, Liddon was bound to feel that he had a vital work to do in defending Catholic doctrine. His theological system was so tightly-knit and its constituent parts so closely interrelated that an attack on any one part made the whole vulnerable. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ was the cornerstone of the whole edifice and it was necessarily involved in the questioning of even seemingly remote issues such as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. It remains to ask whether these early writings offer any clear signs of the means by which Liddon seeks to stave off attacks on his position and to defend it.

It is, of course, important to remember that the whole of this early material, covering the period from 1859 to 1865, is made up almost entirely of sermons. Even though Liddon's style is more precise and closely argued than that of most preachers, it remains true that this is hardly the most suitable medium for extended and complex reasoning. Liddon was not averse to preaching for an hour or more but even this is a short time for adequate treatment of complicated matters. The details and length of a fuller exposition would surely have been more than congregations, even in those days, could be expected to take. Preachers inevitably cut corners. Liddon probably did so less than most. Still, too much should not be expected. On the other hand, it must be said that Liddon sometimes preached extempore - though it is not entirely clear what the word meant in his case - and not from a full manuscript. The writing out of the manuscript for publication sometimes followed the actual preaching and this might have meant that the written version was more carefully put together than the original. In any event, Liddon was too conscientious and cared too much about the truth as he saw it to be slipshod or glib in

anything he said or wrote. The early sermons are typical if fragmentary and abbreviated representations of his thought.

The lack of extended discussion is felt acutely in those passages in which Liddon offers a natural theology. For the existence of God and for a general religious or theistic interpretation of life, he finds some pointers in ordinary experience. The popular craving for progress, for example, has, Liddon believes, its source in God and is:

the effort to satisfy an unquenchable thirst for the Infinite.<sup>1</sup>

Again, he says,

Why then does the human intellect crave perpetually for new fields of knowledge? It was made to apprehend an Infinite Being; it was made for God. Why does the human heart disclose, when we probe it, such inexhaustible capacities for love and tenderness and self-sacrifice? It was made to correspond to a love that had neither stint or limit; it was made <sup>for</sup> God. Why does no employment, no success, no scene or field of thought, no culture of power or faculty, no love of friend or relative, arrest definitely and for all time the onward, craving, restless impulse of our inner being? No other explanation is so simple, as that we were made for the Infinite and Unchangeable God compared with Whom all else is imperfect, fragile, transient and unsatisfying.<sup>2</sup>

This style of apologetic, with its echoes of Augustine, in which there is a leap from the phenomenon to its explanation in religious terms is typical of Liddon.

For one who opposes rationalism it might seem that Liddon gives a surprisingly high place to reason. But rationalism to him is more than the use of reason. It is the denial of the supernatural. He says:

It were a libel on the All-wise Creator to suppose that between intellect and spirit, between thought and faith, there could

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 31

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 16-17

be any original relations other than those of perfect harmony.<sup>1</sup>

The scope he gives to reason is very considerable. He writes:

Reason, indeed can do much, even beyond the province in which she confessedly reigns. She can prove to man that he possesses an immaterial soul; that his will is really free; that deep in his secret heart there is the mysterious but indelible law which distinguishes right from wrong. Reason, as she studies human society, can give shape to those principles of justice and order, which are essential to its stability. She can even attain to a certain shadowy knowledge of the First Cause of all. She can demonstrate His existence by two or three lines of argument. She can infer that He is One, that He is a personal Being, that He is infinite in His perfections, and unfettered in His action and His will, and that His creatures are under the strongest possible obligations to seek and obey Him.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately Liddon gives no demonstration here of how reason can achieve all that is claimed for it. Consequently it is difficult to know how seriously he can be taken. Would Liddon be so confident of the powers of reason if he had not himself already arrived at conviction by another route? In fairness to him, however, it must be said that there are places in which he is prepared to argue rather than merely assert. In his sermon on Immortality, for instance, while he notices that the real ground for faith lies in Scripture and especially in the witness of Christ, at the same time the burden of his message rests more on argument. A being capable of the idea of an Infinite God and an endless life implies for Liddon one who is also immortal. Immortality is also implied in the universal desire for a deeper happiness than this world provides. It is demanded by the lack of

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford,

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 174-5  
p. 167

correspondence in present experience between morality and suffering.<sup>1</sup>  
Again, there is the tendency to jump from phenomenon to a single explanation.

This optimistic assessment of reason's powers has to be set alongside other statements which make clear its limitations. It must always be assisted by revelation. Liddon says that reason's:

highest conquests do but suggest solutions which she cannot solve; they only afford glimpses of a world on which she may not presume to enter. She has at best discovered enough to make life a dreary mystery and the prospect of death a frightful nightmare.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, he says:

Reason must accept her providential place. She must make room for faith. She must act as faith's handmaid, not as faith's substitute.<sup>3</sup>

This must be so since there is inevitably some mystery to be encountered and accepted in all our thinking about God. Indeed, he claims:

The Highest Truth ..... is necessarily mysterious.<sup>4</sup>

And he explains what he means:

Mystery, it may be imagined, is but another name for a confused statement, or for a contradiction or for an impossibility, or for a purely unintelligible process, or for something which is believed on no sufficient grounds whatever, or for a reverie of the heated religious imagination. No, believe it, a mystery is none of these things. A mystery is a truth, but a hidden truth ..... It is apprehended as true, it is not comprehended. It does not lie on the surface of things, It

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached in the University of Oxford, pp. 107ff.

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 175

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 175

<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 207

cannot be seen in itself. It can only be known from the evidence or symptoms of its presence. Yet the evidence whatever it be, proves to us that the truth is there; and the truth is not the less a truth because it is itself shrouded from our direct gaze.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon finds in this concept of mystery the explanation for the limitations of reason and the necessity for faith. For him it is the necessary concomitant to the uniqueness and sovereign freedom of God. One of his major criticisms of the Rationalists is their refusal to recognise it and to leave room in their thinking for the supernatural. They must reduce everything to human categories. Liddon has a strong case against them but his problem is to be able to show the difference between theological statements which may justifiably be labelled mysterious or supernatural and those which are merely arbitrary or nonsensical. He believes that general, theistic ideas are accessible to us through reason. But he is not, of course, content with these. The doctrines of Christ's person and incarnation, for example, were conspicuous by their absence from the list of doctrines to which reason can lead us. Liddon must now find a way to justify these and for this purpose reason must be supplemented by revelation. Religion, he thinks, must be definite. He says:

She must have doctrines; she must speak with precision and authority; she must undertake the responsibility and bear the odium of asserting that which will be assuredly and energetically contradicted; or she will make no adequate response whatever to the deepest needs of man. But, you ask, has God made any such response? Undoubtedly He has.<sup>2</sup>

Supremely that response has been made in the Incarnation.

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached in the University of Oxford, pp. 176-8

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 110.

Speaking of Christ, Liddon says :

Certainly, when He came, to Whom, directly or indirectly, by implication or explicitly, all His prophets pointed, He brought from heaven a Body of Truth, containing whatever we now know in respect of questions which must always possess the deepest interest for the human soul. He told us all that is to be apprehended here concerning life and death, and God and eternity. Thus the essential faith of Christendom is fixed.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon acknowledges :

that Revelation leaves as less than absolutely certain some truth which it appears to intimate; that there is a margin round the Central Verities of faith, in which there is a lawful place and home for mere opinion.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless the essential faith is fixed.

The importance of the doctrines of the incarnation and the divinity of Christ in Liddon's theology is now clear. Through them the whole body of Christian truth is guaranteed. But how are they themselves to be secured? Liddon's answer is to introduce a dilemma. It makes its first appearance in the very earliest of his published sermons, 'The Divine Victim'. He asks,

Is it granted that Christ is, morally speaking, a perfect Man?

Assuming a positive answer, he continues :

Then He is more than Man; since He puts forward claims, which if they are not simple and necessary truths, are blasphemous pretensions.<sup>3</sup>

The argument rests on the insistence that the New Testament presentation of Jesus must be taken as a whole. The moral quality of his life and his ethical teaching cannot be separated from what he had to say about himself and his relationship with the Father.

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 32  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 112  
<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 235

To accept the former while denying the latter is to make a nonsense of Christ. In his ministry dogmatics and ethics are inextricably interwoven in Liddon's view. If Jesus is not what he claimed to be in his relation with God, then neither is he a person to merit our moral approval.

Underlying the argument is the assumption that the New Testament record of the sayings of Jesus is reliable and that it does confront us with the authentic message he taught. Liddon has no doubts on this matter. Not only can he say:

Our Bible is essentially unlike all merely human books.<sup>1</sup>

But also:

To faith it is throughout inspired and unerring; it is the very Voice of God speaking in human language to his listening children.<sup>2</sup>

So the inspiration of the Bible guarantees the truth of Jesus's words and consequently the divinity of Christ.

Here Liddon betrays some circularity in his argument since it was earlier pointed out that he uses the doctrine of Christ's divinity to guarantee the truth of Scripture.<sup>3</sup> But the circularity is mitigated by that fact that the Bible is not the only authority on which his theology is based. Equally important to him in this respect is the Church. When he says:

The positive revelations of Scripture and the doctrines of the Church's primitive Creed claim to be God's truth: they are this or they are falsehoods.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 275

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jowett, B., Essays and Reviews, pp. 377ff

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 204

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 46

<sup>4</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 98

he is putting both together as the twin bases of doctrine.

Finally, Liddon also employs an apologetic based on the effects of the outworking of the Christian gospel in the world. Here the tendency to leap from phenomenon to explanation is particularly in evidence and it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that sometimes the description of the phenomenon, both before and after the influence of Christian religion, has been coloured by the conclusions he wants to reach. It is certainly reasonable to ask whether his belief about Christ has not already been allowed to influence his evaluation of both the world without Christ and the Christian effects upon it. Even so, this serves to underline the centrality of the doctrine of Christ's Godhead in Liddon's thought. Given this doctrine, he expects the Christian impact to be radical and extensive.

In his sermon on 'Active Love a criterion of Spiritual Life', he makes the bold claim that, without Christ, the world does not really know love. There is, he knows, something which, at first glance, looks like love but, on closer examination, it turns out to be quite different. He says:

There is the love of relations, friends and country; the love of those whom we benefit or who do us good; the love which is secure of its return, whether of service or affection. But this love of those whom we like, or who like us, is obviously and from the nature of the case, a narrow love ..... it turns out to be only a disguised form of the love of self. The truth must be spoken: in a state of nature man does not love His fellow-man.<sup>1</sup>

The transformation of this situation was brought about through the coming of the Divine Christ. He says:

We Christians love, because we believe; our belief is the motive and the measure of our love. Because we believe in the

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Special Occasions, pp. 61-2

Incarnation of God, descending from His throne, out of pure love, to the lowliness of Bethlehem and to the ignominy and anguish of Calvary - therefore there arises in our hearts a responsive love, evoked by His transcendent charity. We love Him, because He first loved us. Because He bade us love one another as He had loved us, therefore ours may be no narrow love. He died for us and for all poor sinners, that we might embalm the memory of His precious death in a love which shrinks not from opening its arms to all for whom He died.<sup>1</sup>

The argument works in two directions. It is because Christ is divine that he has made this difference in human relations and because he has made this difference, we can recognise him as divine.

In a similar vein, Liddon argues that it is the incarnation of the Divine Word which has injected a new moral quality into the world's life. Not that everything was totally corrupt previously. Stoicism, for example, he recognises as a noble philosophy and ethical theory. It produced 'a rare example of philosophical integrity' in Marcus Aurelius. Yet at heart it was selfish and it had as little influence upon the masses, he says:

as have the midnight speculations of an astronomer who is pacing the roof of his observatory upon the thought and habits of the sleeping cottagers around him. The worldwide principle of spiritual death needed to be expelled by a stronger and not less universal principle. It demanded a regenerating force, resting not on theory but on fact, a principle human in its form and action, but Divine in its strength and origin.<sup>2</sup>

Having established the need for a divine regenerating influence, to his own satisfaction at least, he now applies the remedy and satisfaction for the need with some vigour. The principle the world requires is found in the coming of Christ, the Divine Word. He says:

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Special Occasions, p. 65

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, pp. 213-4

The Incarnation was the source of a moral revolution. It was the uplifting of the standard of moral reform. By saving man, it was destined to save human society. The Incarnation confronted sensuality by endurance and mortification. It confronted covetousness by putting honour before poverty. It taught men that a man's highest life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth. But its great lesson was a lesson of humility.<sup>1</sup>

Again the argument moves both from cause to effect and from observed effect to cause. Liddon is sure that the effect is such that it must have a divine cause.

Lastly, in this connection, there is the relationship which Liddon sees between the incarnation and the Church. The Church requires a divine incarnation to explain it. That it exists at all and in the way it does is evidence that Christ is divine. Liddon is impressed by the vigorous life and continual expansion of the Church and knows the explanation. He says:

The continuous missionary and self-expanding action of the Church is a truth which we generally fall back upon or enforce for the practical purposes of supporting Missions. But it has a distinct speculative value; it is in itself an evidence of the divinity of Christianity; its history, often intermittent and disappointing, is yet (taken as a whole) a living and perpetual testimony to the presence in Jesus of a something which was higher than the highest human foresight or human genius; it is a feature of Christianity which, if Christianity were not divine, would be nothing less than inexplicable; - it flows from Words of Christ, which if Christ had been merely human, would have been words of startling audacity or of unprecedented folly.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford,  
p. 214

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Clerical Life and Work, p. 272

In the last few words of that passage, the dilemma previously noticed as part of his apologetic recurs in a less strongly stated form.

This degree of empiricism in Liddon's apologetic, however naive and unsatisfactory it may seem, does save him from being thought of as a theological positivist offering his hearer no point of contact and demanding that his message be simply swallowed whole.

The early sermons are few in number and must be no more than samples of his total output during these opening years of his work. Nevertheless they do give an impression of a theologian of firm conviction who has worked out for himself a cohesive doctrinal system and also of an earnest and committed apologist. We can take them as typical of his thought. They represent a mind already formed and mature but are not complete in themselves. Some refining of the argument and expression and some filling of the gaps will be looked for in Liddon's later work and especially in the Bampton Lectures, which were his magnum opus.

Chapter Three - Liddon's Bampton Lectures

John Bampton, Canon of Salisbury, died in 1751 leaving, in his will, a sum of money for the inauguration of a series of eight Divinity lectures or sermons to be preached 'at St. Mary's in Oxford, between the commencement of the last month in Lent Term, and the end of the third week'.<sup>1</sup> The first Bampton Lectures were delivered in 1780 and they continued annually until 1895, with four exceptions.<sup>2</sup> Heavy outlay on the estate from which the endowment of the lectures was derived then made it necessary to suspend them in alternate years.

Their popularity with the public was not always great nor were they always reckoned by every commentator to be valuable. But a change came about in 1858 when Henry L. Mansel lectured on The Limits of Religious Thought. On this occasion eager crowds gathered attracted by both the superb delivery of the lecturer and the manifest importance of the subject. Even so, what was said was not to everyone's liking. One report of the occasion reads as follows:

Dr Thomson, the present Archbishop of York, at that time Preacher of Lincoln's Inn, came up from Oxford at the beginning of each term to preach at the morning service. In those days he sometimes walked back to luncheon at Russell Square between the services. At the beginning of one of the terms of 1858 he came, full of the subject of the Bampton Lectures, of which two or three had been already delivered. He described the crowded audiences eagerly listening to discourses of which it was certain that at least large portions were wholly unintelligible to the great majority of the hearers. He spoke of the matter as in its essence the most unalloyed Atheism that had been heard in England for generations. He described the immense popularity

<sup>1</sup> The last Will and Testament of the late Rev. John Bampton, Canon of Salisbury.

<sup>2</sup> No lecturers were appointed in 1834 and 1835. In 1841 Samuel Wilberforce was appointed but was unable to deliver the Lectures because of a domestic calamity. In 1847 the lecturer died before the delivery of the third lecture.

which the lectures were nevertheless acquiring, because they served as such an admirable excuse for laughing at all troublesome German and English thinkers, enabling all those, who never thought at all, to feel their own superiority to the fools who searched after wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

Thomson's description suggests that he detected a certain nervousness amongst orthodox believers concerning contemporary criticism and scepticism and even a somewhat hysterical and irrational reaction.

The times were changing. Where once the Christian faith had been seen as essential for the maintenance of the moral and social order, there were now some who dared to contemplate civilisation without it. Others who found such a prospect unthinkable would welcome an annual event in which a Churchman of some distinction set out 'to confirm and establish the Christian Faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics'.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly it was a task which might now be undertaken with a greater sense of purpose than in some earlier days. As the second half of the nineteenth century progressed, the lectures assumed a new significance and prestige.

In March 1865 William Bright persuaded Henry Liddon to offer himself as a candidate. Pusey was very much against Liddon's undertaking the Lectures, despite his insistence that Oxford was the place for Liddon and the fact that he had cast him in the role of dam against attacks on Scripture and faith. Pusey apparently thought that it would distract Liddon from the task of helping with the commentary on the Bible on which Pusey had set his heart.<sup>3</sup> Liddon's application to the lectureship committee was consequently delayed. Nevertheless his response to Bright's suggestion was positive and Liddon did apply only to find that he was too late. When the Vice Chancellor and the Heads of Houses met to make the appointment, they chose A.W. Haddon. But

<sup>1</sup> Maurice, Frederick, The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice, vol. ii, p. 333

<sup>2</sup> The Last Will and Testament of the late Rev. John Bampton Canon of Salisbury

<sup>3</sup> Johnston, pp. 81-2

in November Haddon was compelled to resign because of ill-health and Liddon was now unanimously elected.

The terms of reference for lectures are such as to make the task very congenial to Liddon. They direct that:

the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either of the following Subjects - to confirm and establish the Christian Faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics - upon the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures - upon the authority of the authority of the writings of the primitive Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the primitive Church - upon the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ - upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost - upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as comprehended in the Apostles' and Nicene Creed.<sup>1</sup>

They are intended to be apologetic in character and to concentrate upon what are perceived to be the central doctrines of the Faith and Liddon's early writings have been shewn to exhibit, in both mood and content, that this was work to which he was naturally suited.

The urgency with which he viewed the task is clear from his own comment upon the times:

Never since the first ages of the Gospel was fundamental Christian truth denied and denounced so largely and with such passionate animosity, as is the case at this moment in each of the civilised nations of Europe.<sup>2</sup>

This attack from outside the ranks of believers is, he thinks, resulting in widespread unsettlement within. He says:

People have a notion that the present is, in the hackneyed phrase, "a transitional period", and that they ought to be keeping

<sup>1</sup> The Last Will and Testament of the late Rev. John Bampton, Canon of Salisbury.

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, p. 506 (Hereinafter referred to as Divinity.)

pace with the general movement ..... Their most definite impression is that the age is turning its back on dogmas and creeds, and is moving in a negative direction under the banner of "freedom".<sup>1</sup>

Even within the Church, as Liddon sees it, the mood is against dogma but strongly for morality. This has implications for Christology. It leads to a modern version of Socinianism in which the essential divinity of Christ is exchanged for a oneness with God which stops short of Nicaean orthodoxy and to what Liddon calls "Humanitarianism." He says:

It regards the great statements whereby Christ's Godhead is taught or guarded in Scripture and the Creeds, if not with impatience and contempt, at least with real although silent aversion. Church formularies appear to it simply in the light of an incubus upon true religious thought and feeling; for it is insensible to the preciousness of the truths which they guard. Hence as its aims and actions become more and more defined, it tends with increasing decision to become Humanitarian. Its dislike of the language of Nicaea hardens into an explicit denial of the truth which that language guards. Yet, if it exults in being unorthodox, and therefore is hostile to the Creed, it is ambitious to be pre-eminently moral, and therefore it lays special emphasis upon the beauty and perfection of Christ's Human character.<sup>2</sup>

It is with the recognition of this tendency amongst those who would call themselves followers of Christ that Liddon is most concerned. The preface to the Second Edition of the Lectures makes this explicit.

Liddon identifies three groups into which mankind is divided. First, there are those who have no doubt about Christ's Godhead. They are orthodox Catholic Christians. He doubts whether his lectures will

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. xv

<sup>2</sup> Divinity, pp. xv, xvi

be of any great service to them. They may even find them distressing because they offer a review of the grounds of faith which ought not to be necessary.

Secondly, there are those who question or deny the possibility of any divine revelation. He says:

They may admit the existence of a Supreme Being, in some shadowy sense, as an Infinite Mind, or as a resistless Force. They may deny that there is any satisfactory reason for holding that any such Being exists at all. But whether they are Theists or Atheists, they resent the idea of any interference from on high in this human world, and accordingly they denounce the supernatural, on a priori grounds. The trustworthiness of Scripture as an historical record is to their minds sufficiently disproved by the undoubted fact, that its claim to credit is staked upon the possibility of certain extraordinary miracles. When that possibility is denied, Jesus Christ must either be pronounced to be a charlatan, or a person of whose real words and actions no trustworthy account has been transmitted to us.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon does not propose to address himself to these people. His concern is not to engage the world at large by offering a fundamental, thoroughgoing apologetic. Some things he assumes in order to perform what he sees as his proper pastoral care:

Under these circumstances, the present writer deliberately assumed a great deal which is denied in our day and country by many active minds, with a view to meeting the case, as it appeared to him, of a much larger number, who would not dispute his premises, but who fail to see, or hesitate to acknowledge, the conclusion which they really warrant.<sup>2</sup>

Among the things assumed as in all his earlier writings, are the fact of revelation, the inspiration of Scripture and the existence of God.

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. xiii

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. xiv

The reality of these and the propriety of using them as tools in his apologetic he will not take time to establish. The limitations which this involves for his lectures are frankly admitted. They are 'rather calculated to reassure a believer than to convince a sceptic.'<sup>1</sup>

Liddon's real interest is in the third group, the Socinians.

This group want to be:

still loyal in some sense to Jesus Christ, although under new conditions: if it discards ancient formularies, it maintains that this rejection takes place only and really in the interest of moral truth.<sup>2</sup>

It is broad and embraces a variety of schools of thought. Pantheism, for instance, is included. It claims to uphold the divinity of Christ but what it means by that is much less than the orthodox doctrine. Sometimes it is a divinity which he must share with the universe. Sometimes it claims that:

Christ is divine in a higher sense than any other man because he has more clearly recognised or exhibited "the eternal oneness of the finite and the Infinite, of God and humanity"<sup>3</sup>

thus making his divinity different only in degree from that which every man possesses. A special incarnation is denied by such thinking.

Rationalism, in the broad sense in which the term appeared in the earlier writings, is also included.

Sometimes Liddon describes it in language which suggests that it belongs to the second of his groupings rather than the third. He accuses rationalists of 'an explicit and total rejection of the

Christian creed.'<sup>4</sup> In their refusal to countenance the supernatural they come close to denying Theism. But Liddon includes them within the third group because it is what they have to say about Christology

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 72

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. xv, xvi

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 26

<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 125

which really interests him. For all their antagonism towards orthodoxy, they apparently find it impossible to leave Christ alone. Estimates of him vary. Ewald makes him 'the altogether human source of the highest spiritual life of humanity'. Renan reduces him to 'the semi-fabulous and somewhat immoral hero of an oriental story, fashioned to the taste of a modern Parisian public.' The writer of Ecce Homo, not yet identified as Seeley, represents him 'as embodying and originating all that is best and most hopeful in the spirit of modern philanthropy'. Liddon addresses them all triumphantly with the claim:

Aye, though you salute your Saviour in Pilate's words, Behold the Man! at least you cannot ignore Him; you cannot resist the moral and intellectual forces which converge in our day with an ever increasing intensity upon His Sacred Person.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of 'historical' rationalism towards Christ is summed up by Liddon, in the fourth lecture, in this way:

It proposes to fashion a Christ who is to be aesthetically graceful and majestic but strictly natural and human. This Christ will be emancipated from the bandages which supernaturalism has wrapped around the Prophet of Nazareth. He will be divorced from any idea of incarnating essential Godhead; but, as we are assured, He will still be something, aye more than the Christ of the Creed has ever been yet, to Christendom. He will be at once a living man, and the very ideal of humanity; at once a being who obeys the invincible laws of nature, like ourselves, yet of moral proportions so mighty and so unrivalled that his appearance among men shall adequately account for the phenomenon of an existing and still expanding Church.<sup>2</sup>

So the greatness of Christ is not denied but it is a greatness which Liddon finds unsupportable in the light of the gospel record, the

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 15

<sup>2</sup> Divinity, p. 154

greatness of a supremely good man.

Liddon is now more concerned than he was in the early writings about the menace of materialism. At first sight it would seem to belong better to the atheistic grouping but he includes it here because it also has Christological implications. Its pure forms leave no room for God but the term may also include the new evolutionary science which, he thinks, can be theistic but is also dangerous to incarnational Christology. This is Liddon's first clear treatment of this topic. It is not favourable towards it.

He says:

It fixes its attention exclusively upon the graduated variety of form perceptible in a long series of crania which it has arranged in its museum, and then it proclaims with enthusiasm that a Newton or a Herschel is after all only the cultivated descendent of a grotesque and irrational ape.<sup>1</sup>

He continues:

We cannot consent to suppose ourselves to be mere animal organisms, without any immaterial soul or future destiny, parted by no distinctive attributes from the perishing beasts around us. For the true nobility of our nature has received the seal of a recognition which forbids our intellectual complicity with the physics or "psychology" of materialism.<sup>2</sup>

What he means here by "the seal of a recognition" is the taking of human form by the divine Christ, the direct entry of God into the life of man. He goes on:

The hopes which are raised by the Incarnation utterly forbid speculations that would degrade man to the level of a brute incapable of any real morality.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 459  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 460  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 461

His interest here is, in one sense, anthropological. He is defending the dignity of man. But, at the deeper level, his interest' is Christological since it is man as defined by the Incarnation or man endowed with dignity through the Incarnation that is the object of his defence. For Liddon, to regard man as part of the animal world, even as the highest product of the evolutionary process, is to threaten the very idea of a divine incarnation since he cannot conceive of God stooping to the level of the animal creation.

The Bampton Lectures, therefore, confirm that the concerns revealed in his earlier writings are the primary interests of Liddon. The threats to the Catholic faith which he identifies are the same and it is supremely their impact upon orthodox Christology that worries him. Precisely how and when the subject of the lectures was chosen is not known. Surprisingly, since he had offered himself as a candidate previously, Liddon had no clear conception of the form they would take when the delayed offer of the lectureship came. On November 8th, 1865, he wrote to a close friend, Walter Kerr Hamilton, Bishop of Salisbury:

It will interest you to hear that, Haddon, who was elected Bampton Lecturer in the spring, having been obliged to resign from ill-health, the electors have appointed me to take his place. To a certain extent this places me in a difficulty, as I have nothing but the vaguest idea of my subject, and, of course, have not written one line.

But one must trust in God and set to work.<sup>1</sup>

It was, however, the natural subject for him to choose. Given the kind of opportunity which the Bampton offered, any man would be likely to select the subject dearest to him. Liddon leaves no room

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 82  
Liddon's friendship with Hamilton had begun in 1859 and was strengthened when the Bishop appointed Liddon to be one of his Chaplains in 1863. Johnston says that 'after Dr. Pusey and Mr. Keble, Bishop Hamilton had the greatest influence on his life.  
p. 115

for doubt as to what that is when he says:

The question of Christ's Divinity is the question of the truth or falsehood of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, it was a topical issue. Perhaps the last thing Liddon read before beginning the writing of the lectures was Strauss's Life of Jesus. He noted in his diary:

November 14 - Read some of Strauss's new Life of Jesus, and felt wretched. His cold infidelity chills one's soul to the core.

November 17 - Wrote the beginning of my first Bampton, but unsatisfactorily.<sup>2</sup>

Christological issues were clearly at the forefront of his mind at this moment.

The style and deliberate limitations of the lectures may well be due to Liddon's recognition that these were what suited his gifts best. He was not a philosopher nor a creative thinker. His one attempt to elucidate the faith through argument, in the Bampton,<sup>3</sup> is unsatisfactory as even he appears to have recognised. He did not possess a flexible or subtle mind. But he was a man of strong and clear convictions and of wide learning. He was not always able to sympathise with opponents in their doubts and was apt to pass harsh judgments on their motives but he had an incisive grasp of the implications of their teaching for what he perceived to be the fundamentals of the faith. He was also a natural preacher, accustomed to speaking to people who wanted to believe. He never knew what it was to live without faith or to be outside the community of faith. Consequently he was better at defending the faith from within the Church to the Church than he was at arguing for its truth amongst those who did not share his basic assumptions.

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 506

<sup>2</sup> Johnston, p. 82

<sup>3</sup> Divinity, pp. 260-7

Given all this, it is not surprising that he entitled his lectures, The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The fact that Liddon's purpose is apologetic and that he is primarily addressing people with a measure of Christian faith and knowledge means that he is assuming some understanding of the Catholic doctrine of the Person of Christ. He does not need to present a systematic exposition of the doctrine. The position to be maintained is succinctly stated:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being truly and perfectly Man, is also according to His higher Pre-existent Nature, Very and Eternal God; since it was the Second Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity, Who, at the Incarnation, robed Himself with a Human Body and a Human Soul. <sup>1</sup>

His defence of that position begins with a review of the Old Testament evidence for Christ's divinity. Immediately he recognises that the validity of any claim that such evidence exists there depends upon the existence of a unity or continuity of revelation through the whole of Scripture. In Liddon's view, Biblical critics are too ready to surrender such unity by overemphasising the differences which exist between its different writers and parts. Liddon does not deny that such differences are to be found and he is willing to allow a measure of progression in Biblical thought. He says:

This oneness of Scripture is a truth compatible with the existence within its compass of different measures and levels of Revelation. <sup>2</sup>

He compares it with the experience of growth and development in a human being. He says:

The unity of consciousness in a human life is not forfeited by growth of knowledge, or by difference of circumstances, or by

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 34

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 48

varieties of experience.<sup>1</sup>

So any historical conditioning of the Biblical writers is easily explained and its effect cancelled out by their possession of a common source of inspiration. Liddon claims that the discovery of difference and progression is not new. The Fathers themselves were aware of it. He cites an example:

Novatian compares the unfolding of the mind of God in Revelation to the gradual breaking of the dawn, attempered as it is to the human eye, which after long hours of darkness could not endure a sudden outflash of noonday sunlight.<sup>2</sup>

This characteristic Tractarian device of searching the Fathers for supporting quotations has a twofold usefulness. It gives respectability to the idea being propounded and it disarms the critics who imagine that their ideas are novel and destructive of orthodoxy. Liddon can now say that the intensity of revelation may vary in different parts of Scripture but it is still revelation and its source is one and the same. He feels able to describe the Biblical writers as 'docile organs of One Infallible Intelligence'<sup>3</sup> and the way is clear for him to find the divine Christ in the Old Testament.

He says:

There are explicit references to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity in the Old Testament, which we can only deny by discrediting the historical value of the documents which contain them. But there are also occult references to this doctrine which we are not likely to detect, unless, while seeking them, we are furnished with an exegetical principle, such as was that of the organic unity of Scripture, as understood by the Ancient Church.<sup>4</sup>

1 Divinity, p. 48  
2 ibid. p. 48  
3 ibid. p. 47  
4 ibid. p. 49

Occult references include the plural nature of the name 'Elohim', the priestly three-fold repetition and the three mysterious men who came to Abraham, all of which point to the Trinity. More explicit references occur in the revelation of the divine Wisdom and the expected Messiah.

To the objection that the idea of a divine Christ cannot be reconciled with the rigid monotheism of Judaism, Liddon replies that the Jewish revelation was not to be final nor does it imply that God led men into error. Unity and Trinity in God are not contradictory but complementary. To the other question as to why the Old Testament does not set forward the divinity of Christ more clearly, he replies that the evidence concerning Christ in the Old Testament is more copious and elaborate than rationalists are willing to admit.

Liddon continues to amass Biblical witness to a divine Christ with an impressively detailed exposition of New Testament writings. He depends heavily on Christological statements in the Fourth Gospel and has, therefore, to begin by defending the authenticity of the Gospel. He has no great difficulty in showing that the Tubingen School is mistaken in dating the book sometime after 160 A.D. There are allusions to John's Gospel in the writings of early fathers and heretics which clearly require a date somewhere around the end of the first century. But he allows this to lead him to unwarranted conclusions about the apostolic authorship of the Gospel. He says:

We are already in a position to admit that the facts before us force back the date of St. John's Gospel within the lines of the first century. And when this is done the question of its authenticity is practically decided. It is irrational to suppose that a forgery claiming the name and authority of the beloved disciple could have been written and circulated beneath his very eyes, and while the church was still illuminated by his

oral teaching.<sup>1</sup>

Once this question of date and author has been established, Liddon turns to examine the contents of the Gospel and finds there that combination of the titles 'Son' and 'Word' for Christ which he insisted, in his early writings, was so necessary. The topic now receives fuller treatment. He says:

The Divine Logos is God reflected in His own eternal thought; in the Logos, God is His own Object. This Infinite Thought, the reflection and counterpart of God, subsisting in God as a Being or Hypostasis, and having a tendency to self-communication, - such is the Logos. The Logos is the Thought of God, not intermittent and precarious like human thought, but subsisting with the intensity of a personal form. The very expression seems to court the argument of Athenagoras, that since God could never have been  $\alpha\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , the Logos must have been not created but eternal. It suggests the further inference that since reason is man's noblest faculty, the Uncreated Logos must be at least equal with God. In any case it might have been asked why the term was used at all, if these obvious inferences were not to be deduced from it; but as a matter of fact they are not mere inferences, since they are warranted by the express language of St. John. St. John says that the Word was "in the beginning."<sup>2</sup>

Liddon has no doubt that the Word, as described in the Fourth Gospel, 'is in the absolute sense God.'<sup>3</sup> But it is also true that the Word is the Son. He goes on:

In St. John He is the Only-begotten Son, or simply the Only-begotten. This last epithet surely means not merely that God has

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 220  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 230-1  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 231

no other such Son, but that His Only-begotten Son is, in virtue of this Sonship, a partaker of that incommunicable and imperishable Essence, Which is sundered from all created life by an impassable chasm.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the use of the title, 'Son', preserves an important distinction between Father and Son which might be lost if he were only known as the Word. Liddon says:

The Son is His Father's equal, in that He is partaker of His nature; He is His Subordinate, in that this Equality is eternally derived.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of this for Liddon is made explicit when he says:

Each of these expressions, the Word and the Son, if taken alone might have led to a fatal misconception.<sup>3</sup>

'Logos', he claims, can lead to Sabellianism or Modalism since an Eternal Thought or Reason does not necessarily imply a Personal Subsistence. Equally the Son alone could lead to Arianism since it does not suggest eternity. The two words together preserve the full Catholic doctrine.<sup>4</sup> He says:

Taken together they exhibit Christ before His Incarnation as at once personally distinct from, and yet equal with, the Father; He is That personally subsisting and "Eternal Life, Which was with the Father and was manifested to us." St. John's Gospel is a narrative of that manifestation.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 236

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 236

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 236

<sup>4</sup> Sabellianism was a form of modalism derived from Sabellius in the early third century. It described God as by nature a monad with three names representing three successive modes of revelation. Arianism taught a view of Christ as a being in whom the divine was immanent in a superlative degree but who was essentially less than God.

Cf. Richardson, A., (ed.), A Dictionary of Christian Theology, pp. 56, 299

<sup>5</sup> Divinity, p. 237

The same emphasis on the two titles was met in the early writings. Liddon's theology has not changed. It is now given fuller and clearer expression and supported by Biblical evidence, as Liddon sees it, in order to establish its antiquity. Nothing here, however, is original to Liddon. A similar concern for this balance in Christology is shown, for example, by J.H. Newman and F.D. Maurice.<sup>1</sup>

After all he has said about the unity of the Biblical witness, Liddon cannot allow his argument to rest too heavily on Johannine material. It is important to him to be able to find the same doctrine in other parts of the New Testament. The Fourth Gospel is different from the Synoptics but he says that the reason is that its purpose is different. It supplements them as a kind of historical appendix. It is a polemical treatise and it is also a gospel with a direct, positive and dogmatic purpose. The Synoptics tell the story in a different manner but is essentially the same story. Liddon is sure that they:

do teach the Divine Nature of Jesus, although in the main His Sacred Manhood is most prominent in their pages.<sup>2</sup>

He has no doubt that Jesus is not merely Son of God for these evangelists in the ethical or theocratic sense in which the title was used of a king or a prophet in the Old Testament. When, for example, Matthew refers to Jesus as 'Emmanuel' he is pointing to the full truth of his divine essence. Liddon thinks that the Nativity stories rule out Ebionism or Docetism. So he quotes Dorner with great satisfaction when he says,

The entire representation of Christ which is given us by the synoptists, may be placed side by side with that given by St. John, as being altogether identical with it. For a faith

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Newman, J.H., Parochial and Plain Sermons, vol. iii pp. 161-5. Newman actually combines the two titles and calls Christ 'His only-Begotten Word.'  
See also his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, p. 78

<sup>2</sup> Maurice, F.D., Theological Essays, Essays V, V1 pp. 76ff.  
Divinity, p. 249

moulded in obedience to the synoptic tradition concerning Christ, must have essentially the same features in its resulting conception of Christ as those which belong to the Christ of St. John.<sup>1</sup>

An examination of the epistles of Paul, James, Peter and John convinces Liddon that here too, although each writer has his individual approach and interests, there is fundamental agreement about the Person of Christ and that that agreement is reflected in the faith and practice of the early Church. The worship paid to Jesus in the apostolic age acknowledged him as God. Fundamental to Liddon's argument is the assertion that Catholic Christology is grounded in the united witness of the Scriptures.

The unanimity of the Gospels is the vital background to Liddon's fourth lecture. He entitles it 'Our Lord's Divinity as Witnessed By His Consciousness', a title which suggests that it will be one of the most important for his general argument.

He begins by noticing that some modern writers see the question of Christ's Person as one between the 'historical spirit' and the 'spirit of dogmatism'. They regard the latter as the result of ignoring current critical scholarship and relying on what they see as baseless superstition and worn-out metaphysics. In contrast, the historical spirit depends on what they would term hard facts and undertakes 'to disentangle the real Person of Jesus from the metaphysical envelope within which theology is said to have "encased" Him.'<sup>2</sup> The historical school 'proposes to fashion a Christ who is to be aesthetically graceful and majestic, but strictly natural and human' not enjoying divinity.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the dogmatic spirit offers us a Christ who is divine, not sharing our

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 257

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 153

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 154

humanity. So a dilemma is created. Liddon describes it in this way:

"You must choose", men seem to say, "between history and dogma; you must choose between history which can be verified, and dogma which belongs to the sphere of inaccessible abstractions. You must make your choice; since the Catholic dogma of Christ's Divinity is pronounced by the higher criticism to be irreconcilable with the historical reality of the Life of Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

Liddon does not accept that any such choice is, in fact, necessary. For all his insistence upon Christ's divinity, he claims to believe equally in the humanity of Jesus. That humanity is shown in the way in which Jesus experienced childhood and growth, the physical necessity for food, drink and rest and the pain of suffering and death. As a man he loved, was angry, compassionate and sorrowful. He developed mentally and showed a creaturely dependence on God. Nor was this humanity destroyed by his sinlessness. He says:

Christ's manhood is not unreal, because It is sinless; because the entail of any taint of transmitted sin is in Him cut off by a supernatural birth of a Virgin Mother.<sup>2</sup>

It is true, he thinks, that there was an ideal quality about the humanity of Jesus but he argues that this actually makes him more human rather than less 'since in Him our nature does but resume its true and typical excellence as the crowning glory of the visible creation of God.'<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, for the sake of argument and in order to strengthen his own position, Liddon is prepared to go along with those who pose the dilemma. If the choice is between history and dogma, he will choose history. Indeed, he claims that Catholic doctrine does justice to the history of Jesus as we have it

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 154

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 23

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 23-4

whereas the so-called 'historical school' actually does violence to it. As an example he cites the treatment of miracle stories contained in the Gospels. The 'Humanitarian' is embarrassed by them, especially by what Liddon calls the 'miracles of power'. They are dismissed as part of a 'torrent of legend' which came to be attached to Jesus. But far from being historical, Liddon argues that this repudiation of miracles is based on a priori rejection of the supernatural and no such rejection, no foreclosing of any question is appropriate when it is the activity of the living God in human history that is being considered.

This matter is crucially important when it is what Liddon terms 'the chief of the miracles', the Resurrection of Christ, that is under discussion. He allows that the Rationalist critics are themselves divided. Some explicitly refute the idea 'of the literal Resurrection of Jesus from the grave', while others stop short of denying it. Those who deny it are, says Liddon, rejecting Christianity itself. The Resurrection cannot simply be subtracted from the Gospel history without changing the whole nature of that history. It is inextricably bound up with the message and progress of the apostolic church. But the Christ who rose from the dead on the third day must, he asserts, be an altogether superhuman being. So, he says:

The Catholic doctrine then is at home among the facts of the Gospel narrative by the mere fact of proclaiming a superhuman Christ, while the modern Humanitarian theories are ill at ease among these facts.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon's most important argument is that the miraculous is inseparable from the ethical in Jesus.

He says:

A neutral attitude towards the miraculous element in the

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 161

Gospel history is impossible. The claim to work miracles is not the least prominent element in our Lord's teaching; nor are the miracles which are said to have been wrought by Him a fanciful or ornamental appendage to his action. The miraculous is inextricably interwoven with the whole life of Christ. The ethical beauty, nay the moral integrity of our Lord's character is dependent, whether we will or not, upon the reality of His miracles. It may be very desirable to defer as far as possible to the mental prepossessions of our time; but it is not practicable to put asunder two things which God has joined together, namely, the beauty of Christ's character and the bona fide reality of the miracles which he professed to work.<sup>1</sup> and what he means is certainly most obvious in connection with the Resurrection. The event is not only important in itself but also as something predicted by Jesus in advance. To deny it is, therefore, to bring into question the honour and credit of Jesus. He says:

To have admitted the stupendous truth that Jesus, after predicting that He would be put to a violent death, and then rise from the dead, was actually so killed, and then did actually so rise, must incapacitate any thoughtful man for objecting to the supernatural Conception or the Ascension into heaven, or to the more striking wonders wrought by Jesus on any such ground as that of intrinsic improbability.<sup>2</sup>

It is the prediction as well as the event that matters. Thus the resurrection is bound up with the dilemma on which the Bampton are founded and which was present in the early writings, 'Christus, si non Deus, non bonus.' To deny the resurrection, Liddon thinks, is to make Jesus a liar. If that is unthinkable, he must be admitted to be God.

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 163

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 158

The claims he thinks Jesus made for himself, implicitly or explicitly, impress Liddon greatly and it is on them that his argument chiefly rests. He recognises two stages in Jesus's teaching ministry. In the first he urges absolute morality without any need to confess his unworthiness to do so. Liddon makes a new apologetic argument here:

The silence of Jesus respecting any such sense of personal unworthiness has been accounted for by the unrivalled closeness of his life-long communion with God.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, Liddon reminds his readers, it is precisely those who are closest to God who are usually first to acknowledge their faults. At this stage also Jesus speaks with complete authority and even sets himself above Moses in claiming to complete the Law.

In itself this is remarkable but, in the second stage of his teaching, Jesus goes even further and actually preaches himself. At this point Liddon again becomes very dependent upon the Fourth Gospel. In the fifth chapter, for instance, he takes it that Jesus is revealed as claiming parity of working power with God and, therefore, equal right to the homage of mankind. Jesus also, says Liddon, distinctly asserts 'His absolute oneness of Essence with the Father' when he says, 'I and My Father are One Thing.'<sup>2</sup> But if John is the prime witness here, such self-assertion on the part of Jesus is not, in Liddon's view, confined to the Fourth Gospel. He says:

Indeed so entirely is our Lord's recorded teaching penetrated by His Self-Assertion, that in order to represent Him as simply teaching moral truth, while keeping Himself strictly in the background of His doctrine, it would be necessary to deny the trustworthiness of all the accounts of His teaching which we possess.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 166

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 185

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 175

Moral teaching and self-assertion are interwoven throughout Jesus's teaching. Liddon claims that the most destructive of critics - and he cites as examples F.W. Newman in his Phases of Faith and Baur in Vorlesungen uber N.T. Theologie - has to admit that Christ, in the synoptics, goes as far as to say that he will return one day to earth as the Judge of all mankind. He goes on:

In other words, He will proceed to discharge an office involving such spiritual insight, such discernment of the thoughts and intents of the heart of each one of the millions at His Feet, such awful, unshared supremacy in the moral world, that the imagination recoils in sheer agony from the task of seriously contemplating the assumption of these duties by any created intelligence.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the self-assertion of Jesus in the synoptics is, says Liddon strengthening the dilemma further, sometimes even more explicit. For example, they describe Jesus displaying a clear consciousness of his own pre-existence. Jesus says, 'Before Abraham was, I am'. In those words, there is, Liddon thinks:

a double contrast, in respect both of the duration and of the mode of His existence, between Himself and the great ancestor of Israel.  $\text{Ἦν Ἀβραὰμ γεννηθείς}$ . Abraham, then, had come into existence at some given point of time. Abraham did not exist until his parents gave him birth. But  $\text{Ἔγώ εἰμι}$ . Here is simple existence, with no note of beginning or end. Our Lord says not, "Before Abraham was, I was," but "I am." He claims pre-existence indeed, but He does not merely claim pre-existence; He unveils a consciousness of Eternal Being. He speaks as One on Whom time has no effect, and for Whom it has no meaning. He is the I AM of ancient Israel; He knows no past, as He knows no future; He is unbeginning, unending Being; He is the eternal "Now".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 176  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 190

Liddon is in no doubt about the enormity of the claims that Jesus made for himself. There is a note of modernity in his words, when he says:

He taught the highest theology, but He also placed Himself at the very centre of His doctrine, and He announced Himself as sharing the very throne of that God Whom He so clearly unveiled. If He was the organ and author of a new and final revelation, He also claimed to be the very substance and material of His own message; His most startling revelation was Himself.<sup>1</sup>

It is because he is so sure of this that Liddon finds the dilemma, 'Christus, si non Deus, non bonus' so very convincing. He expands it to bring out its force:

If Jesus was merely Man, was He, I do not say morally perfect, but morally eminent at all? Was not His self-assertion such as to be inconsistent with any truthful recognition whatever of the real conditions of a created existence?<sup>2</sup>

The argument is impressive and Liddon might justifiably claim that it is the result of taking the whole New Testament witness seriously rather than being content with an approach to Scripture which is arbitrarily selective or based on a priori notions of what is and is not possible. But it depends for its force on the possibility of being able to demonstrate the integrity of teaching and character in Jesus. Jesus must be consistent and the general picture of him must preclude the possibility of our regarding him as evil, mistaken or mad.

It is generally accepted, Liddon affirms, that Jesus is sincere, unselfish and humble. But, he asks, can he be any of these things if he is not God in view of his self-assertions? Liddon answers that he could not be unselfish. After all:

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 5  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 314

He bids men make himself the centre of their affections and their thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

To the suggestion that Jesus was insincere, Liddon replies that, on the contrary, sincerity was the mainspring of his thought and action. He says:

But Jesus Christ, speaking to us from the Gospel pages, or speaking in the secret chambers of conscience, is a Monitor Whom we can trust to tell us the unwelcome but wholesome truth; and could we conceive of Him as false, He would no longer be Himself in our thought; He would not be changed; He would simply have disappeared.<sup>2</sup>

And he can only be humble, Liddon continues, if he is God since humility is the honest recognition of truth respecting the self.

Despite the fact that Jesus is charged in the Gospel record with madness, Liddon considers this to be not a serious possibility for one who commands the adoration of the civilised world and although he does not expressly consider the idea that Jesus might simply have been sincerely mistaken, Liddon's response to it would probably have been similar to his reply to the suggestion of madness. There are he thinks only two real possibilities:

The choice really lies between the hypothesis of conscious and culpable insincerity and the belief that Jesus speaks literal truth.<sup>3</sup>

From what has been said earlier about Liddon's insistence on the authenticity and apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel, it will be evident that Liddon could not countenance any possibility that the assertions of oneness with God were anything other than dominical sayings. His conclusion is, therefore, not unexpected when he says:

The moral character of Christ viewed in connection with the

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 199  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 197  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 206

preternatural facts of His Human Life, will bear the strain which the argument puts upon it. It is easier for a good man to believe that, in a world where he is encompassed by mysteries, where his own being itself is a consummate mystery, the Moral Author of the wonders around him should for great moral purposes have taken to Himself a created form, than that the One Human Life which realises the idea of humanity, the One Man Who is at once perfect strength and perfect tenderness, the one Pattern of our race in Whom its virtues are combined, and from Whom its vices are eliminated, should have been guilty, when speaking about Himself, of an arrogance, of a self-seeking, and of an insincerity which, if admitted, must justly degrade Him far below the moral level of millions among His unhonoured worshippers.<sup>1</sup>

Despite all that has been said about the witness of the New Testament to Christ's divinity, however, Liddon knows that its language is still not that of the creeds and conciliar decisions. It might still be said that early Christianity was unformed, simple and vague and that it was only in the fourth century that the Church learned how to fix her creed in precise, rigid, exclusive moulds. The process of doing so involved the risk of altering the faith and he asks whether this, in fact, happened. Has the fixing of the 'homousion' clause, the insistence in the Nicene Creed that Jesus was of one substance with the Father, in particular, changed the apostolic faith?

Liddon is certain that it has not. The Gospels themselves describe instances in which Jesus was worshipped which he must surely have checked had they been incidents of mistaken devotion.<sup>2</sup> In the first days of the Church, Christians were known as those who

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 207

<sup>2</sup> Liddon cites such passages as Matthew 2:11, 8:2, 9:18, 20:20, 25:25.

called upon the name of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> Prayer to Jesus Christ was the universal practice of Christians<sup>2</sup> and the apostolic practice of offering to Christ the worship 'due to God alone' was passed on to succeeding ages as an integral part of the Church's spiritual life.<sup>3</sup>

The popular language of the Church expressed Christ's divinity as did the more cautious, measured language of the higher minds in the early Church. Maybe there were times, Liddon admits, when the fathers used language which fell below the doctrine of the Nicene Council but occasional lapses on the part of individuals are only to be expected and prove nothing. Liddon sums up:

From the first the general current of Church language proclaims the truth that Jesus Christ is God.<sup>4</sup>

He is convinced that the Nicene language simply formalised what the Church had always believed. It did not represent a development of primitive faith except in the sense of explanation and elucidation.

Liddon says:

<sup>1</sup> Ananias (Acts 9:14) and Paul (1 Cor. 1:2) are quoted in support of this statement among others.

<sup>2</sup> The prayers of Stephen (Acts 7:59, 60) and of Ananias (Acts 9:13-14) are cited by Liddon as early examples. Of Paul he writes:  
If we had no explicit records of prayers offered by St. Paul to Jesus, we might be sure that such prayers were offered, since otherwise the language which he employs could not have been used. But, in point of fact, the Apostle has not left us in doubt as to his faith or his practice in this respect. "If," he asserts, "thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. . . . For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.

(Divinity, pp. 389-90)

<sup>3</sup> John's example is cited from 1 John 5:13-15

Liddon finds support for this in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen and Novatian among others. Early Christian hymnody also witnesses to it as well as pagan testimony such as Pliny's correspondence with Trajan.

<sup>4</sup> Divinity, p. 432

The Nicene fathers only affirmed, in the philosophical language of the fourth century, what our Lord and the apostles had taught in the popular dialects of the first.<sup>1</sup>

The formal definition was made necessary by the threat of Arianism. The Homoousion was simply the result of the translation of the language of the apostles into that of another intellectual period. It did not add to the number of articles in the Christian faith.

This is another very significant aspect of Liddon's thought and it demonstrates the particular school of Catholic theology to which Liddon belonged. His insistence that Nicea correctly interprets the New Testament has a two-fold importance. In refusing to allow development in the content of the Christian faith during these initial centuries of the Church's history, he refutes Newman and others who do see development here and who would use this precedent to justify the development of new doctrines in the later Church. Liddon is sure that the growth within the Roman Church of doctrines, in recent times, like that of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is quite unwarranted. The Church must not add new articles to the faith once delivered to the saints through Christ. He Says:

Therefore between the imposition of the Homoousion and the recent definition of the Immaculate Conception, there is no real correspondence . . . . . The Nicene fathers did but assert a truth which had been held to be of primary, vital import from the first; they asserted it in terms which brought it vividly home to the intelligence of their day. . . . . But the recent definition asserts that an hypothesis, unheard of for centuries after the first promulgation of the Gospel, and then vehemently maintained and as vehemently controverted by theologians of at least equal claims to orthodoxy, is a fact of Divine revelation, to be received by all who would receive the true faith of the Redeemer. In the one case an old truth

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 438

is vindicated by an explanatory reassertion; in the other the assertion of a new fact is added to the Creed.<sup>1</sup>

Implicit in this refusal to allow the addition of anything new to the Creed is the conviction that there must be Biblical warrant for any dogma. Liddon's high view of the inspiration of Scripture which leads him to describe it as the very 'voice of God' and his conception of revelation as propositional, the disclosure of a 'body of truth' through Jesus Christ, combine to make Scripture enormously important to him. To go beyond what is implicit or explicit in Scripture is, for him, a very serious step to take.

At the same time, it would be wrong to think of him as taking a Protestant view of the Bible as the sole authority in doctrine. Authority for him lies in Scripture as it is interpreted by the Church. As well as limiting doctrine to what can be demonstrated to be found in the New Testament, he is also concerned to fix the interpretation of the New Testament for all time on Nicaean lines. For him the Church means the Church of the Creeds and Councils.

Liddon's approach to Scripture and dogma is very much that which Newman says he heard from Dr. Hawkins of Oriel, and which he thinks was original to Hawkins, in a sermon preached in Oxford. Newman reports Hawkins as laying down the proposition that:

the sacred text was never intended to teach doctrine, but only to prove it, and that, if we would learn doctrine, we must have recourse to the formularies of the Church; for instance to the Catechism, and to the Creeds. He considers, that, after learning from them the doctrines of Christianity, the inquirer must verify them by Scripture.<sup>2</sup>

Liddon belongs to that wing of Tractarianism for which it is the

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 441

<sup>2</sup> Newman, J.H., Apologia Pro Vita Sua, p. 102

task of the Church to teach and the Bible to prove.

The major purpose of Liddon's Bampton is to defend the doctrine of Christ's divinity, his essential unity with the Father. But Catholic doctrine also insists upon the humanity of Jesus. Liddon cannot, therefore, escape the question of how the two natures can co-exist within the one person of Christ. He is fully aware of the objections raised against the orthodox position and he states them clearly;

It represents Christ on the one hand as a Personal Being, while on the other it asserts that two mutually self-excluding Essences are really united in Him. How can He be personal, you ask, if He be in very truth both God and Man? If He is thus God and Man, is He not, in point of fact, a "double Being"; and is not unity of being an indispensable condition of personality? Surely, you insist, this condition is forfeited by the very terms of the doctrine. Christ is either not both God and Man, or He is not a single Personality. To say that He is one Person in Two Natures is to affirm the existence of a miracle which is incredible, if for no other reason, simply on the score of its unintelligibility.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon's answer to this question in the Bampton confirms what he had already said in the early sermons and asserts that Christ's Manhood is impersonal. By this he means that the centre of Christ's personal being is not a created, human individuality but the Person of the Eternal Word. His Manhood has no existence apart from the Incarnation. He says that the Eternal Word:

wrapped around His Being a created nature through which, in its unmutilated perfection, He acts upon humankind.<sup>2</sup>

This comes close to saying that, in the incarnation, the divine Word merely takes on a vehicle of flesh rather than becoming human nature.

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp. 258-9  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 23

To speak of impersonal humanity sounds like a contradiction in terms. It evidently suggests some compromising of the humanity of Jesus. In the fifth lecture, Liddon treats the matter at some length. He says:

Thus to speak of Christ as a Man, at least without explanation, may lead to a serious misconception; He is the Man, or rather He is Man ..... Christ's Manhood is a vesture which he has enfolded around His Person; It is an instrument through which He places Himself in contact with men and whereby He acts upon humanity.<sup>1</sup>

Now he attempts to explain himself by the use of a psychological analogy. He says:

His Manhood no more impaired the unity of His Person than each human body, with its various organs and capacities, impairs the unity of that personal principle which is the centre and pivot of each separate human existence, and which has its seat within the soul of each one of us.

"As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one in Christ". As the personality of man resides in the soul, after death has severed soul and body, so the Person of Christ had Its eternal rest in His Godhead before His Incarnation.<sup>2</sup>

This quotation from the Athanasian Creed is not taken by Liddon as meaning that the soul of Christ should be equated with the Godhead and the flesh with the Manhood. Liddon is too well aware of the history of Christian theology and too afraid of heresy to make any such crude equation. By manhood he means both man's physical nature and his immaterial nature and he is clear that Christ possessed both a human soul and a human will. To say otherwise would be destructive to 'the integrity of His Manhood, to the reality of His incarnation, to the completeness of His redemptive work'<sup>3</sup> - phrases which contain an echo

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 262

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 263

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 264

of the early sermons. But, realising perhaps that the quotation is a dangerous one, Liddon attempts to refine the analogy and to be more precise. He says:

Intimately as the "I", a personal principle within each of us, is associated with every movement of the body, the "I" itself resides in the soul. The soul is that which is conscious, remembers, which wills, and which thus realises personality. When divorced from the personal principle which rules and inspires it, the body is but a lump of lifeless clay. The body then does not superadd a second personality to that which is in the soul. It supplies the personal soul with an instrument.<sup>1</sup>

The personal principle in Christ, which is to be distinguished from his human soul, was the Eternal Word. The distinction is a somewhat subtle and imprecise one and there is still a danger that Christ will be thought to be a person in whom there are two centres of individuality and volition, Liddon recognises this and asserts that it is only true in the sense in which it is true of all men. In every man there are two wills, a higher and a lower, and he cites the testimony of Paul in Romans 7 to this fact. But whereas in men the two wills are in a state of continual conflict, in the incarnate Christ the human will was always in absolute harmony with the will of God. Liddon says:

The Human Will of Christ corresponded to the Eternal Will with unvarying accuracy; because in point of fact God, Incarnate in Christ, willed each volition of Christ's Human Will ..... As God and Man, our Lord has two Wills; but the Divine Will originates and rules His Action; the Human Will is but the docile servant of that Will of God which has its seat in Christ's Divine and Eternal Person.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 263  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p.266

At which point, and abruptly, Liddon retires gracefully admitting that we are here at the line where revealed truth shades off into inaccessible mystery. A more rigorous and speculative theologian would not be so content to leave the matter. Liddon's comments about mystery in the early sermons have prepared for this moment however. His role is to defend received doctrine and his confidence in its truth allows him to leave some rough edges without expecting to understand fully.

Confidence is, in fact, one of the marks of Liddon's apologetics and it leads him into being too optimistic and sanguine about the effectiveness of his argument. He jumps too easily to conclusions because he cannot really believe that doctrine which has stood firm for at least fifteen centuries can now be genuinely undermined by new thought nor can he doubt that the Church's contribution to the world's life has been beneficial or that Western Christendom is superior to any other civilisation. This becomes very apparent when Liddon moves from the discussion of Christ's person to the consideration of his work.

Jesus came, says Liddon, to found a world-wide society, the kingdom of God. Three things strike Liddon about this plan.

First, there is its originality. The obscure origins of Jesus and his early isolation from the world of thought guaranteed his originality. But, in any case, there was nowhere in the ancient world from which he could have learnt anything like the moral quality of the teaching he gave concerning the kingdom. Others had certainly spoken of the kingdom but none had given it the content he gave it. Liddon says:

His originality is indeed seen in the reality and life with which He lighted up the language used by men who had been sent in earlier ages to prepare His way; but if His creative thought employed these older materials, it did not depend on them. He

actually gave a practical and energetic form to the idea of a strictly independent society of spiritual beings, with enlightened and purified consciences, cramped by no national or local bounds of privilege, and destined to spread throughout earth and heaven . . . . His plan can be traced in that masterful completeness and symmetry, which is the seal of its intrinsic originality, to no source beyond Himself.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, there is its audacity. The most ambitious ideas are presented complete and without the slightest sign of tentativeness. Moreover, Jesus is certain of their success. Liddon says:

The Son of Man speaks as One Who sees beyond the most distant possibilities, and Who knows full well that His work is indestructible. "The gates of hell", He calmly observes, "shall not prevail against it;" "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." . . . . a Galilean peasant, surrounded by a few followers taken like Himself from the lowest orders of society: yet He deliberately proposes to rule all human thought, to make Himself the Centre of all affections, to be the Lawgiver of humanity and the Object of man's adoration.<sup>2</sup>

These two marks of the plan of Jesus Liddon takes, in a rather facile manner, as indications of the divinity of Christ. But he is still more impressed by the success of the plan which Jesus launched. Here Liddon is very Tractarian. You have only, he thinks, to look at the Church, its expansion, its intellectual and moral influence and its effects for progress in Western society to see that success clearly. He says:

The Church herself is the true proof of His success. After the lapse of eighteen centuries the kingdom of Christ is here, and it is still expanding, still animated by its original idea, still carried forward by the moral impulse which sustained it in

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp. 114-5  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 118

its infancy.<sup>1</sup>

The ripples of the Church's influence reach out over a wide area of human life and Liddon explains the advance of civilisation by the direct influence of Christianity. He asks:

Is it not a simple matter of fact that at this moment the progress of the human race is entirely identified with the spread of the influence of the nations of Christendom? What Buddhist, or Mohammedan, or Pagan nation is believed by others, or believes itself, to be able to affect for good the future destinies of the human race? The idea of a continuous progress of humanity, whatever perversions that idea may have undergone, is really a creation of the Christian faith.<sup>2</sup>

The Christian religion, in his view, has worked as leaven in the lump to raise the whole quality of the world's life. He claims:

Christianity is the power which first gradually softened slavery, and is now finally abolishing it. Christianity has proclaimed the dignity of poverty, and has insisted upon the claims of the poor, with a success proportioned to the sincerity which has welcomed her doctrines among the different peoples of Christendom. The hospital is an invention of Christian philanthropy.<sup>3</sup>

Further, he says:

The Hospital, in which the bed of anguish is soothed by the hand of science under the guidance of love; the penitentiary, where the victims of a selfish passion are raised to a new moral life by the care and delicacy of an unmercenary tenderness; the school, which gathers the ragged outcasts of our great cities, rescuing them from the ignorance and vice of which else they must be prey; - what is the fountainhead of those blessed and practical results, but the truth of His Divinity, Who has

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp. 133-4

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 123

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 132

kindled man into charity by giving Himself for man?<sup>1</sup>

All these are the words of a man who belongs still to an age in which a measure of romantic triumphalism and confidence in the superiority of Western Christian civilisation is possible, though even he has to acknowledge some blemishes. He knows that there have been failures such as the loss of territory to Islamic invaders, failures in missionary enterprise, and the rise of rationalism and heresy. Nevertheless he takes the overall view and is confident. What would have happened had he been writing a little later we can only conjecture. The Crimean War was coming and in 1870 that between France and Germany. World War was not too far distant. So bold an apologetic could not be so easily maintained when Christians were tearing each other apart. But, for the moment, he can say:

It is precisely this belief in the Divinity of our Lord which has enriched human life with moral virtues such as civilised paganism could scarcely have appreciated and which it could not have created.<sup>2</sup>

The argument is that the moral effect of Christianity is such as to require Christ to be nothing less than divine - an argument impossible to prove and one which owes everything to the fact that Liddon has decided the conclusion long before advancing the evidence.

He is equally sure that this moral argument applies to individuals as to nations. He says:

The moral intensity of the life of a sincere Christian is a more signal illustration of the reality of the reign of Christ, and of the success of His plan, than is the territorial range of the Christian empire.<sup>3</sup>

He confirms the view expressed in the early sermons that there is no such thing as love without Christ. He says:

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp. 504-5  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 496  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 127

The sensualism which Pagans mistook for love has been placed under the ban of all true Christian feeling; and in Christendom love is now the purest of moral impulses; it is the tenderest, the noblest, the most refined of the movements of the soul.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, the impact which Christ makes upon the minds of Christians is total. He says:

Christ is not a limited, He is emphatically an absolute monarch. Yet His rule is welcomed by his subjects with more than that enthusiasm which a free people can feel for its elected magistracy. Every sincere Christian bows to Jesus Christ as to an Intellectual Master. Our Lord is not merely listened to as a Teacher of Truth; He is contemplated as the absolute Truth itself.<sup>2</sup>

So Liddon brings us back once again to the essential divinity of Christ.

The final lecture introduces a new approach to the subject. Liddon begins a fresh line of argument in which he points out some of the consequences of the doctrine of Christ's divinity. He thinks that belief in Christ's divinity protects truths which are prior to it, belonging both to natural and revealed theology.

First among them is the existence of a Personal God. Deism finds it easier to believe in a Supreme Being if he is detached from orthodox Christianity. Doctrines like those of Incarnation and Trinity only serve to complicate matters. But, in practice, Liddon thinks, Deism has little to offer. He claims:

Where an abstract deism is not killed out by the violence of atheistic materialism, it is apt, although left to itself, to die by an unperceived process of evaporation ..... When God is regarded less as the personal object of affection and worship

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 132  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 128

than as the necessary term of an intellectual equation, the sentiment of piety is not really satisfied; it hungers, it languishes, it dies. And this purely intellectual manner of apprehending God, which kills piety, is so predominant in every genuine deistic system as to bring about, in no long lapse of time, its impotence and extinction as a popular religious force.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon argues that the God of Deism is remote and inactive, no lively Providence, whereas the Incarnation brings God down to earth and bridges the abyss between him and man. He says:

Instead of presenting us with some fugitive abstraction, inaccessible to the intellect and disappointing to the heart, the Incarnation points to Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

Pantheism, to take a second theory, recognises the human craving for union with God and satisfies it by making him the only existing being whose existence absorbs and is identified with the whole universe and humanity. Its fatal error is to involve God in human evil. The incarnation brings God down to man yet also exhibits a gulf between God and creation. Pantheism overlooks God's distinctness from creation, his independence of our thought, his sustaining power and his personal nature, all of which, Liddon says, are asserted in the doctrine of the incarnation.<sup>3</sup>

There is, therefore, a shift in this lecture from the defence of the doctrine of Christ's divinity to its use as an apologetic tool. He uses it to show the inadequacy of other theories about God and to give sense and meaning to other aspects of Christian faith and devotion. Their truth and power are guaranteed by this doctrine. Soteriology, for example, requires the doctrine of the homoousion.

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp. 453-4

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 455

<sup>3</sup> ibid. pp. 456-9



Without it, Christ can offer no salvation. Liddon asks:

Can He really justify if He is only Man? Does not His power to "save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him" depend upon the fact that He is Himself Divine?<sup>1</sup>

This question from the first lecture is answered in the last when he says:

Alas! brethren, if Jesus Christ be not God, the promises of redemption to which penitent and dying sinners cling with thankful tenacity, forthwith dissolve into the evanescent forms of Jewish modes of thought and unsubstantial misleading metaphors. If Jesus be not God, we stand face to face in the New Testament, not with the unsearchable riches, the boundless mercy of a Divine Saviour, able "to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him," but only with the crude and clinging prejudices of His uneducated or semi-educated followers.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, he says:

Vast as is the conclusion of a world of sinners redeemed, atoned for, reconciled, the premise that Jesus Christ is truly God more than warrants it.<sup>3</sup>

The whole sacramental life of the Church, so vital to Liddon because through it the grace of God is channelled to men, depends upon Christ's divinity. Without it, he says:

The one Sacrament is only "a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened". The other is at best "only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have one towards another." Thus the sacraments are viewed as altogether human acts; God gives nothing in them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 42  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 486  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 487  
<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 488

On the other hand, if the one who instituted these things is the Eternal Son of God then, says Liddon:

Baptism will be the real laver of a real regeneration; the Eucharist will be a real "communion of the Body and Blood" of the Incarnate Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

It is by this doctrine that the whole Christian faith stands or falls. This is the linch-pin of Liddon's theological system. But precisely because the constituents of this tightly system are so interdependent, when anyone of them is called in question, the central doctrine is itself threatened. The area in which this is most acutely felt is that of the teaching of Jesus. Liddon says that the divinity of Christ explains his nature as a teacher. Infallibility and virtual omniscience are the necessary implications of divinity. The qualification 'virtual' has to be used because Liddon has to accept that on one point Jesus confessed ignorance. Liddon says:

To charge Him with error is to deny that He is God.<sup>2</sup>

But Old Testament criticism was now bringing this issue to the forefront. Colenso and others were questioning the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. As Liddon saw it, this was tantamount to charging Jesus with error since he himself spoke of Deuteronomy 24:1, for example, as a Law of Moses.<sup>3</sup> He notices that these scholars do admit the infallibility of the Eternal Son of God but they also assert that as human the knowledge of Jesus was limited and in support of this contention they point to the fact that St. Luke says that Jesus increased in knowledge and that Jesus himself admitted ignorance concerning the date of the Last Judgment.<sup>4</sup> Liddon accepts that there is a discrepancy between Luke's statement that Jesus grew in knowledge<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp. 489-90

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 461

<sup>3</sup> Mark 10:3-5

<sup>4</sup> Luke 2:52, Mark 13:32

<sup>5</sup> Luke 2:52

and John's description of the Word as 'full of truth.'<sup>1</sup> But he explains it. What Luke describes is another example of divine condescension and Liddon points to the difference between what he calls 'infused knowledge' and knowledge which is the result of active observation and appropriation. He says:

If by an infused knowledge He was, even as a Child, "full of truth" yet that He might enter with the sympathy of experience into the various conditions of our intellectual life, He would seem to have acquired, by the slow labour of observation and inference, a new mastery over truths which He already, in another sense, possessed. Such a co-existence of growth in knowledge with a possession of all its ultimate results would not be without parallel in ordinary human life.<sup>2</sup>

He offers examples of what he means from other fields of knowledge. Observation may verify some fact which we may previously have known only through mathematical calculation. In any case, even if the human soul of Jesus acquired knowledge not previously possessed, it does not warrant the notion, Liddon thinks, that he was ever ignorant of the truth about the authorship and worth of the Old Testament.

Liddon admits that many of the Fathers such as Irenaeus and Athanasius accepted that Jesus's own words about his lack of knowledge of the date of the Last Judgment did involve a real ignorance on his part. He knows that some will see in this an obstacle to belief in the unity of Christ's person. The co-existence of knowledge and ignorance in one person may seem to dissolve the unity of the God-man but it need not do any more than does the conjunction of divine omnipresence with human particularity. The same difficulty is common to all the contrasts of the divine

<sup>1</sup> John 1:14  
<sup>2</sup> Divinity, p. 465

incarnation. He says:

For example, as God, Christ is omnipresent; as Man, He is present at a particular point in space. Do you say that this, however mysterious, is more conceivable than the co-existence of ignorance and knowledge, with respect to a single subject in a single personality? Let me then ask whether this co-existence of ignorance and knowledge is more mysterious than a co-existence of absolute blessedness and intense suffering?<sup>1</sup>

All that this instance of ignorance amounts to, says Liddon, is that at this one particular moment in time:

the Human Soul of Christ was restricted as to its range of knowledge in one particular direction.<sup>2</sup>

There need be nothing strange or remarkable in this since at other moments he was deprived of other aspects of deity. He continues:

If then His Human Intellect, flooded as it was by light streaming from His Deity, was denied, at a particular time, knowledge of the date of one future event, this may be compared with that deprivation of the consolations of Deity, to which His Human affections and will were exposed when He hung upon the Cross.<sup>3</sup>

It is all, as Liddon sees it, part of the grace of Christ.

He says:

If we cannot specify the motive which may have determined our Lord to deny to His Human Soul at one particular date the knowledge of one fact; we may presume that it belonged to that love which led Him to become in all things like unto His brethren.<sup>4</sup>

Despite this identification of limitation with the demonstration of grace, Liddon insists that it is restricted in the case of knowledge

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 471

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p.472

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 475

<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 475

to this one instance. He warns:

That He was ever completely ignorant of aught else, or that He was ignorant of this one point at any other time, are inferences for which we have no warrant and which we make at our peril.<sup>1</sup>

Further, he points out that limitation of knowledge is not the same thing as liability to error. He says:

When we say that a teacher is infallible, we do not mean that his knowledge is encyclopaedic, but merely that when he does teach, he is incapable of propounding as truth that which, in point of fact, is not true.<sup>2</sup>

For critics of the Pentateuch to defend the idea that Jesus was wrong about Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy by pointing to his lack of knowledge about the Last Judgment is, therefore, nonsense to Liddon.

Liddon's discussion of this issue is particularly interesting and important in its bearing on future Tractarian thought. The elucidation of infallibility is not unlike Roman Catholic arguments for the papacy. Most important for the present study is the fact that in comparing the co-existence of knowledge and ignorance in Jesus with similar contrasts implied in the orthodox view of the incarnation and in his use of phrases like 'that deprivation of the consolations of Deity', 'another example of divine condescension' and 'that love which led Him to become in all things like unto His Brethren', there is some anticipation of a kenotic view of the incarnation. They suggest the voluntary surrender by Jesus of some of the divine attributes as part of the process of incarnation. Here Liddon is establishing a very important principle which might help him to meet the challenge of the Old Testament critics. Why then does he not allow it a wider application and employ it more thoroughly?

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 475  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 476

The answer is that Liddon is afraid to pursue it further for fear of weakening the case for Christ's Divinity. His intuition seems to tell him that a divine Christ must really be as free of limitation as possible and the one case of ignorance which he has no choice but to allow appears to embarrass him. He shows some intensity about it because to him this is no academic matter. It is profoundly serious. Historical knowledge and moral judgment cannot be separated here. To say that Jesus was wrong about the authorship of Deuteronomy is to accuse him of an 'unsuspected self-deception' which would be unacceptable in a human teacher. It would mean that this Christ who knew 'the secret heart of man' and the 'hidden thought and purpose of the Most High God' was unable to spot a forgery and was, therefore, deficient in moral judgment. So the moral character and perception of Christ are, in Liddon's judgment, in question here and for this reason he finds it hard to understand how anyone can go on believing in the divinity of Christ while denying the Mosaic authorship of this book. Liddon assumes that anyone who repeats the accepted conventions of the day is thereby setting the seal of his authority upon them. If Jesus does it, then those conventions are granted divine authentication. Liddon says:

The man who sincerely believes that Jesus Christ is God will not doubt that His every word standeth sure, and that whatever has been sanctioned by His supreme authority is independent of, and unassailable by, the fallible judgment of His creatures respecting it.<sup>1</sup>

For Liddon, then, this detail of critical Biblical scholarship entails questions about the ontological status of Christ. He sees a danger that the removal of the small brick of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch from the wall of orthodox teaching could lead to

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 480

the collapse of the whole edifice. He says:

If when He sets the seal of His authority upon the writings of Moses as a whole, and upon the most miraculous incidents which they relate in detail, He is really only the uneducated Jew who ignorantly repeats and reflects the prejudices of a barbarous age; how shall we be sure that when He reveals the Character of God, or the precepts of the new Life, or the reality and nature of the endless world, He is really trustworthy.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon is inevitably involved in a direct encounter with critical scholarship. The brittleness and inflexibility of his position are now exposed. His whole theological system is based on the dilemma, 'If Christ is not God, he is not a good man.' But the dilemma only has force if a unity of thought between Scripture and the Church of the Creeds and Councils can be established. By 1866 Biblical criticism was challenging that unity. In particular, its understanding of the Fourth Gospel, on which Liddon was so dependent, was changing. The Gospel might well be the mature reflection of an elderly saint rather than a verbatim report of Jesus's conversations with his disciples. Statements which Liddon takes to be evidence of Jesus's consciousness of his own divinity might be the result of this sage's reading back into the teaching of Jesus the conclusions which his meditation on the life and impact of Jesus has reached and so represent a development in Christian thought and not part of the earliest message. In the face of that kind of criticism, Liddon has little room for manoeuvre.

It is interesting to compare Liddon's Bampton with a review of them published in 1871. It was written anonymously by 'A Clergyman of the Church of England' under the title, An Examination of Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures. He regards Liddon as far too Protestant in the importance he puts upon Scripture. He says:

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp 479-80

However far Mr. Liddon's phraseology may at times diverge from that of ordinary orthodox Protestants, he here proceeds upon distinctively Protestant principle, and proffers his dogma to be tested by the Bible thoroughly investigated and reasonably understood. To prove his confidence justified, and his conclusions sustained, by the Bible, is the one great end of his carefully - compiled, and, from his own side virtually exhaustive, pleadings. If he had not thus chosen to stand upon indefensible ground, I should not have ventured to criticise his Lectures.<sup>1</sup>

The Clergyman prefers to rely upon the authority of the Church rather than the Bible. His reason is that:

The Christian Church is as grand a fact in the world's history as is the Bible and, with reference to the doctrine under consideration, the mind of the Church Universal has long displayed a perspicuity, explicitness, and uniformity of expression, of which the Bible is conspicuously destitute. If Orthodoxy is to be retained, some comprehensive preliminary assumption must be made, and the assumption that the Church is the divinely-appointed organ and vehicle of Christian revelation, the Bible being a subordinate factor in the Church's hands, seems to me incomparably more simple, expedient, and valid than the assumption that the Bible is the one inspired and sufficient repertory of the dogmatic faith proclaimed by the later two of the three great Creeds.<sup>2</sup>

In his examination of the Bampton, he resolved to proceed on the hypothesis, which he takes to be Liddon's also, 'that Protestant principle in relation to the sufficiency and sole supremacy of

<sup>1</sup> A Clergyman of the Church of England, An Examination of Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures, p. 2 (Hereinafter referred to as Examination)

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 2-3

Scripture is true!<sup>1</sup> But working on that hypothesis, he was led to the conclusion that the doctrine of Christ's divinity was false. He has read the contemporary Biblical scholars and with them, and against Liddon, he accepts that passages like 1 John 5:20, Titus 2:13, and Romans 9:5 are ambiguous, what they have to say about the person of Christ is ambiguous. There is no certainty that the divine title here actually refers to Christ. Again, he argues that the lack of the definite article in the phrase, 'The Word was God', means that it does not necessarily point to Christ's absolute divinity. The Fourth Evangelist 'did not intend to affirm the Word's absolute deity' is his conclusion.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to Liddon, he says:

The fact is patent; men who are, at the very least, his equals in every qualification entitled to respect, unhesitatingly affirm the interpretation which he refuses to allow.<sup>3</sup>

Concerning Christ's self-assertions, he claims:

In the New Testament, the Great Speaker, Who is in the Church's preaching Very God veiled in Humanity, gives no hint of His own boundless Uncreated Goodness ..... He never approaches an affirmation that He is internal to the Self-subsisting Nature, and, by independent necessity of Being, the Father's Co-equal Partner.<sup>4</sup>

Three passages sum up his position:

The supposed Scriptural evidence for Christ's Godhead crumbles vexingly away as the meaning of text after text is explored.<sup>5</sup>

The Christ of an uncritical Biblical Protestantism is an Arian, superhuman Christ. The Christ of a critical Protestantism is a

<sup>1</sup> Examination, p. 3

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 82-88

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 94

<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 317

<sup>5</sup> ibid. p. 316

merely human, but extraordinarily endowed Christ. For the Catholic Christ there is, without the admission of the Church's revealing inspiration and authority, no logical basis anywhere.<sup>1</sup> No fact in the history of opinion is more clearly provable, than that the Orthodox dogma was a growth, developed amid controversy, and fixed in the face of strong opposition.<sup>2</sup>

The Clergyman insists that he is not opposing the dogma of Christ's divinity itself. He believes it as firmly as Liddon himself. What he denies is the basis on which, he thinks, Liddon is trying to support it. And this is what makes him interesting. Like Liddon he belongs within the Catholic wing of the Church of England. Unlike Liddon, as he thinks, he rests on 'the Catholic principle which acknowledges, within the human exterior of ecclesiastical organization, the secret infallible guidance of the Holy Ghost as an abiding source and guarantee of dogma.'<sup>3</sup> He understands that principle as giving sole authority to the continuing Church and as allowing development in doctrine. He is not, therefore, threatened by the findings of Biblical critics in the way Liddon is. The security of orthodox Christology lies in the Church and not in the Bible.

It is not certain that Liddon would, as the Clergyman thinks, disallow that statement of the Catholic principle. But he would certainly interpret differently. The accusation of being too Protestant and of failing to take the authority of the Church seriously must have been hurtful to Liddon. In an appendix to the Bampton's,<sup>4</sup> he rejects it and claims that his position has not been fairly represented. He does not, he says, stand merely upon the inspiration of Scripture but also upon the inspired interpretation

<sup>1</sup> Examination, p. 248n.

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 323

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 3

<sup>4</sup> Note I, Divinity.

of Scripture by the Church. The difference is that for Liddon the Church is that of the first five centuries, not the nineteenth.

The stated purpose of the Bampton is to answer those who take a Socinian view of Christ. Liddon wants to oppose liberal or Rationalist anti-dogmatism. The mood of the age, as he perceives it, wants to separate the moral nature of Jesus from dogmatic assertions about his divine nature. It can do this if it can show that Nicene Christology is a late development within the Church which has complicated the original, simple religion of Jesus or even if it can demonstrate development within the New Testament itself, by showing, for instance, that the Fourth Gospel is much later than the Synoptics and is the free composition of the Evangelist. Rationalists may then argue that in removing superhuman elements from Christianity as later accretions they are merely restoring the original purity of the Gospel. Liddon's response is to insist that dogma and sublimity of teaching and character have belonged together in Jesus from the first. For this he needs to be able to defend the authenticity of Scripture and the unanimity of its teaching about Christ as well as to show that Nicea and Chalcedon in no way developed what was already there in Scripture.

The Clergyman thinks that Liddon would be better advised to abandon Scripture to the critics and to rest his case solely on the authority of the Church. But for Liddon this is a dangerous process. To allow the Clergyman's view that orthodox Christology is the product of development in doctrine in the course of the Church's life would be to set a precedent for other developments. In the seventh lecture, Liddon objects to the newly formulated dogma of the Roman Catholic Church about the sinless conception of Mary as an unwarranted creation of new doctrine. And he seems to be afraid that more of this will follow unless there is some authoritative

check on the Church's activity. If, therefore, Liddon's main concern is with the Socinians, he also has a wary eye on Roman Catholicism and will not make concessions to it. This seems to explain why he quotes, with apparent approval, the judgment of Vance Smith on the Examination:

The marvel attending it is, that the author should announce himself, on his title-page, as a "Clergyman of the Church of England." <sup>1</sup>

The price Liddon has to pay for basing his apologetic on the authority of the Church of the Fathers and the Bible together is a loss of freedom and flexibility. The claim of the Clergyman that the Church is divinely inspired is hard to substantiate. He has to be content with calling it an assumption. But, because it is this, it is not easily refuted. It is a piece of theological positivism to be accepted or rejected but not subject to verification or falsification.

Liddon's position is different. It is no more verifiable that the Clergyman's. But it is falsifiable because the inspiration of the Bible is not beyond examination. An identification of internal contradictions and inconsistencies would put the doctrine under strain. So would the discovery of theological variety, ambiguity and mistaken claims about authorship of Biblical writings or the historicity of recorded events. Further, a revelation of these things in Scripture, especially theological variety, would make the tenet that the New Testament and Nicaea are unanimous an impossible one to hold. Liddon's position, therefore, might seem to his contemporaries to be one which was becoming increasingly difficult to adhere to in 1866 not so much because of attacks from science or other secular intellectual movements but because of developments within theology itself.

The abiding impression left by the Bampton is of a man standing at the close of an age, impressive when judged by the standards and

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 551

assumptions of that age, but soon to be left behind at the dawn of a new one. Liddon's later writings must now be investigated for indications of adjustment and adaptation.

Chapter Four - Liddon's Later Writings 1867-90

After the delivery of the Bampton Lectures, the settled life Liddon enjoyed in Oxford began to change. The lectures were sent for publication in 1867 and, soon afterwards, he left for a two months tour of Russia. Keble had died in 1866 and, on his return from the continent, Liddon became engrossed in the establishment of Keble College as a memorial to his friend. He was himself pressed to become its first head but he steadfastly refused. Both his father, Captain Liddon, and his great friend, Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury, died in 1869. The old order of things was breaking up for him.

A new era dawned in 1870, when, not without some misgiving in each case, Liddon was almost simultaneously made a Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral and Ireland Professor of Exegesis in Oxford. For the first time he had a regular congregation representing more of a cross-section of the general public than he could ever expect in Oxford. The disreputable state of St. Paul's would make him anxious to improve the quality of the worship and the size of the congregation. He seems to have recognised the need for a pulpit ministry in which the faith of his hearers might be nurtured and assured in an age of growing intellectual ferment and scepticism. The style of his sermons changed and they became more diverse in topic.

But his preaching still ranged around the doctrine of the person of Christ. Thus in 1872 he suggests to his congregation:

We cannot conceive the best man we have ever known in life speaking of himself as the Good Shepherd of men. To do so would be to forfeit his claim to our love, our reverence, even to our respect. Why is it not so in our Lord? Because there is that in Him, beyond yet inseparable from His Perfect Manhood, which justifies His language ..... We feel in short that He is Divine ..... But it is because He is also Man that

such a title befits Him. Because He is no abstract providence, but a Divine Person, Who has taken our human nature upon Him, and Who, through it, communicates with us and blesses us, He is the Good Shepherd of His People.<sup>1</sup>

As on previous occasions, it is the unity of speech and character in Jesus with which he wishes to impress his hearers. But now references to the doctrine of the person of Christ are used to make devotional points and without pausing to present a theological justification.

After his first year in residence, Liddon changed his months in London from May, September and January to April, August and December in order to be able to fulfil his responsibilities in Oxford. This meant that he was always there for part of Advent, Christmas and often Passiontide and Easter. These are obvious times for sermons on Christological themes and it might be thought that any emphasis on this aspect of Christian doctrine is due more to circumstances than to the preacher's natural inclinations. But this is not so. In the last year of his life Liddon is still saying:

Undoubtedly, my brethren, the Divinity of our Lord is the central article in the Faith of the Church.<sup>2</sup>

His Christmas residence gave him the opportunity to expound his understanding of the person of Christ. Easter was the chance to stress the conviction, which seems to have become increasingly important to him as the years progressed, that it is the Resurrection which establishes most clearly the divinity of Christ. There can be little doubt that Liddon's emphasis would have been the same in any circumstances and that the change in times of residence was not merely convenient but also congenial to him.

The sermons and writings during this long period of Liddon's life reveal no essential changes in his Christology. Certain aspects

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Easter at St. Paul's, pp. 318-9

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Some Words of St. Paul, p. 223

of it receive more attention at times, for example, the representative nature of Christ's manhood. Others are more fully expounded. But they are not new. Indeed, Liddon's conviction that there could be no development in doctrine beyond elucidation is exemplified in his own thought. He may see and express things more clearly than before but there is never any novelty in his teaching. The examination of two sermons, one early in the period and one almost at the end, may serve to illustrate the point. In 1870, Liddon preached a series of sermons at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, designed to present the Christian faith in what is described in the preface to the published collection as 'an age of feverish scepticism'.<sup>1</sup> Liddon dealt with such topics as the Idea of Religion, God, the Soul, Sin, Prayer and finally, 'The Mediator, the Guarantee of Religious Life'.<sup>2</sup> In this last sermon, Liddon describes the character of Jesus as he is presented in the Gospels. The moral sense recognises in Jesus a quality of life which is complete and supreme. But, he says:

The ideal Character of the Gospels is, on one side, at issue with what we should abstractedly conceive to be a perfect human ideal. For He who presents it to us proclaims Himself, in terms and to an extent which are altogether inconsistent with any true ideal of a purely creaturely perfection.<sup>3</sup>

He continues:

His attitude is that of One Who takes His claims for granted; Who has no errors to confess, no demands to explain, or to apologize for; no restraining instinct of self-distrust to keep Him in the background; no shrinking from high command, based upon a sense of the impossible superiority of those around Him. It is the bearing of One Who claims to be the First of all, the

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Some Elements of Religion, p. vii  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 204  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 218

Centre of all, with entire simplicity indeed, but also with unhesitating decision.<sup>1</sup>

What the bearing of Jesus suggests is made explicit by his own self-assertions. In what can now be recognised to be his customary fashion, Liddon piles up the evidence from the Gospels, mainly from John but some also from the Synoptics, to show what Jesus said about his own status. Then he goes on:

And the question arises, how to account for this earnest self-assertion on the part of Jesus Christ; how to acquit such language of the charges to which it would expose any religious man who should use it at the present day? How are we to adjust it, on the one hand, with the sobriety and truthfulness of a perfect human character; on the other, with a due recognition of the rights of God?<sup>2</sup>

The language of Jesus might seem an imposture but for the fact that 'the entire drift and atmosphere of His Life' justify it. It is, for instance, entirely in harmony with the nature of the miracles ascribed to him. They are miracles of power or mercy or both. Liddon remarks:

Some of this class of miracles are, in fact, objected to by a recent writer, on the specific ground that they only befit a superhuman personality. We therefore do not strain the import of such miracles in saying that they are, at least, in harmony with Christ's language about His claims and His superhuman Person.<sup>3</sup>

Equally, the self-assertions of Jesus are in harmony with his sinlessness. He says:

Jesus challenges His enemies to convince Him of sin, if they can. He never hints that He has done or said any one thing which needs forgiveness. He teaches His disciples to pray, "Forgive

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Some Elements of Religion, pp. 219-20

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 223

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 226 By 'this class of miracles' Liddon means miracles of power or nature miracles. The recent writer he has in mind is Schenkel in Characterbild Jesu.

us our trespasses": He never prays for pardon Himself.<sup>1</sup>

Of modern critics, Liddon says,

Either they must consent to forfeit the moral ideal which they admire in the Gospels, and which, to do them justice, they are sincerely anxious to preserve; or they must fall back upon those very statements of the creeds which, by affirming Christ's personal Divinity, really and only justify His constant references to Himself, and His unbounded claims upon mankind.<sup>2</sup>

All this rests upon the familiar dilemma. It is precisely the argument employed in the Bampton Lectures and it continues to be the basis of Liddon's apologetic.

The second sermon was preached in 1887 and is published with the title, 'The Word made flesh'. Here he expounds the doctrine of the Person of Christ and again the thought is exactly that of the Bampton if a little more clearly and fully expressed. Liddon notices certain misconceptions which have been entertained at times concerning the Incarnation. He says:

Sometimes Christians have been supposed to hold that two persons were united in Christ, instead of two natures in His single Person; sometimes that the Infinite Being was confined within the bounds of the finite Nature which He assumed; sometimes that God ceased to be really Himself when He took on Him man's nature; sometimes that the Human Nature which He took was absorbed into or annihilated by its union with the Deity.<sup>3</sup>

All these ideas have been rejected by the Church in favour of the position stated in the Athanasian Creed:

The right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man. God of the substance of His Father, begotten before all worlds, and Man of

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Some Elements of Religion, p. 227

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 228-9

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, p. 124

the substance of His mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. Who although He be God and man, yet is He not two but one Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon says:

He Who was born, as on this day, did not begin to be when He was conceived by His human Mother; since He had already existed from before all worlds - from an eternity ..... He had already lived for an eternity when He condescended to make a human body and a human soul in an entirely new sense His own, by uniting them to His Divine and Eternal Person.<sup>2</sup>

In order to explain the two natures, Liddon turns again, as in the Bampton, to the illustration of the union of body and soul in man. Again he relies upon the Athanasian Creed with its statement, 'As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ' and he goes on:

He Who could thus bring together matter and spirit, notwithstanding their utter contrariety of nature, and could constitute out of them a single human personality or being, might surely, if it pleased Him, raise both matter and spirit - a human body and a human soul - to union with His Divinity, under the control of His Eternal Person.<sup>3</sup>

For a Christmas Day sermon this is heady stuff. The argument is rather subtle and complex for an ordinary congregation to take in and it indicates how weighty a preacher Liddon was. He is too careful a theologian to say that the divine in Christ took over the soul in the human Jesus and that the human was flesh but the argument, noticed in

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, p. 124-5  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 123  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 127

the Bamptons,<sup>1</sup> that the personal principle within the soul of Jesus was divine is not repeated here.

Most striking about this sermon is that it contains the fullest statement in Liddon's writings of the 'communicatio idiomatum.'

He says:

So real was and is this union, that all the acts, words, and sufferings of Christ's Human Body, all the thoughts, reasonings, resolves, emotions of His Human Soul, while being properly human are yet also the acts, words, sufferings, the thoughts, reasonings, resolves and emotions of the Eternal Son, Who controls all, and imparts to all the value and elevation which belong to the Infinite and the Supreme. Thus, although Christ suffered in His Human Soul in the garden, and in His Human Body on the Cross, His sufferings acquired an entirely superhuman worth and meaning from the Person of the Eternal Word to whom His Manhood was joined; and St. Paul goes so far as to say that God purchased the Church with His own Blood - meaning that the Blood which was shed by the Crucified was that of a Human Body personally united to God the Son.<sup>2</sup>

This passage explains why it is so important to Liddon to be able to maintain the inerrancy of Christ's knowledge. If Christ could be shown to be mistaken about anything, on this view, it would reflect not only upon his humanity but also upon his divinity.

Nothing in Liddon's Christology could be said to be original to him. The very idea would have appalled him. He saw his role as a theologian in the elucidation and vindication of the faith of the Church Councils. But a number of distinctive emphases have been noted and these are reiterated with more or less frequency during this period.

For example, the stress upon the necessity for recognising Christ

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp 263-4

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, p. 125

as both Son and Word appears in a sermon in 1874. He says:

His Son! Let us dwell on that prerogative Name. It must mean a Being Who shares the Father's Nature, yet is personally distinct from Him; one Being Who, by nature and right, stands towards the Eternal in this unique relation. But lest we should think of some inferior and created nature, Scripture gives the Son another Name; He is called "the Word", that is, the Thought or Reason, uttered or unuttered, of the Everlasting Father. What is more intimately a part of a man than his thought? What more clearly distinct from him, while yet inheriting his nature than his child? Thus Scripture teaches us the existence of One Who is of one substance with the Father, yet personally distinct from Him; His Peer and His Companion from everlasting.<sup>1</sup>

The insistence upon the impersonal humanity of Jesus is also there. There is a hint of it in the sermon on 'The Word Made Flesh.' Liddon tells us that Christ wore his human body and human soul as a garment. He says:

After having existed from eternity, He united to Himself for evermore a perfect and representative Sample of the bodily and immaterial nature of man, and thus clothed with It, as on this day, He entered into the world of sense and time.<sup>2</sup>

'A perfect and representative Sample of the bodily and immaterial nature of Man' hardly sounds like an actual person. And indeed Liddon elsewhere firmly states that it was not. He says:

It has been said, with truth, that when the Eternal Word, or Son of God, was made flesh, He united Himself, not to a human person, but to human nature. His Humanity had nothing about it that was local, particular, appropriate only to a single historical epoch, to a country, to a race. He was born in

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Advent in St. Paul's, p. 146  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, p. 124

Palestine, and of a Jewish mother, yet He was without the narrowing characteristics of a Jew; He was born a member of a down-trodden and conquered race, when the Roman empire had reached the zenith of its fortunes, yet in Mind and Character He might have belonged as well to the race of the conquerors, or to any other epoch in the history of mankind. All races, all countries, all ages had a share in Him, yet He could be claimed as an exclusive possession by none.<sup>1</sup>

Ideas like these sound very strange to a great many readers today. New Testament scholarship in this century has tended to emphasise the Jewishness of Jesus, highlighting such things as his attitude to the Law, his tendency to employ rabbinical methods of argument and his evident insistence, during at least part of his ministry, that his mission was essentially to Israel rather than to the nations. Liddon offers no evidence for the fact that Jesus lacked racial particularity or cultural and historical conditioning. But Liddon is motivated here by dogmatic interests rather than concern for biographical accuracy. For Liddon particularity in Jesus would militate against the presentation of him as representative of mankind. Some modern readers may welcome the fact that Jesus was rooted in a particular experience of human life, limited and expressed through family traits, racial characteristics, a specific culture, time and geographical location. Not to be so grounded would make him untypical and unreal by removing him from the stream of human life. But for Liddon it is the impersonal nature of Christ's humanity and the fact that he is not characterised by any of these localising factors which makes him representative of mankind. He continues in the same passage by saying:

This representative character of our Lord's Manhood is insisted on by St. Paul, when he calls Jesus Christ, the second Adam.

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Passiontide Sermons, p. 45

As the first Adam represented the whole human family by being the common ancestor, from whom all human beings derived the gift of physical life, so that his blood flowed in their veins, and their several lives, whatever their individual characteristics may be, are traceable to and meet in him; so the Second Adam was to represent the human family, not as the common source of bodily life, but as the parent of a moral and spiritual existence, which those children of the first Adam who could, might receive from Him. The Second Adam was, says the Apostle, a Quickening Spirit: He held towards the spiritual and higher life of mankind a relation as intimate, and, in its purpose, as universal as the first Adam had held to man's natural life.<sup>1</sup>

This view of Christ receives fuller treatment in the 1870's and early 1880's than at any earlier time. He even suggests the curious notion that somehow Jesus's humanity is more human than any other man's and actually uses the word 'human' in a derogatory sense. In 1873, he says:

Our Lord is not merely human, but the Representative or Ideal Man ..... This is what St. Paul means by calling Him the Second Adam, the counterpart of the first father of our race. Unlike the first Adam, He is always true to the idea of a perfect humanity; and so He stands alone, as the first of a new race of men, as the faultless Pattern and Type of human goodness.<sup>2</sup>

The use of the word 'merely' here is very strange. Liddon comes close to compromising the real humanity of Jesus for the word seems to denote both man in his fallen state and man in his particularity. Liddon will not accept that Jesus experienced either of these aspects of humanity.

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Passiontide Sermons, p. 45

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Advent in St. Paul's, p. 133

If it is asked why Liddon can countenance the idea of Adam, a particular man, as representative of all later generations and yet refuse particularity to Christ in order that he should be representative, it is hard to find a satisfactory answer. Perhaps, understandably, he found Paul's ideas on this subject difficult to understand. Part of the answer may be though that he did not regard Adam as being quite like other men since as the parent of the human race he was specially created. Liddon did not think of the First Adam as merely a theological model or symbol. He had to be an historical figure to have had the effect on human history that is described in the doctrine of the Fall. As the special creation of God he may have transmitted tendencies and characteristics to his children but he did not inherit them from anyone. A further element in the answer and probably one that loomed larger for him is found in Liddon's insistence upon the sinlessness of Jesus. He is confident that all we know about our Lord goes to show that Jesus was sinless and he takes this quite literally to mean that Jesus was conceived without sin and never committed a sin. Again his real interest is not biographical. This time it is soteriological. He says :

In considering our Lord's birth of a Virgin-Mother, we have always to remember that it was a first necessity that the Redeemer of mankind should be sinless. If He was to help our race out of its tradition of moral degradation, He must have no part in the evil which it was His work to put away.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in his sermon on the 'Sinlessness of Jesus Christ', (1871), he says,

Had He been conscious of any inward stain, how could He have desired to offer Himself in sacrifice to free a world from sin?

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, p. 81

Had there been in Him any personal evil to purge away, His Death might have been endured on account of His own guilt: it is His absolute Sinlessness which makes it certain that He died for others.<sup>1</sup>

Although he does not actually say so, it seems likely that Liddon would think that Christ, the Second Adam, could only inaugurate a new humanity, released from the power of sin, if he were himself sinless and that his sinlessness would be very much in doubt if it were possible to think of him as a particular man, grounded within the stream of human history.

Despite all this, he is careful to insist that the humanity of Jesus was real. His divinity and his impersonal human nature do not, as Liddon sees them, remove Jesus so far from us that we cannot follow the example of his life. Liddon says,

Our Lord's true Divinity did not interfere with the truth of His Manhood; or lessen the value of the Example which He set us ..... Our Lord's Eternal Person does not make the virtues which are so apparent in his earthly life inimitable by us; since they belong to that common nature which is ours by inheritance, and which in His love and condescension He took upon Himself.<sup>2</sup>

Liddon says that there are many things which Christ did that we cannot but 'we can show the mind, if we cannot reproduce all the works, of our Divine Lord.'<sup>3</sup>

In these later writings, as in the earlier, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ is the linch-pin of Liddon's theology. This is most obvious with regard to the Atonement. In 1868, he says:

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Passiontide Sermons, p. 15  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Some Words of St. Paul, p. 225  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 225

If He were a mere man, then so far would His death be from having any atoning virtue, that it may be fairly questioned, nay, it has been questioned, whether such a death was not morally indefensible, as being in fact an act of voluntary self-destruction; since He might have avoided the encounter with Jewish opinion which more immediately precipitated the action of the Sanhedrim. But being, as He is, Very and Eternal God He imparted to His passive as to His active obedience a priceless value; and He wrought out, in intention, the salvation of the whole race of men, when He hung dying upon the Tree of Shame.<sup>1</sup>

Again, in 1887, he says:

By a Death which crowned a Life perfectly conformed to the Divine Will, and invested with incalculable value through association with His Divine Nature, He made for human sin a perfect atonement ..... since He is God, as well as Man, we too may approach, nay, be united with, that Being in Whom alone our weak and distracted nature can recover its repose and strength.<sup>2</sup>

The doctrine also affects the force of Christ's teaching. It gains its power because it is the teaching of a divine person and not simply through its intrinsic merit. He says:

Doubtless His Words are, beyond any others, the stay of the soul; He spoke as never man spoke. But they are this, not simply because of their intrinsic merit, or rather because of our power of doing justice to it but because they are His. His Person is the foundation.<sup>3</sup>

He sums up:

His Person is for us the fundamental fact which underlies, explains, justifies, sustains all that is built upon it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 64  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Advent in St. Paul's, p. 589  
<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Special Occasions, p. 225  
<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 225

A passage in a sermon on the 'Gradualness of Divine Teaching,' preached in 1883, serves as a summary of Liddon's position at this time as at all other times on the centrality of the doctrine of Christ's divinity, the grounds for believing in it and its nature as the connecting link for the various constituents of the Christian faith. Liddon says:

The world-wide invitations to trust and obey and love; the great sayings, but half understood when they were uttered, about His Oneness with the Father, His Eternal Existence when Abraham as yet was not, His passing the knowledge of all save the Father, Whom He alone also could really know; the claim to judge the whole human race from the throne of heaven; the absolute unhesitating assertion of Self - so unpardonable if the Speaker was merely human, so inevitable if He was indeed Divine - all this would be brought to a focus by the teaching, unveiling, systematising spirit, till the great central truth of Christian Faith, the Absolute Deity of Jesus Christ, as the Everlasting Son of the Father, had stood forth in all its awe and all its beauty in the faith and teaching of the Apostles. And from this central truth how much else would radiate: the infinite value of His death, incalculable by any merely human estimate; the virtue of those appointed instruments of contact of His Human Nature with mankind, the Sacraments; the infallibility of all language that can fairly claim His sanction; the power to save to the uttermost all who need and claim His help.<sup>1</sup>

A further reason, apart from the rationalist attack, why Liddon felt the need to go on asserting these things so strongly in this period of his ministry and the extent to which they mattered to him are clear from the controversy over the use of the Athanasian Creed to which he often made an appeal. For generations of Churchmen, from

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Easter at St. Paul's, p. 435

the Reformation onwards, the Creed had caused difficulties because many found it hard to understand and some objected to the terrible judgment with which it threatened those who could not altogether accept its teaching. The disuse of the Creed was common and it is claimed that more than half the parishes in England were unaccustomed to the creed.<sup>1</sup> In September 1870 Archbishop Tait had said that the use of the Creed in public worship should be discontinued. For some years the matter was the subject of debate and Liddon wrote to the Archbishop on December 23rd, 1871, saying:

As I gather from a letter signed "Anglicanus" in today's Times that the attacks recently made on the Athanasian Creed are likely to be renewed at no distant date, it is not, I trust, obtrusive or other than right in me to state formally to your Grace, that if this most precious Creed is either mutilated by the excision of the (so-termed) Damatory Clauses, or degraded, by an alteration of the rubric which precedes it, from its present position in the Book of Common Prayer, I shall feel bound in conscience to resign my preferments, and to retire from the ministry of the Church of England.<sup>2</sup>

Tait was not impressed by the element of threat in the letter and replied saying that it should not have been held out:

in the midst of a calm discussion on a very difficult question amongst learned and attached members of the Church of England, when the results of such discussion are on the point of being submitted to the consideration of the provincial Synods of our Church.<sup>3</sup>

The threat, a weapon which Gore was also prone to employ, is unpleasant but, at the same time, it does indicate the strength of

<sup>1</sup> Davidson, R.T., and Benham, W., Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, vol. ii, p. 126

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 137

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 138

Liddon's feeling on the matter. His reasons were explained, first in a letter to Pusey on February 24th, 1872, and then in an Oxford sermon in October of the same year. They are primarily Christological.

To Pusey, Liddon writes:

The moral effect of the removal of the Warning Clauses will be a proclamation of indifference to the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, and the Divine Incarnation; a proclamation that the man who, with his eyes open, adopts the blasphemies of Sabellius and Arius, will be just as well off as a Catholic believer in the Eternal World.<sup>1</sup>

If this shows the nastier side of Liddon, it also shows the seriousness with which he viewed the matter of holding what he regarded as the correct doctrinal view. It was a matter of eternal salvation!

In the sermon, Liddon says:

each statement is seen to be an indispensable part of a living and integral body of truth, whereby the two terms of our Faith, the perfectness of our Lord's human character regarded in the light of His self-assertion and the unity of the Godhead are brought into fundamental harmony. It is the trustworthiness of Jesus which is the master-truth asserted by the Athanasian Creed. In the last analysis it will be found impossible to justify the promises which He held out to the human race, and the language which His apostles used about Him, except upon such grounds as those which are taken by the Creed.<sup>2</sup>

The matter was finally resolved in May 1873 when, largely as a result of the efforts of Pusey and Liddon, the Meetings of Convocation decided to leave the Creed in its place unaltered except for the addition of an explanatory note.

The change of congregation in 1870, necessitating some change of style in Liddon's preaching did not mean that he ceased to be an

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 166

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford, Second Series, p. 136

apologist. Gladstone, writing to Archbishop Benson as late as January 1885, could say of Liddon:

To hear him is, I apprehend, the advice (that) would be given to, or the course which would be spontaneously taken by an inquiring unbeliever. May he not perhaps be called the first champion of belief?<sup>1</sup>

Lord Acton, a prominent Roman Catholic, described himself as 'not in harmony with Liddon and scarcely in sympathy'. Nevertheless, he could say in a letter to Gladstone in March 1884:

Liddon is in contact with all that is doing in the world of thought.<sup>2</sup>

Again in June specifying a particular area of thought which Liddon had investigated, he wrote:

Evidently Liddon is in no peril from the movement of modern science. He has faced those problems and accounted for them. If he is out of the perpendicular, it is because he leans the other way.<sup>3</sup>

As one would expect, contemporary science is more important for Liddon in this later period than it was previously. In 1871, the year of The Descent of Man, there is a passing reference to Darwinism but no extended treatment. He says:

Science may unveil in nature regular modes of working, and name them laws; she may substitute and to a degree beyond present anticipations, some doctrine of gradually developed forms of life for the older belief in permanent distinctions between living species. But the great question still awaits her. Who furnished the original material for the presumed development?<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Johnston p. 312

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 309

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 309

<sup>4</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, Second Series, p. 41

He appears to assume that evolution and development are synonymous.

It is not until 1882 that he pays greater attention to the subject in his writings. Apparently he was not involved in the original controversy, despite his closeness to Samuel Wilberforce. Indeed, he reveals a more detached attitude to evolution and is apparently less alarmed by its implications than might have been expected of him. A comment from 1882 reflects the earlier statement of 1871 and may indicate the position he had always held. Liddon says:

It may be admitted that when the well-known books on The Origin of Species and on The Descent of Man first appeared, they were largely regarded by religious men as containing a theory necessarily hostile to the fundamental truths of religion. A closer study has generally modified any such impression. If the theory of "natural selection" has given a powerful impulse to the general doctrine of evolution, it is seen that whether the creative activity of God is manifested through catastrophes, so to call them, or by way of a progressive evolution, it is still His creative activity, and that the really great questions beyond remain untouched. The evolutionary process, supposing it to exist, must have had a beginning; who began it?

He suggests that there are three gaps in the evolutionary sequence requiring the intervention of God:

There is the great gap between the highest animal instinct, and the reflective, self-measuring, self-analyzing mind of man. There is the greater gap between life, and the most highly organised matter. There is the greatest gap of all between matter and nothing. At these three points, as far as we can see, the Creative Will must have intervened otherwise than by way of evolution out of existing material, - to create mind, -

to create life, - to create matter.<sup>1</sup>

This more or less placid acceptance of Darwin was encouraged by Liddon's conviction that the scientist himself remained a believer in God. Liddon's renewed interest in Darwin in 1882 was due to Darwin's death early in that year and the fact that Liddon was invited to join the committee which was to arrange for a Memorial to him. Liddon himself was inclined to accept the invitation but in the end gave up the idea rather than upset Pusey who had already refused. His diary for May 10th records:

If I had only to think of my own convictions, I think I should join, as we owe Darwin much for his courageous adherence to Theistic truths under a great deal of pressure, as I cannot doubt.<sup>2</sup>

Liddon thought Darwin's view of God impoverished and probably derived, consciously or unconsciously, from Deism and he thought that Darwin sometimes spoke as though natural laws had somehow had an existence independently of God.<sup>3</sup> Still he was glad to call Darwin a Theist.

Liddon was not greatly disturbed by the effect of Darwinism on Genesis. He thought it quite possible to reconcile the two. He says: Holy Scripture tells us that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." If the Church should hereafter teach that this "formation" was not a momentary act, but a process of development continued through a long series of ages, she would not vary the traditional interpretation so seriously as was done in the case of passages which appeared to condemn in terms the teaching of Galileo. Nor would the earlier description of the creation of man in the Sacred Record present

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Recovery of Thomas, pp. 26-7

<sup>2</sup> Johnston, p. 276

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Recovery of Thomas, p. 6

any greater difficulty. It is very far from clear that the Darwinian hypothesis has so established itself as to make such a modified interpretation necessary; only let it be considered that here, as elsewhere, the language of the Bible is wider than to be necessarily tied down to the terms of a particular account of man's natural history.<sup>1</sup>

More serious in Liddon's eyes are the implications of Darwin's thesis for man's understanding of his own dignity within creation and beyond this for the Incarnation. This was noticed briefly in the Bampton Lectures.<sup>2</sup> Now, for a moment, Liddon approaches the question from the other end, as it were, and says that the Incarnation bestows such a dignity upon man that it will take more than an evolutionary theory to diminish it. He says:

Man's true dignity depends not upon the history of his physical frame, but upon the nature of the immaterial principle within him, and above all upon the unspeakable honour conferred upon both parts of his being when they were united to the Eternal Person of God the Son, in the Divine Incarnation.<sup>3</sup>

But he returns to his earlier teaching in 1887 when he says:

Sometimes, in a strange spirit of paradox, he (that is, man) has combined theories which ascribe to himself an origin and a nature as degraded as well can be, with passionate assertions of his capacity to judge of all things in earth and Heaven.<sup>4</sup>

Later, in the same sermon, he says:

But the human nature in which the Eternal Word condescended and condescends to dwell can never be treated by a Christian believer as other than a nature capable of the highest destinies.<sup>5</sup>

1 Liddon, H.P., The Recovery of Thomas, pp. 12-13  
2 Divinity, p. 459  
3 Liddon, H.P., The Recovery of Thomas, p. 12  
4 Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, p. 129  
5 ibid. p. 134

The implication is that once Darwin's theory is fully accepted, if it is not already, Liddon will find it hard to imagine that God is not somehow demeaned by such involvement with the animal creation.

There is, moreover, a further implication for Liddon's Christology in Darwinism. Liddon emphasises Christ as Ideal or Representative Man, the Second Adam, and this, far from being merely a piece of theological imagery, must be taken quite literally. So insistent is he on maintaining this position that even if Darwin is to be accepted, there must still be only one man, an historical Adam, through whom the evolution to human beings takes place. He says:

One man only, too, there must have been to whom the gift of a soul, with free will and self-consciousness, was thus originally given, and from whom all other men are since descended. The great antithesis of the First and Second Adam would disappear from our faith if we could suppose that mankind were derived from more than one natural parent.<sup>1</sup>

There is, therefore, a certain fragility about the facile manner in which Liddon takes evolution into his system. For one who normally impresses by his grasp of the ramifications of even details of new scholarship, it is odd that he should not apparently have seen more of what Darwinism entails for theology. The fact is though that, in the later years of his life, Liddon is less inclined to take new thought seriously. His motives are mixed. First, there is the confidence that the truth has been once delivered to the saints and cannot be touched. Then there is the further confidence, implied in The Recovery of Thomas,<sup>2</sup> that since all knowledge comes from God, the Christian need not be afraid of genuine new discoveries from any quarter. Liddon would not be able to countenance the idea of truth

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Recovery of Thomas, p. 14  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 14-15

arising from any source but God but so convinced is he of God's revelation through Scripture and Church that he is bound to take general revelation through science or art less seriously. Apparent conflicts are certainly to be settled in favour of, what he saw as, the more direct revelation. He knows that fashions come and go in thought and that it is not wise to be too seriously committed to any one of them. Liddon would have agreed wholeheartedly with Dean Inge's dictum that the man who marries the spirit of the age will soon find himself a widower. Unfortunately his attachment to the authority of the past in Scripture and Church has robbed Liddon of his ability to distinguish fundamental and significant change from the merely fashionable and ephemeral. Thoroughly typical of Liddon is the comment:

No Christian who believes in the essential harmony of all truth will be other than anxious to reconcile the statements of men of science with the truths of Divine Revelation, so far as our present knowledge enables him to do so. But God's Word in Revelation will never pass away; while theories respecting God's working in nature are, as we know, changing almost from year to year.<sup>1</sup>

To this may be added another characteristic comment from the last sermon Liddon ever preached, on Whit Sunday, 1890:

And yet we might observe that many a past generation has cherished this notion of an absolute value attaching to the thought and temper of its day, while we, as look back on it, with the aid of a larger experience can see that it was the victim of an illusory enthusiasm. When we analyse the ingredients that go to make up the spirit of the time, of any one phase of time; and when we observe that, notwithstanding its stout assertions of a right to rule it melts away before our very eyes

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Recovery of Thomas, pp. 14-15

like the fashions of a lady's dress, into shapes and moods which contradict, with equal self-confidence its former self, we may hesitate before we listen to it as if it were a prophet, or make a fetish of it, as though it had within it some concealed divinity.<sup>1</sup>

These remarks were directed towards developments in Biblical criticism rather than Darwinism although they sum up his approach to both. He could not be nearly so sanguine about what was happening in Biblical studies as he was about science. He began to lose touch with the younger men within his own school of churchmanship, in these later years, as far as their attitude to critical scholarship was concerned. He took it for granted that they would remain as implacably opposed to the new criticism as he was himself. His biographer thinks that this was largely due to the fact that from 1883 his attention was absorbed by the task of writing his Life of Pusey and that this caused him to be more concerned with the literature and needs of the first half of the century than with those of the second.<sup>2</sup> Liddon, who had never favoured novelty in Christian thought and had always regarded Pusey as his supreme guide in matters of doctrine, was hardly likely to deviate from the path now that the old man was dead. Loyalty to the old ways was the supreme requirement and he assumed that the new generation of Tractarians would feel the same and thus hardly troubled to discover what they were thinking.

But even more fundamental to Liddon's attitude to Biblical criticism than his devotion to Pusey is the fact that the heart of his Christological apologetics is still the familiar dilemma, 'Either Christ is not divine or he is not a good man.' It is expressed in a variety of ways through the years but the essential idea is the same in 1870, he says:

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Inspiration of Selection, p. 18  
<sup>2</sup> Johnston, p. 298

It is strictly impossible to maintain our faith in the faultlessness of His character if we deny that a fundamental necessity of His Being forced Him to draw attention so persistently, so imperiously, to Himself. But, on the other hand, if His words about Himself are sober truth, they only afford another illustration of His compassionate love for those whom He came to enlighten and to save . . . . His precepts about humility are contradicted by His example, unless His statements about Himself are dictated by that true humility which would rather incur the suspicion of pride than conceal the simple fact . . . . If on the other hand, we bow before the general impression produced by Christ's character, and He be taken at His word, He must be believed to be, in the absolute sense, Divine.<sup>1</sup>

As late as 1887 this argument which has sustained him from the beginning is expressed again:

His proclamation of Himself would be intolerable, if He were not more than man; but as God and Man in One Person, He spans the abyss which had yawned between earth and Heaven.<sup>2</sup>

The validity of the dilemma depends upon the fact of a supernatural revelation and the reliability of Scripture, both of which, Liddon thinks, the rationalist is concerned to deny. In the later writings he gives much more attention to their defence than he has previously. In a sermon in 1887, he says that revelation:

has two concurring certificates of its reality. One is miracle, whereby the revealing God, the Lord of Nature, steps, as it were, from behind the veil and gives a sensible proof that He is in communication with the human agent who claims to be uttering His Word. And the other is conscience, the seat of His original Presence and legislation; but now illuminated as in harmony with

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Some Elements in Religion, pp. 230-1  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Advent in St. Paul's, p. 589

its first and earliest lessons.<sup>1</sup>

This use of the word, 'certificate' is now a habit with Liddon.<sup>2</sup>

It will be convenient to look at what he has to say about miracle along with the closely related topic of the inspiration of Scripture and then go on to conscience.

In an Oxford sermon on 1874, Liddon defends the possibility of miracle and the supernatural. He says:

No a priori doctrine about the absolute invariability of natural law will persuade us Christians that Jesus Christ did not really rise from the dead. The Resurrection rests upon adequate testimony, and a really comprehensive science will recognise and account for it, whether by supposing the intervention of a higher law or otherwise. It is irrational to demand that Christians shall forget the great fact which sustains their faith because science has formulated a doctrine of invariable law; Christianity may be denounced as unprogressive or reactionary, but Christians will keep their eyes on the evidence which has sustained the highest minds and the noblest efforts for eighteen centuries.

He complains against 'a strange indisposition' on the part of scientific men which, he says:

at least rivals any private theological prejudice in its irrational tenacity, to admit facts of a different order from their own.<sup>3</sup>

Hume is cited as an example of this scientific mind. Liddon says:

Hume affirms that the credibility of a fact or a statement must be decided by its accordance with the established order of Nature, and by this standard only. This would be true enough, if it were

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Advent in St. Paul's, p. 144

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Liddon, H.P., Some Elements of Religion, p. 75; Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, Second Series, p. 103; Easter in St. Paul's, p. 151. It is possible that Liddon's use of the word "certificate" owes something to Newman's discussion of certitude in "A Grammar of Assent", especially pp. 210-58

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, Second Series, p. 218

certain that there is no Being in existence above and beyond Nature; if Nature really included all existing forces. But if there does exist a being higher than what we call Nature, and indeed its Author of Whose mind and character we have independent knowledge, then occurrences which, like miracles, are yet out of agreement with the order of Nature, may yet be credible, if they can be shown to agree with the known attributes and purpose of this Being.

Hume suggests that whatever sense experience may tell us, we must not deny the 'order of Nature.' But, says Liddon:

this very idea of a settled order of Nature is itself the product of a continuous exercise of the senses of many generations of men; and if the senses are to be credited when they report that order which is the rule of Nature, they do not deserve less credit when they report the exception to the rule.<sup>1</sup>

The argument itself is not new. In his earlier work, Liddon, as part of his apologetic, pleaded for some allowance to be made for the possibility of the supernatural. What he did not offer in either the early sermons or the Bampton Lectures, was a clear statement of the reason for thinking that the supernatural was a reality. Now comes the bold suggestion that there is empirical ground for accepting the supernatural which can be seen by anyone not blinded by his own preconceptions. This empirical evidence is to be found in miracle. This is the 'certificate of identity between the Lord of Nature and the Lord of Conscience'<sup>2</sup> and the supreme miracle is the Resurrection of Christ. But this, Liddon thinks, is precisely the great stumbling block for the 'scientific mind'. He says:

If the testimony which can be produced in proof of the Resurrection concerned only a political occurrence, or a fact of natural history witnessed eighteen centuries ago, nobody would

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, pp. 6-7

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Some Elements of Religion, p. 75

think of denying its cogency. Those who do reject the truth of the Resurrection quarrel, for the most part, not with the proof that the Resurrection occurred, but with the supposition that such a thing could happen under any circumstances. No proof would satisfy them; because they have made up their minds that the thing cannot be.<sup>1</sup>

The Resurrection is now central, in Liddon's view, to the Christian faith. He says:

Enough to say that the supreme certificate of the reality of the Christian Revelation is the fact that Christ rose from the dead. Deny this fact, and ..... the moral consistency of Christ, no less than His redemptive power, must forthwith disappear from earnest thought. Admit this fact, and the religion which it attests must mean not only much more than, but something altogether distinct in kind from, the highest lessons God has ever taught to the best heathen through nature and conscience; you are in the presence of a supernatural Revelation.<sup>2</sup>

It is the Resurrection which clinches the argument for the divinity of Christ. One of the last sermons which Liddon preached was devoted to this theme. He took his text from Romans I vv. 3,4 : 'Who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' Liddon says that the text makes clear that Christ was man, yet more than man. The Resurrection is the single event which declares this great truth. Christ had foretold his resurrection on at least six occasions. So The Resurrection of Christ, says Liddon:

was a verification of the proof which He had offered of His own claim.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Easter at St. Paul's pp. 158-9

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, Second Series, p. 103

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Some words of St. Paul, p. 6

It is the irresistible and overwhelming demonstration that Christ is divine. Liddon goes on:

All who think seriously about the matter know that the Resurrection is the point at which the Creed, which carries us to the heights of heaven, is most securely embedded in the soil of earth, most thoroughly capable of asserting a place for its Divine and living Subject in the history of our race. Disprove the Resurrection and Christianity fades away into the air as a graceful but discredited illusion; but while it lasts it does its work as at the first; more than any other event, it proclaims Christ to be the Son of God with power in millions of Christian souls.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon thinks that Christ himself used the Resurrection as the guarantee of his divine work. He says:

Our Lord pointed to it as the certificate of his mission. He rebuked indeed the temper which made men ask whether He could show a sign of having a mission from above: but he granted the request. The prophet Jonah was the type of the Son of Man: "As Jonah was three days and nights in the whale's belly, so would the Son of Man be three days and nights in the heart of the earth."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that Christ predicted the Resurrection is crucial to Liddon's argument. It gives the greatest force to the dilemma for if Christ could have dared to make so enormous a claim and not been able to fulfil it, he would have been finished. He says:

If anything is certain about the teaching of our Lord, it is certain that He foretold His resurrection, and that He pointed to it as being a coming proof of His being what He claimed to be. If He had not risen His authority would have been fatally

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Some Words of St. Paul, p. 11  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Easter in St. Paul's, p. 151

discredited; He would have stood forth in human history - may He forgive me for saying it - He would have stood forth as a bombastic pretender to supernatural sanctions which He could not command.<sup>1</sup>

Only now does Liddon turn to what he means by the Resurrection and what grounds there are for thinking that it actually happened. Here Liddon talks in unashamedly physical terms. A resuscitated corpse and an empty tomb are fundamental to his understanding of the event. It is no merely spiritual or heavenly occurrence. It means for him an actual rising of the body from the tomb and, therefore, its truth can be demonstrated by an investigation of the Gospel narratives. Other arguments may help to support a positive conclusion. For instance, he says:

If Christ did not rise, the existence of the Christian Church is unaccountable.<sup>2</sup>

But this is not the real evidence. That is more immediate and physical. Liddon says:

Whether our Lord really rose with His wounded Body from the grave, or not, was a question to be settled by the bodily senses; and our Lord submitted Himself to the exacting terms which St. Thomas laid down as conditions of faith.<sup>3</sup>

For Liddon, the empty tomb is an event as well attested as any in history. When the apostles taught the Resurrection, it was not as a doctrine but as a fact of experience. They reported what they witnessed, namely, the appearances of the risen Christ. He says:

No doubt there are states of hallucination, states of mental tension in which a man may fancy that he sees something which does not in fact present itself to his senses.

But the accounts of the appearances of our risen Lord do not all

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons, vol. 1, p. 72

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 75

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Recovery of Thomas, p. 23

admit of these explanations. He goes on:

If He had been seen for a passing moment only by one or two individuals separately, only in one set of circumstances, under one set of conditions again and again repeated, then there would have been room for the suspicion of a morbid hallucination, or at least of an inward vision. But what is the real state of the case? The risen One was seen five times on the day that He was raised from the dead; He was seen a week after; He was seen more than a month after that; and, frequently, on many occasions, during the interval; He was seen by women alone, by men alone, by parties of two or three, by disciples assembled in conclave, by multitudes of more than five hundred at a time; He was seen in a garden, in a public roadway, in an upper chamber, on a mountain, in Galilee, on the shore of the lake, in the village where His friends dwelt. In short, He left on a group of minds, most unlike each other, one profound ineffaceable impression, that they had seen and lived with One Who had died indeed and had risen again.<sup>1</sup>

Once again Liddon insists that the evidence is so strong that it can only be opposed on the strength of the a priori doctrine that such things simply cannot happen.

Elsewhere, in a sermon on the grounds of faith in the Resurrection (1879), Liddon considers such questions as Did Jesus really die? Did the disciples remove the body from the tomb? How much positive testimony is there? And he answers objections such as the argument that discrepancies in the Gospel accounts cast doubt on the event, the complaint that the Resurrection was not a sufficiently public event to be accepted as historical, and, again, naturalistic objections to the possibility of such a miracle. Throughout he comes down firmly in favour of a literal acceptance of

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons, vol. 1, pp. 73-5

the fact of the empty tomb.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon's dependence upon the New Testament witness to the events of Jesus's life is now very evident. His understanding of what the Resurrection was and of its role as the clinching argument for Christ's divinity rests upon the Gospel record. He must be able to say that the record is true and not vulnerable to contemporary criticism. As always, he is insistent that his position should not be confused with the Protestant view of Scripture as the sole authority. His sermon on the True Use of the Bible (1883) contains one of his clearest statements that the twin authorities for the Christian revelation are Scripture and Church. He says:

In point of fact, when we look closely into the matter, we see that God committed His Revelation of Himself and of His Will, not to one recipient or factor, but to two; not to a book only, not to a society only, but, in different senses, to a book and a society; to the Bible and to the Christian Church. The Church was to test the claim of any book to be Scripture .....

And Scripture in turn was to be the rule of the Church's teaching.<sup>2</sup>

But, if the Bible's task is to prove rather than teach, the need to demonstrate its inspiration remains. Liddon notes that the Church has always believed that the Bible is inspired although it has never been able to define what it means by inspiration and has usually been careful not to try. Liddon says:

We do not know enough to draw the line with any confidence whatever between what in each author may have belonged to natural disposition, temperament, training and what may be entirely due to a higher guidance or suggestion.

But, he continues:

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Easter in St. Paul's, pp. 50ff.  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Advent in St. Paul's, p. 480

It does not by any means follow that inspiration means nothing, or that it means anything that we please, because we cannot give a complete definition of it.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, inspiration means several things. Sometimes it means 'revelation, the unveiling to a human soul of some truth which could not have been known to it by the light of Nature.' Sometimes it means spiritual impulse. And, most importantly, he says:

It is also, in whatever degree, a protection and assistance to the writer against the errors which beset him on this side and on that - a protection which, if it be good for anything, must at least be assumed to extend to all matters of faith and morality.<sup>2</sup>

Liddon's treatment of the book of Daniel is a clear illustration of his understanding of inspiration and of the difficulties which it created for him. He knows that the date of the book is a matter of dispute and says that some may be tempted to imagine that whether it should be placed in the sixth century B.C. or the second is of no vital importance. But, he says:

in reality upon the settlement of this question depends the further question whether the Book of Daniel is what it plainly claims to be, or whether it is the forgery of a later age, designed to assist the Jews in their resistance to the pagan king Antiochus Epiphanes, but wholly untrustworthy as a record of what the prophet whose name it bears really did and said in his lifetime.<sup>3</sup>

If it is the latter, Liddon says:

it would be difficult to maintain the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself as a teacher of religious truth,

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons, vol. iv, pp. 56-7

<sup>2</sup> ibid. vol. iv, p. 57

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 58 The book of Daniel was particularly important to Liddon because Pusey had made it a particular concern and had written a commentary on it.

considering that He largely based His claim to the Messiahship on the great prophecy which the Book of Daniel contains, that He adopted from it the title Son of Man, that by which He willed to be known among men. If the Book of Daniel be the fiction of a Jewish patriot of the time of Epiphanes, it can no longer be described as inspired, or as the Word of God, unless these high titles are consistent with a lack of natural veracity which would be fatal to the reputation of works of the most ordinary and mundane pretensions.<sup>1</sup>

An element of circularity is now again detectable in Liddon's position and it might be asked of him whether the doctrine of inspiration is the basis of Christ's divinity or whether it is the conviction about Christ's status that gives rise to the idea of inspiration. It certainly seems to be his conviction about the divinity of Christ which prevents an objective appreciation of what the critics are saying about Daniel.

For Liddon the Bible is a unity of inspiration. He is not prepared to distinguish between one part and another for to discriminate between the true and the false in Scripture is to presume to put oneself above it. He says:

The property of inspiration attaching to the Bible is felt in its having, from first to last, a constant purpose of leading man to God and to a higher life. This motive is sometimes more, sometimes less in the foreground, but it runs throughout the sacred volume. It is as discernible in the Song of Solomon as in the Book of Exodus; in the Book of Esther as in Isaiah; in the Epistle to Philemon as in the Gospel of St. John.<sup>2</sup>

He has to admit that for this to be felt the reader requires what he calls 'certain dispositions'.

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons, vol. iv. p. 58  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 58-9

The difficulties which this view creates are strikingly illustrated in Liddon's sermon on 'The Blessing of Jael,' (1886) He acknowledges that there might seem to be a problem about pronouncing any blessing on a woman such as Jael but this consideration cannot be allowed to predominate otherwise the whole doctrine of inspiration is at risk. The fact is that the Bible says she was blessed. Liddon says:

If Deborah's blessing on Jael is uninspired, it is hard to claim inspiration for any part of her song; and if Deborah's song is not inspired, it would be difficult to say what portions of the Book of Judges are.<sup>1</sup>

He might have gone on to say that if the Book of Judges is not inspired, it is difficult to say that any part of the Bible is. Even to attempt a sermon on such a topic is to give an indication of a view of inspiration.

To Liddon's inflexible mind to remove one brick from the Biblical edifice is to bring the whole thing down. There is a revealing entry in his diary for February 4th, 1876:

Walked out with Master of Balliol. Talked chiefly about the Old Catholic Movement. He did not think that it would come to very much. He wished to know how I thought the Bible could be made useful to people nowadays? I could only say by their believing and reading it. The point of the question was, I suppose, that they did not believe it.<sup>2</sup>

This is typical of Liddon's all or nothing approach. It goes a long way towards explaining his tendency to attack the morality of critics and unbelievers. His comment on Jowett's words contains a note of censoriousness because Liddon cannot conceive of any middle way between believing the Bible to be inspired and thus infallible and

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Old Testament Subjects, pp. 86-7  
<sup>2</sup> Johnston, p. 189

sheer unbelief. To reject the Bible as a unity of verbal inspiration is to reject the Christian faith itself in his eyes.

If this seems an extraordinary attitude to take, it becomes more explicable when considered alongside what he had to say on the matter of the New Testament witness to the nature and extent of Christ's human knowledge. It was seen, in the last chapter, just how important this was to him.

Liddon was a serious theologian for whom no detail of critical scholarship was of merely academic interest. Theology, in all its branches, was for him concerned with truth and thus a matter of life and death. The Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, a remote, even trivial, question for many, was for him of fundamental importance to the Gospel. For, if Jesus could assume Mosaic authorship and not detect that it was, as the new Biblical criticism seemed to suggest, after all a forgery, then Jesus's moral consciousness must be defective. In a letter on January 11th, 1868, Liddon writes:

It seems to me, if this was the case, our Lord was not only ignorant of a fact of archaeology, but that He was unable to detect the moral obliquity which must enter into the structure and thoughts of a forged document. But however this may be, it seems important to observe that it is not merely the "authorship" of the Pentateuch which our Lord's quotations assume, and which is disputed by modern Rationalism, It is whether the Pentateuch contains legend instead of history. Our Lord, for instance refers to the Noachian deluge, to Lot's wife, and - to take another case - to Jonah's being in the fish. It is admitted that He refers to these things as literal matters of fact. Modern Rationalism says that they are legends. If we accept this conclusion, I do not see how we can trust our Lord when He says, in St. Matthew xxv., that He will

come to judge the world. Why should He not have been mistaken here, too; first, in attributing to the prophecy of Daniel the force of a description which was to be literally fulfilled, and secondly, in claiming Himself to fulfil it?

In short, I do not believe that it is possible to draw a line between Christ's doctrine concerning His Father and Himself," and the other parts of His teaching. To suppose that our Lord is really ignorant of any one subject upon which He teaches us as One Who believes Himself to know, appears to me to admit a solvent which must speedily break up all belief in His authority and teaching whatever.<sup>1</sup>

The failure of the rationalists to see the dangers in Biblical criticism and their readiness to accept ideas which cast doubt upon the orthodox view of Christ, as Liddon saw it, were easy to explain. Their failing was not so much intellectual as moral. Liddon, putting the emphasis on the Resurrection again, once said:

It is no mere speculative question whether Jesus Christ did nor did not rise from the dead; it is an eminently practical one.

The intellect is not more interested in it, than the will.<sup>2</sup>

What I think he means is that to believe the Gospel is not only to accept its ideas but also to live by them. It requires effort as well as assent. It entails a willingness to obey the moral imperatives of the Gospel. And that, Liddon was sure, was why the rationalists were so intent on proving that orthodox doctrine was mistaken. They had no wish to make the necessary moral effort which was demanded once it was agreed that the doctrine was true. In a letter to the Bishop of Salisbury, written from Moscow in 1867, he describes the impression made upon him by Bishop Leonide. He calls him "a person of great

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 125

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Easter in St. Paul's, p. 59

intellectual activity" and continues:

He had read Renan, Strauss, etc., with great attention; and he was very anxious to know how we, in England, dealt with the difficulties which were raised by the German theologians. He "thought that moral weakness of some sort was generally at the bottom of it. People had reasons for not wishing to believe".<sup>1</sup>

That remark would appeal to Liddon greatly. He had himself gone so far as to say:

Doubt is moral weakness.<sup>2</sup>

So he brings us to the second of his twin certificates of the Christian revelation which is conscience.

Sometimes he reveals an unworthy tendency to attack his opponents' motives rather than deal with their intellectual problems. He tries to find God in the gaps discerned in the moral make-up of men. Speaking of those who claim that they cannot believe the Creed, in a sermon in 1868, he says:

And yet, if such objectors were to look a little deeper into the real motives which lead them to reject the Gospel, they would probably find that it is not the doctrine but the moral teaching of the New Testament at which they really stumble.

He continues:

It is, of course, more respectable to except against a dogma on intellectual and literary grounds, than to except against a high and exacting moral precept on the plain ground that you do not wish to have to put it in practice. Therefore, it is quite natural that the objections to Christianity which are commonly stated should be objections to its doctrines; - to the literal truth of the Resurrection, or to the Sacrifice offered by Our

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 103

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, p. 15

Lord on the Cross, to the majesty and justice of God, or to the grace and power of the Sacraments. But man being what he is, and especially the middle and upper classes in England being what they are, it is equally natural that the objections which are felt should be moral ones.<sup>1</sup>

He makes the same point in Oxford a fortnight earlier:

in a Christian country hostility to Revelation is more frequently than not of moral origin, albeit disguised in an intellectual dress ..... The will has a subtle but strong purchase over the understanding in matters of belief.<sup>2</sup>

All this is despite the fact that he has previously complained that objectors to orthodox Christology have actually maintained their admiration for the moral example. Their objection has been to the dogma which, they allege, has been allowed to obscure the moral teaching.

There may, of course, be some truth in Liddon's accusations but it ill becomes an apologist to abuse those he is trying to convince. It might be taken as an indication that his real argument is weak. Perhaps Liddon himself became more conscious of this over the years because, although he never altogether relinquishes this habit, he does come to sound less peevish about it. When he presents the argument in a more positive manner, he can sound impressive.

The basic point is that there is more to faith than intellectual assent. He deals with it at some length in a sermon on 'The young man in Dothan'. He says:

The act of faith is not merely an act of intelligence. It is an act of the whole inward nature of the affections and will, as well as of the understanding.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Some Words of Christ, pp. 78-9  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Special Occasions, p. 150  
<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Old Testament Subjects, pp. 293-4

Intellectual assent can never be enough because the rational evidence for Christianity, as opposed to Theism, is not conclusive. He says:

Faith is indeed spoken of as it is in the New Testament because it is a test of the moral nature: because a man believes upon adequate although not absolutely compulsory evidence in obedience to the promptings of his heart and will.<sup>1</sup>

The fact is, he says, that:

Reason can do much for faith. Reason stands to faith as did the Baptist to Christ our Lord; she is the messenger which makes ready the way of faith in the soul. Reason can explain, infer, combine, reduce difficulties to their true proportions, make the most of considerations which show what is to be expected. But she cannot do the work of God's grace: she cannot open the eyes of the young man, and make him see. If this last triumph is to be achieved, it must be by grace, given in answer to prayer.<sup>2</sup>

Liddon thinks that it would not be <sup>in</sup> line with the purposes of God to provide conclusive evidence for the truth of the Gospel. He says:

God has made the evidence for Christianity less than mathematical, because He desires to make faith a test, not only of the soundness of our understandings, but also and especially of the condition of our hearts and wills.<sup>3</sup>

Faith requires openness to the evidence but also a certain sensitivity towards and a moral affinity with the Christian gospel. Liddon asks:

Why, when Revelation offers itself to two men of equal intellectual powers and equal opportunities, does one accept and the other reject it?

And he answers:

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Old Testament Subjects, p. 294  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 296  
<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Christmastide Sermons, p. 9

Because the believer has moral affinities with the Revelation, in which the other is deficient; because the non-believer has a moral temper which checks and thwarts the movement of the soul towards a perfectly Holy Object external to itself.<sup>1</sup>

This is essentially the same point that he has always employed in his apologetics but there is a shift of emphasis from the moral deficiencies of the sceptic to the nature of faith itself. And the shift is more pronounced when Liddon claims that the Christian evidences themselves have a certain moral quality. He says:

Certainly, my brethren, it must be admitted that the Christian evidences presuppose a certain moral sympathy in an inquirer. They are in fact moral and not mathematical or experimental. They are not of so imperative a character as to impose themselves, as the sensible experience of an earthquake or of an eclipse imposes itself, upon reluctant wills. We do not accept the Apostles' Creed by a mental act identical with that which accepts the conclusion of a proposition in Euclid. For the Creed addresses itself not simply to our capacity for speculative thought, but also by implication to our sense of duty, because we know that if it is true, a great many practical consequences immediately follow.<sup>2</sup>

This being so, Liddon thinks that conclusive intellectual evidence would be out of place since it would lead to the wrong kind of response to God. He goes on:

In this sense it must be granted that Christianity expects to be met - if not halfway, yet to a certain point - by the yearnings of human nature; by desire based upon a clear discernment of its need of knowledge and of its need of

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Some Words of Christ, pp. 56-7  
<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, Second Series, p. 216  
Cf. the discussion of the Illative Sense in Newman, J.H., A Grammar of Assent, pp. 341-383

strength. If the evidences for Christianity were of such a character that no honest and educated man could possibly reject them without intellectual folly, whatever his moral condition or history might be, then Christian belief would be like a university degree, a certificate of a certain sort of mental capacity, but it would be no criterion whatever of a man's past or present relation to God.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon seems to be saying here that there are different kinds of knowledge, each of which has its own appropriate faculty.

Knowledge of God is not like scientific knowledge. The latter comes by observation and experiment and requires only intellectual competence and objectivity for its acceptance. Knowledge of God requires a certain moral and spiritual predisposition in addition to these intellectual qualities. He says:

In the world of sense the empiric understanding reigns supreme; the intrusion of heart, conscience, the moral faculty, would here be an impertinence. In the world of spiritual truth the empiric or scientific intellect is blind and powerless; the moral faculty, instructed and guided by Revelation, alone can judge. Thus each region of truth has a faculty to investigate it.<sup>2</sup>

This second quotation makes the point more strongly to the extent of denigrating the place of the intellect in Christian faith. Liddon's tendency to do this is unfortunate because it weakens his argument by suggesting that he is evading the intellectual issue and because too easily it leads him to abuse his opponents. But it does show how closely related faith and morality are in Liddon's understanding. He

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, Second Series, pp 216-7.

Cf. Sermons on Some Words of St. Paul, pp. 103ff. and the Letter to a Lady, 10th April 1875, quoted in Johnston, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Some Words of Christ, p. 150

can speak of conscience as a twin certificate of the Christian revelation. It is because he finds it so impossible to resist the moral appeal of Christ, so unthinkable that Christ should be called anything other than good, as well as the fact that a good man could not wilfully teach falsehoods that makes Liddon feel that the dilemma is so strong an apologetic.

So Liddon is saying that the right moral disposition leads to right belief. The lack of the former prevents some men from finding the latter. But what I think Liddon also assumes, without explicitly saying so, is that only right belief will lead to right moral action. For him the dilemma, 'Either Christ is God or he is not a good man' leads on to 'Either a man believes that Christ is God or that man is not good.' This explains why Liddon can, on the one hand, say that the rationalists admire the moral quality of Christ and, on the other, accuse them of being morally deficient. For him there is dishonesty in revering Christ's morality while ignoring the dogmatic teaching which he sees interwoven with it. And this also helps to explain the extreme shock he felt about Lux Mundi. If it had been written by Colenso or Strauss, it would not have troubled him so much. Men who are assumed to be morally lacking can be expected to produce books which deny orthodox Christianity. But Gore was a good man. Liddon had no doubts about that. He admired him as a man of impeccable Christian quality. When this man could write an essay which, in Liddon's view, compromised the central doctrine of Christ's divinity something very serious indeed was happening.

Chapter Five - Lux Mundi

In 1875, a small group of friends in Oxford began a practice, which became an annual one, of taking over a small country parish for a period during the summer. While the incumbent was on holiday, they would deputise for him and carry out his parochial duties. The rest of their time they spent reading, discussing and praying together. Amongst the original members of the group were Charles Gore, J.R. Illingworth, Henry Scott Holland, Francis Paget and E.S. Talbot. Others joined them as time went on.

Amongst themselves they were known as 'The Holy Party', an ironical title characteristically coined by Scott Holland, and the group came to mean a great deal to each member. The motivation for the group seems simply to have been their enjoyment of each other's company and a desire for recreation and stimulation in thinking about their faith together and in corporate devotion. They talked about the possibility of forming an Anglican religious community on the lines of the Oratory.<sup>1</sup>

Catholic in theology and churchmanship, the group was also marked by a certain radicalism in political and social outlook and by a concern that orthodox Catholic doctrine should come to terms with current movements in thought. As a result of their talking together, in 1887, a decision was made to produce a volume of essays which would embody their common view of doctrine and its moral application.<sup>2</sup> Gore was to be editor and, in 1888, while on a visit to Italy, he wrote to each of the contributors expressing the hope that they were making progress with the composition of their respective contributions and summoning them to a meeting in September. Gore's biographer says:

The meeting took place at Holland's house in London. The

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, G.L., The Life of Charles Gore, p. 25

<sup>2</sup> Hereinafter referred to as Prestige.  
ibid. p. 98

essays were read through, criticised and discussed, and two further essays were added to the original list. Of the two, one was the essay on the Holy Spirit and Inspiration, assigned to Gore himself, which changed Lux Mundi from a declaration of High Church doctrine into an ecclesiastical typhoon. Gore had had the subject in his head for a very long time. He had been lecturing and speaking about it for over ten years, and thinking about it since he was an undergraduate. He wrote the first draft in a fortnight. The Party met again at Malvern in June of 1889, made their final criticisms, and prepared the book for publication.<sup>1</sup>

No precise reason is given as to why the two extra essays were decided upon. But, in a volume which evidently aims to present a fairly comprehensive presentation of Catholic doctrine, the omission of any treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit would certainly seem strange. It was not, however, the only omission. One reviewer was upset at the failure of the essayists to deal with the subject of sin and complained:

The subject of sin is so inextricably connected with all that relates to the doctrine of redemption, and the denial of the idea of sin is at the root of so much irreligious philosophy, against which the volume is a protest, that a distinct treatment of the subject might have been expected.<sup>2</sup>

A broad area of doctrine was nevertheless covered. Scott Holland explored the nature of faith. Aubrey Moore contributed what was described as 'by far the most valuable essay'<sup>3</sup> on the Christian doctrine of God. The problem of pain as it bears upon faith in God was dealt with by J.R. Illingworth. E.S. Talbot wrote about the preparation in history for Christ. Illingworth contributed a second

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 98

<sup>2</sup> The Guardian, December 11th, 1889

<sup>3</sup> The Record, December 13th, 1889

essay, on the incarnation in relation to development, and R.C. Moberly discussed the incarnation as the basis of dogma. The atonement was expounded by Arthur Lyttelton. Then followed Gore's essay on the Holy Spirit and Inspiration. Catholic doctrine on the Church and Sacraments was treated by Walter Lock and Francis Paget respectively and the final essay was by R.L. Ottley on Christian ethics.

Prestige offers no supporting evidence for his statement that Gore had been lecturing, speaking and thinking about his subject for some years previously. If it really was in the forefront of his mind over a lengthy period, it is surprising that he should not have suggested it as one subject to be dealt with among the original list of essays. It is true though that Gore claimed, in a letter to Liddon, that the views expressed in Lux Mundi had previously been expressed in his Cuddesdon lectures and on other occasions.<sup>1</sup>

There was some dispute over the title to be given to the volume. Gore originally wanted to call it The Religion of the Incarnation but this was changed at Illingworth's suggestion to Lux Mundi. Oxford University Press declined to publish it but it was accepted by John Murray.

What the writers hoped to do is clearly stated in Gore's preface: The writers found themselves at Oxford together between the years 1875-1885, engaged in the common work of University education; and compelled for their own sake, no less than that of others, to attempt to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems ..... We are sure that if men can rid themselves of prejudices and mistakes (for which it must be said, the Church is often as responsible as they), and will look afresh at what the Christian faith really means, they will find that it is as adequate as ever to interpret life

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, October 25th, 1889, L.1.

and knowledge in its several departments, and to impart not less intellectual than moral freedom. But we are conscious also that if the true meaning of the faith is to be made sufficiently conspicuous it needs disencumbering, reinterpreting, explaining.

Gore quotes with approval the words of Pere Gratry:

It is not enough to utter the mysteries of the Spirit, the great mysteries of Christianity, in formulas, true before God, but not understood of the people. The apostle and prophet are precisely those who have the gift of interpreting these obscure and profound formulas for each man and each age ..... to speak the word of God afresh in each age, in accordance with both the novelty of the age and the eternal antiquity of the truth, this is what S. Paul means by interpreting the unknown tongue. But to do this, the first condition is that a man should appreciate the times he lives in.

Gore continues:

We have written then in this volume not as "guessers at truth," but as servants of the Catholic Creed and Church, aiming only at interpreting the faith we have received. On the other hand, we have written with the conviction that the epoch in which we live is one of profound transformation, intellectual and social, abounding in new needs, new points of view, new questions; and certain therefore to involve great changes in the outlying departments of theology, where it is linked on to other sciences, and to necessitate some general restatement of its claim and meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps Liddon would not have found fault with the general terms of this statement of intent. Liddon was anxious to prove himself

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, pp. vii-viii  
The reference here may be to the title of Julius Hare's book, Guesses at Truth by Two Brothers. (1859)

aware of the times in which he lived and concerned to come to terms with some new ideas. His readiness to acknowledge Darwinism is a case in point. But his stress fell on 'the eternal antiquity of the truth' to such an extent that his appreciation of the present was weakened. He underestimated the significance of the intellectual change that was taking place and was ready to dismiss new ideas as temporary fashions.

Gore also tends to play down the implications of current developments. Despite speaking of 'profound transformation', he cautiously restricts its effect to 'the outlying departments of theology.' There is no mention of fundamental consequences for the Catholic Creed itself. Is this the deliberate understatement of a writer who knows he is about to drop a theological bombshell but wants to cushion its effect? Or is it a sign that he too sets limits to the effect that contemporary ideas can have upon an age-old faith supernaturally revealed? It must be both. Gore must have known that many would be shocked by what he had to say and may well have added the words 'outlying departments' as a qualification deliberately calculated to reassure. On the other hand, as one committed to the Catholic faith, it would be odd if he did not have his own sticking points. Nevertheless, he had a much stronger awareness of the seriousness of contemporary movements than Liddon. For him they are much more than passing moods and they have made some impression on his personal faith. He says that the effort to put faith into its right relation to modern problems is 'for their own sake (that is, the members of the Holy Party) no less than that of others.'

Gore chose to entitle his essay 'The Holy Spirit and Inspiration'. He begins his essay with a lengthy exposition of the work and doctrine of the Holy Spirit before any direct attention is given to the idea of inspiration and its relation to modern historical criticism.

Gore acknowledges dangers in appealing to experience as a Christian evidence because it is too often associated with excesses of enthusiasm and fanaticism. He thinks that people too often fasten on to some individual and eccentric phenomenon which is held to be an effect of the Spirit's activity instead of concentrating on the general moral, intellectual and physical transforming effect of the Gospel. Gore likes to argue from general experience to the particular as a concentrated expression of the general. He claims that experience has often been appealed to in the past nevertheless and characteristically he demonstrates the point from patristic writers. Cyprian describes the transforming effect of his baptism. Athanasius argues for the truth of Christ by pointing to his effects upon men. Moreover, Gore says that appeal has to be made because Christianity is what he calls 'a manifested life' or an experienced life. It is not known in itself but in its effects. This is so because the Spirit is the Life-giver. Indeed, the Spirit is life. Negatively he may be described as unlimited, immaterial, but positively he is simply life and, he says:

Where life is most penetrating, profound, invincible, rational and conscious of God, there in fullest freedom of operation is the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The Spirit, Gore says, is in no way remote. He touches the common life of man and is our first point of contact with God. He is the Divine Spirit, the breath of God, who animates the whole of creation. There is no limit to the sphere of his activity. Nevertheless, while not confined within the Church, it is here that his most intense work is done. His special attribute is holiness and his chief work is to build, within the Church, a community in which human nature realises its true freedom and fellowship with God.

The history of humanity is a history of 'development', says Gore, but it is a development in which man is seen as a child of

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 317

nature consciously adapting himself to his environment and moulded by it.<sup>1</sup> In this process he exhibits some freedom and is not merely at the mercy of the forces of nature but still Gore regards it as part of 'natural evolution' and as such it is less than the full development for which man was destined. He says:

The consciousness that he was meant for something higher has tinged his most brilliant physical successes, his greatest triumphs of civilisation and art, with the bitterness of remorse, the misery of conscious lawlessness.<sup>2</sup>

Morally and spiritually, man's history has been one of rebellion. To rescue him from this, what is required is not further 'development' but redemption; not natural but supernatural change - supernatural, this is, from the point of view of fallen man. The people of God, or, at least, the faithful remnant amongst them, represent a sample of that reconstituted human nature which God wills for the world.

Within the Jewish nation, the Spirit of God was continually frustrated by the lack of response. It is only, Gore says, in the Son of Man that the Spirit finds the perfect realisation of the destiny of man. In Christ, humanity is perfect because it displays none of the false independence of sin. It is totally open and obedient to the Spirit. By his obedience Christ gives humanity a fresh start by a new birth from him. Within the Church the Spirit perpetuates all the richness of Christ's humanity. It is his special sphere of operation where the ideal of Christian humanity is kept alive and the work of human recovery goes on.

Gore now turns to four characteristics of the Spirit's work within the Church which are of major importance to his thought and on which he will base much of his treatment of the idea of inspiration.

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 318  
Cf. Temple, F., The Education of the World, Essays and Reviews,  
pp. 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 319

First, the work of the Spirit is social. Restored humanity can only be expressed in community. Man is redeemed in his relationships and not in isolation. In this sense the Church is the sphere of salvation. Grace is communicated through a corporate sacrament and truth is transmitted through a 'rule of faith' and an 'apostolic tradition.'

Secondly, within this corporate emphasis, the Spirit nourishes individuality. Gore says human 'personality and character'<sup>1</sup> are not replaced or crushed but rather intensified. And the Spirit encourages variety both in individual dispositions and in forms of Church life and thought. Even in the realm of the intellect, Gore sees the work of the Spirit as encouraging freedom and individuality. The collective 'rule of faith' is not meant to suppress the individual but 'to pass by the ordinary processes of education into the individual consciousness, and there, because it represents truth, to impart freedom.'<sup>2</sup> The effect is not separatist or divisive since as each person becomes more individualised, he becomes more conscious of his incompleteness, 'more ready to recognise himself as only one member of the perfect Manhood.'<sup>3</sup> The authority of the Church is simply a necessary training of the individual temperament. In all departments of education, the individual needs to be trained into deeper appreciation of the subject by external discipline. So, says Gore, in Christian thought the immature mind needs to be schooled until it 'welcomes truth as a friend.' But the individual is active in 'testing all things and holding fast that which is good.'<sup>4</sup> From time to time specially gifted individuals are required to bring the Church back to 'the undying type of apostolic teaching'. Gore says:

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 323  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 324  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 325  
<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 326

Such a reformer is quite distinct in idea from the heretic. He reforms; he does not innovate. His note is to restore; not to reject.<sup>1</sup>

Individuals may with confidence be encouraged to examine the Christian faith because it is rational and true. When Christianity proscribes free enquiry, it denies its own rationality.

Thirdly, Gore says that a mark of the Spirit is the consecration of 'the whole of nature'.<sup>2</sup> Despite the comprehensiveness of the phrase, Gore confines his interest here to human nature. He says that the Spirit does not destroy or override the faculties of human nature, physical or spiritual, but enriches them. Nature and God, material and spiritual are not to be divided. After all, the Word was made flesh.

Fourthly, and finally, Gore insists, alongside what he has said about the need for redemption rather than simple development if man is to fulfil his destiny, that the Spirit's method in recovery is gradual. The unity of God and the world, of spirit and flesh is not an accomplished fact. The Spirit gradually lifts man with infinite patience. The Old Testament is imperfect because it reflects or demonstrates a gradual process of education. What is important in it is the end result and not any interim stage. Chrysostom is quoted with approval as saying that the measure of the effectiveness of the Old Testament was to be seen in the way it had taught us in the long run to judge its parts. As in the earlier section of the essay, Gore is careful to claim patristic support for his arguments in order to commend them to the Catholic mind.

He does so again with regard to the Church. Like the Old Testament, it must be viewed with the gradualness of the Spirit's method in mind. The early Fathers claimed that:

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 326  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 327

what she represented was a hope, not a realisation; a tendency, not a result; a life in process, not a ripened fruit.<sup>1</sup>

In a brief second section of the essay Gore once more appeals to the early Fathers of the Church who, he says, knew that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was partly based on experience, as he has been arguing, but also partly on revelation. They were cautious in speculation about his person and recognised the existence of mystery. But they were sure the revelation was real and they found security in it. So on the basis of both experience and Scripture, they developed a theology of his person.<sup>2</sup> In the Arian controversy, for example, they felt justified in insisting upon the personal distinctness and true Godhead of the Spirit. Again, they spoke of the Spirit proceeding from the Father through the Son, or from Father and Son. They insisted that though the Spirit is one in essence with the Father and the Son, the doctrine of the Trinity does not lead into tritheism.

In beginning the final section, Gore says that the Spirit's work in the inspiration of Scripture has been kept to the last in order to set it firmly within the context of the whole work of the Spirit. Too often the Scriptures have been isolated and the work of the Spirit here has been separated out as though it were distinct and special. In fact, our general experience of the Spirit's operation is paralleled in the specific area of Biblical inspiration. Gore wants to put the Scriptures into a less isolated position by emphasising the antecedent work of the Holy Spirit in creating faith and the fact that the Scriptures belong to the Church. In language reminiscent of Liddon, he says:

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 331

<sup>2</sup> 'Person' and 'personality' are important words in Gore's writing. He uses them in both the theological sense and the psychological sentence. The sense intended is not always clearly identified.

In order to have grounds for believing the facts, in order to be susceptible of their evidence, we require an antecedent state of conception and expectation. A whole set of presuppositions about God, about the slavery of sin, about the reasonableness of redemption, must be present with us. So only can the facts presented to us in the Gospel come to us as credible things, or as parts of an intelligible universe, correlated elements in a rational whole. Now the work of the Spirit in the Church has been to keep alive and real these presuppositions, this frame of mind.<sup>1</sup>

The Spirit works within the Christian community to protect its members from any feeling that in wanting forgiveness, redemption and reconciliation with God they are doing something abnormal or eccentric. The Spirit also generates confidence that Christ can satisfy our spiritual needs. The Creed was revealed once in certain historical events but revelation is continuously renewed in the life of the Church through this action of the Spirit.

Gore sets the inspiration of the Scriptures within the general action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and shows himself to be very much in harmony with that line of thought which Liddon accepted and which Newman attributed to Hawkins. The apostolic writers of the New Testament are, for Gore, the ministers of a 'tradition' to which they are subject. They wrote within the Church and for the Church and so, he says, their writings:

presuppose membership in it and familiarity with its tradition. They are secondary, not primary, instructors; for edification, not for initiation.<sup>2</sup>

The Scriptures belong to the Church and are not an authority set over against it. Once more, Gore claims the support of the early

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, pp. 337-8  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 339

Church for his view. In it, he says:

The Scripture was regarded as the highest utterance of the Spirit, the unique and constant test of the Church's life and teaching. But the Spirit in the Church interpreted the meaning of Scripture. Thus the Church taught and the Scripture tested and verified or corrected her teaching; and this because all was of one piece, the life of the Church including the Scriptures, the inspired writers themselves appealing to the Spirit in the Churches.<sup>1</sup>

Gore follows Liddon in wanting to ensure that the interpretation of Scripture is the prerogative of the Church. The importance in this connection of Gore's first characteristic of the Spirit, that his work is social, is now clear. Church and Scripture are not to be separated.

What then does the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture imply and how does it relate to modern criticism?

Gore begins his answer by asserting that the doctrine is an important part of the 'superstructure of the Christian faith' but is not among its bases. Acceptance of credal assertions is independent of the inspiration of Scripture. This follows from what has just been said. Necessary to faith are the predisposing moral and social outlook which the Spirit creates together with an acceptance of the general trustworthiness of the Gospels where they relate to the great credal affirmations about the Virgin Birth, the divinity of Christ, the crucifixion, the resurrection, the ascension, the founding of the Church and Pentecost. No specific belief about the Spirit's method of inspiration is implied here. Gore says:

Such belief follows, does not precede, belief in Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, Christianity does have a doctrine of inspiration.

<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 340  
ibid. p. 341

Jesus and the apostles, Gore claims, clearly taught the inspiration of the Old Testament, though he does not specify the evidence on which he bases his claim. The Church soon said the same of the New Testament. Dominical and ecclesiastical authority require the believer to accept it.

What, then, does the doctrine mean? This is the point at which Gore begins to move away from Liddon. He has already freed himself, through his insistence on setting Scripture within the context of the Church, from too heavy a dependence on Scripture and from any need for a rigid doctrine of inspiration. He has also insisted that the work of the Spirit in the Church is a more intense expression of his work in the world and that he uses and enriches rather than replacing what is natural in man. The stage is set for an approach to inspiration in Scripture which views it as continuous with other forms of inspiration. Gore says that the inspiration of the Biblical writers is different in degree, but not in kind, from that which is experienced by great men in every race. Every race has its prophets. The distinctiveness of the Jews lies not in the fact that they were inspired when others were not but rather that their inspiration lay in being agents of the divine work of restoring mankind rather than in leading humanity in art or science. However dim it may have been at times, there was always a direct consciousness of such a vocation. Special men were the inspired interpreters of the divine message to and in the race. They were the instruments of the Holy Spirit in imparting knowledge of God.

An inspired man is not the passive, unconscious instrument of the Spirit. He is free, conscious, rational. Individual characteristics remain. So the poet is still a poet, the philosopher still a philosopher. So Gore employs his second mark of the Spirit, the nourishing of individuality.

For Gore, the primary meaning of inspiration is that the tradition is given from a special point of view, namely, that of God's dealings with men. Various kinds of literature are found in the Old Testament but each exhibits this property. The psalmists reveal the soul in its relation to God. The prophets see deeper under the surface of life what God is doing. They may be mistaken in details but still they are inspired in laying bare God's purposes. Liddon could never have allowed such a concession for, to him, inspiration implied infallibility. Gore, in contrast, says that it is the very fact that the Old Testament is imperfect that makes it so valuable. It allows us to trace development, the growth of God's scheme for mankind. It is the literature of a nation, marked by a unity of purpose and character which is the result of the action of the Spirit.

What is true of the Old Testament, Gore finds equally true of the New. Again, individuality is not overruled. John, for example, may elaborate the words of Christ with the results of his own meditation. A personal element is present in his writings. Yet he does not distort the message. With all their differences, the apostolic witnesses exhibit a clear unity. All reveal God's ways with men and therein lies their inspiration.

Gore can say these things because more than Liddon he appreciates the developmental view of history and because, unlike Liddon, he does not expect the ancient writers to adopt the methods and standards of the modern historian. This becomes clear as he deals with some of the important questions which may be asked. Gore says that historical truthfulness marks the Old Testament record from Abraham downwards. The faults and imperfections of the characters involved are not hidden. But does the inspiration of the recorder guarantee exact historical truth throughout? Does the record hold good in the light of historical

criticism? Gore acknowledges that the facts of Old Testament history are hard to ascertain. On the other hand, he thinks it likely that some written records existed from very early days. Internal evidence encourages the acceptance of the patriarchal history and the narratives of the Egyptian bondage, the exodus and the wanderings as well as of the later events which are not disputed. From Abraham downwards, he affirms, the story is substantially historical. But within broadly historical limits, there is room for material less strictly historical. Pentateuchal criticism, for instance, reveals stages in the development of the law of worship. An early stage is represented in the 'book of the Covenant', a second in Deuteronomy, a third in the Priestly Code. Each contains a basic germ of ceremonial enactment which is Mosaic in origin and the whole development has consequently, without any intention to deceive, been attributed to Moses. He makes a nice distinction when he says that there is something uncritical but not materially untruthful in attributing the whole legislation to Moses under divine command. The same is true of attributing Psalms to David and Proverbs to Solomon.

Gore thinks the books of Chronicles are later and less reliable than those of Samuel and Kings. They are not, however, the result of conscious perversion but of what he calls:

Unconscious idealising of history, the reading back into past records of a ritual development which was really later.<sup>1</sup> By 'idealising' Gore means the reading of history in the light of later theological insight so that the purposes of God are made to seem much clearer and to be understood more completely than was the case at the time. If this were a case of conscious fraud, inspiration would be ruled out. Idealising is not inconsistent with

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 353 "Ideal" and "idealising" are now important words for Gore.

inspiration provided that it represents the real purpose of God and only anticipates its realisation.

This brings Gore to the point at which he can assert that inspiration is the spiritual illumination of the judgment of the recorder. It does not mean that he can communicate facts not otherwise available. The recorder is not lifted out of his time or the conditions of knowledge which belong to it. Nor is there any reason to suppose that an Old Testament historian would adopt methods or standards in his work which would not be employed by other contemporary historians or be free from methods employed by his contemporaries which modern historians find unacceptable. In all this Gore reveals the extent to which his ideas differ from Liddon's who saw inspiration as protecting the writer from the conditioning of his times to the point at which it became the inspiration of the words rather than of the writer.

But Gore begins to reveal his sticking points when he goes on to say that while we can admit such things in the Old Testament, we cannot do so in the New. This is because the Old Testament is the record of how God produced 'a need, or anticipation, or ideal' whereas the New Testament tells how he satisfied it.<sup>1</sup> Idea and fact coincide in the realisation but idea is not necessarily a precise pointer to fact.

All kinds of literature are to be found in the Bible but, on Gore's definition, this does not render the description of all these kinds as 'inspired' inappropriate. Literary and evidential grounds may make it necessary to regard some books, such as Jonah and Daniel, as 'dramatic' or fictional but even this does not mean that they cannot be inspired. Gore acknowledges that Jonah and Daniel have not been seen to be 'dramatic' in the past but traditional views may well have to give way because, he says:

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 354

a literary criticism is being developed, which is as really new an intellectual product as the scientific development, and as such, certain to reverse a good many of the literary judgments of previous ages.

Drawing a startling comparison, he says:

We are being asked to make considerable changes in our literary conception of the Scriptures, but not greater changes than were involved in the acceptance of the heliocentric astronomy.<sup>1</sup>

Gore's openness to literary criticism is a radical departure from Liddon. The comparison would alarm Liddon whose tendency to dismiss new developments as passing fashions has been demonstrated.

Moreover, the idea that it was the province of literary criticism to determine this issue would horrify him. He did not regard the Bible as like other literature to be tested by the same criteria.

Gore turns next to an issue which was among the most contentious, namely, the possible existence of myth in the Old Testament. He notes that the existence of myth as a product of mental activity prior to history, poetry or philosophy has been recognised amongst some races for a time. Why should it not also exist among the ancestors of the Jews? Genesis, prior to the Abraham narratives, he frankly asserts to be myth but is sure that it is no less inspired than other parts of Scripture because it still discloses the purposes of God.

Then, at last, Gore comes to the point at which the relevance of all this to present Pneumatology becomes apparent. He believes that Biblical criticism has arrived at some assured results. For the Church not to realise this would be to repeat the mistake it made over Galileo - a comment which again shows the seriousness with which Gore viewed Biblical criticism - but the Church need not relinquish its faith in inspiration. Gore agrees with Liddon that, fortunately, the

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 356

Church has never been restricted by a precisely defined dogma of inspiration.

Gore's treatment of this crucial issue is of a piece with his whole treatment of the relation between the Old Testament and the New. The Old is an anticipation of the full revelation of God's ways with men and the New is the realisation. It follows from his insistence upon the gradualness of the Spirit's method and his grasp of the developing nature of history.

Gore concludes the essay by saying that in leaving the field open for free enquiry and the critical study of the Old Testament:

We shall probably be bidden to "remember Tubingen," and not be over-trustful of a criticism which at least exhibits in some of its most prominent representatives a great deal of arbitrariness, of love of "new views" for their own sake, and a great lack of that reverence and spiritual insight which is at least as much needed for understanding the books of the Bible, as accurate knowledge and fair investigation.<sup>1</sup>

But Gore responds by reminding those who would give such warning that when the New Testament was under attack, the problem was met not by foreclosing the matter with an appeal to dogma but by facing it in frank and fair discussion. Old Testament criticism must be met with the same honesty and reason so that what is true in it can be appreciated and what is false refuted. There is no danger that criticism of the Old Testament will ultimately diminish reverence for it. The investigation of the New Testament has greatly augmented current understanding of it and enhanced the sense of its inspiration. Why should not the same be true of the Old Testament?

In that optimistic estimate of the state of New Testament study, Gore once again reveals his own sticking point. There is an element of wishful thinking in the assumption that the question of the New Testament is now settled.

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, pp. 360-1

Chapter Six - The Reaction to Lux Mundi

On October 23rd, 1889, Liddon recorded in his diary:

In Hall sat next to ———, who is now at Cuddesdon. He says that it is reported that Gore's essay in the forthcoming volume of "Studies" will make great concessions to the Germans.<sup>1</sup>

The unnamed informant is identified by Harold Anson as a young undergraduate named Tupper-Carey. Anson goes on to say:

Liddon was deeply hurt that he had not been told about this book.<sup>2</sup> The thought that anyone should make concessions to Biblical critics would have caused pain to Liddon. The suggestion that Gore would do so must have made the hurt intense. Gore was now not only Liddon's close friend, he was also the first Principal Librarian of the Dr. Pusey Memorial Library. The appointment had been made on November 14th, 1883, the motion having been proposed by Lord Beauchamp, seconded by Liddon and carried unanimously.

Gore's appointment had brought great happiness to Liddon. He had described Gore as combining:

a lofty simplicity of purpose with that insight and knowledge in the things of faith, which makes him not unworthy to represent, even in Oxford, the great name of Dr. Pusey.

He went on:

It would be impossible, at least for me, to say more of him.<sup>3</sup>

His approval of Gore and his enthusiasm for the appointment were based on the conviction that Gore would perpetuate the teaching of Pusey and even when Gore had found it necessary to warn Liddon that he was by no means disposed to adhere in every point to the teaching of Pusey,<sup>4</sup> Liddon had failed to take seriously what was being said.

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 362

<sup>2</sup> Anson, Harold, T. B. Strong, p. 22

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H. P. Clerical Life and Work, p. 377

<sup>4</sup> Prestige, p. 53

The suggestion that Gore might now be about to publish something which Liddon feared would be out of line with Pusey's approach to Biblical criticism filled Liddon with alarm. It made him anxious and yet was not sufficiently certain information for him to make any direct approach to Gore on the matter. Word of his concern reached Gore by another person. Liddon records:

October 24 - Told Paget what —— had told me about Gore's essay. Begged him not to speak to him. But he did.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Liddon is unwilling, even in his personal journal, to name his informant is significant. It indicates the seriousness of the matter for him. In his eyes, it amounted to an accusation of disloyalty, perhaps even of heresy.

Francis Paget's communication of Liddon's fears to Gore resulted in the immediate dispatch of the essay intended for Lux Mundi to Liddon at Amen Court. An accompanying letter explained that the ideas were not new. They had been tested in the lecture room. Students troubled by the current debate about the Old Testament had found them helpful in allowing them to continue to affirm the Catholic faith without turning their backs on the critics. Gore wrote:

I hear from Paget that evil rumours have reached you of our Essay book, Lux Mundi. I believe you will approve almost all of it. What you will least like are a few pages at the end, I am afraid, of my Essay. Only I hope if you read it you will read the whole Essay ..... Whatever I have said there I have said times out of number to people in all classes of difficulties, and have found again and again that it helped them to a firm footing in Catholic Faith. Where you have found a certain method spiritually effective and useful, and you believe it to be quite orthodox, it seems impossible to refrain from saying it.

Something had to be said on the subject. I do sincerely hope

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, p. 362

that if you read it you will not seriously disapprove. I think I should almost die of it if it did harm. But certainly experience has led me to hope otherwise. If you seriously disapprove, it would be a great misery. But, at least, I had better send it without delay.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon read the Essay and sent a criticism of it to Gore the next day, October 26th. He wrote:

In speaking to Paget, I did not indeed wish to suggest that you should take the trouble you have so kindly taken. ——'s language in Hall seemed to make it a duty to ask whether there was any real ground for it; and I hoped that if there were, the work might still be so far from publication as to leave time for reconsideration.

I have read through your Essay, but nothing else in the volume. It is needless to say that with the drift of the earlier part of the Essay I am in hearty agreement. There are passages which command my warmest admiration.

Then he went on to confirm Gore's worst fears. He said:

You will, in your kindness, forgive me if I add how much I wish that pages 345-362, or large passages in them, could have been modified or abandoned.

May I go into details? .....

Liddon made it clear that he thought Gore had given too much away to the critics, a temptation he had felt himself. He continued:

Is there not a temptation in an age like ours to "purchase the good-will of the barbarians by repeated subsidies" drawn from those treasuries of Revelation which we have no right to surrender? I have felt keenly the pressure of this motive myself.

He revealed his extreme conservatism when, as one who never yielded an inch to the critics, he said:

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, pp. 362-3

I wish I could be quite sure that I had always resisted it. For a time, no doubt, a concession may ensure a truce between Revelation and its enemies. But not for always, or probably for long.

Liddon reminded Gore of his obligations to the Church generally and to the followers of Pusey in particular. He wrote:

You will, I know have thought, as much, or more than I do, of what may be due to Dr. Pusey's name, and to the confidence of good Church-people in the Pusey House for which you have done so much and so well, and to - what is much more important - the confidence of other minds in the Church of England.

With its mention of 'concession' the letter betrays Liddon's fundamental misunderstanding of Gore's mind. He thought that Gore was tailoring the truth of the Bible to make it acceptable to the critics and did not appreciate that for Gore it had become a question of his own integrity and faithfulness to truth as he saw it. In his essay, Gore does not question the findings of the critics. He takes the soundness of their views on the Old Testament for granted. The question for him is not whether the critical position is true but how Catholic doctrine may be reconciled to it. Liddon ended his letter by expressing a fear that:

After all that has been done for us by the Oxford Movement to recover the authority of Catholic Antiquity, we have again begun to slide down the hill towards the pit of uncertainty or unbelief.<sup>1</sup> Gore, in contrast, believed that he was helping to reassure people that faith was still possible. In his reply, he went some way to making this clear and also insisted that he was not saying anything in the essay which he had not said previously. His letter carried the same date and he wrote:

I think the point I am most anxious you should understand is

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, pp. 363-4

that this represents nothing like a lapse. When I first read what you said in the Bampton L's on the subject, as an undergraduate, I felt the difference, as compared with the rest of the book. I felt then that my conscience went only with the Cambridge people in critical matters as it went wholly or almost wholly with Dr. Pusey and you in doctrinal. I said to myself: are these two tendencies compatible? I thought that they were then and my whole life has been so far simply a growth in the conviction. What I said in this essay I said

1. when I was being examined for deacon's orders
2. to the Association of Tutors ..... in 1876 when Burgon assailed me.
3. at Cuddesdon diffidently but with increasing clearness.
- Also 4. I told you in a letter before accepting this post that my mind was not with Dr. Pusey in matters of O.T. or patristic criticism. (When I talked with the Dean of St. Paul's about accepting it he said that he thought the great defect of Tractarians had been that they were not critical: that our business was to give Catholic teaching a critical basis.)
5. I have frequently said it in Lectures and private conversations to undergraduates, clergy and theological students.

The Dean of St. Paul's was R.W. Church, Liddon's superior in London and a man for whom Liddon could be expected to have some regard or at least respect. It was a shrewd move on Gore's part to claim his support. He went on to emphasise the importance of the issue to him and claimed that he thought it was because Liddon appreciated this that they had not discussed it. He wrote:

I am quite unable to talk about the intellectual aspect of the faith and leave it out. I never doubted that you knew all this.

I thought you never said the things that I heard you saying to others, about the O.T., to me because you knew this. I thought you did not countenance but acquiesced in it.

His conviction was, he said, so strong that he could not draw back from publishing even though he had now discovered Liddon's true opinions. He recognised the difficulty the Trustees might have about allowing him to continue at Pusey House but he was ready to accept the consequences. He wrote:

I dare not teach men what I believe about faith and reason in my department and be silent on it. If it is an obstacle to my being here, the obstacle exists. Everything that experience has ever shown me reassures me in the line both in general and in particular. It is bound up with all that makes our case against Rome so strong, as it seems to me. I hope I do not exaggerate what I have said. I believe theologians in the Church have always been allowed to suggest lines of freedom, even if the Church finally condemned such lines and stopped them. I am quite ready to be condemned and to observe silence. Only on that basis I should go as a mission worker among the poor or the heathens. I cd. not be a teacher of theology in a University.

His next sentence was extraordinary for one to whom these questions mattered so much and who saw such clear implications in them for central doctrines. He said:

I cd. be silent on a Mission Field because what you dislike in the critical line, never affects the practical use of Holy Scripture, O.T. or N.T.

The letter concluded with the suggestion that Liddon was really making more fuss about the essay than was necessary. Gore wrote:

I do not myself believe that the book will create much of a stir. So far as anybody is interested in me in particular, I think it is generally known that this is the line I shd. be taking.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, October 25th, 1889, L.I.

The correspondence shows the tension Gore felt between the desire to be true to what he thought and a concern not to cause more distress to Liddon.

How far Gore was justified in thinking that he had always made his views known and that Liddon should not have been surprised by the essay is not easy to determine. Most of the occasions on which he claimed to have stated them were private and Liddon is unlikely to have known of them. The Tutors' Association was one of what Prestige calls 'two loosely-formed donnish associations, in which members of the Holy Party were interested.' He says, 'Its members assembled once in each term for a weekday Eucharist at St. Mary's, and twice for meetings for the reading and discussion of papers; in the course of these it had already been noted with regret by the conservatives, that Gore was disposed to encourage what his elders considered an excessively critical and destructive interpretation of Scripture.'<sup>1</sup> But there is no indication that Liddon was ever a member of the group.

On the subject of Gore's lectures at Cuddesdon, Prestige says, 'Gore did not conceal his real view of the Old Testament' but he adds the telling gloss that 'referring on one occasion to the criticism of Genesis in conversation with a colleague on the staff, he added, 'I hope some day to be able to say this publicly.'<sup>2</sup>

Liddon wrote to Gore on this matter on October 29th, 1889. He regretted adding to Gore's burden of work and admitted:

No doubt if I had been more observant, or rather less stupid than I am, I should have discovered what you were saying and thinking about the Old Testament. I had thought of you as keenly interested in everything that was said on all sides, but as holding tenaciously to the principles which underlie the trustworthiness of the Sacred Volume.

Of course, I have never heard you lecture, nor had I been present

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 37

<sup>2</sup> Prestige, p. 38

at the other occasions to which you refer.

On the question of what Gore had said about his opinions at the time of his appointment, Liddon wrote:

When you accepted the Principalship of the Pusey Library, I remember your telling me - I thought it had been in conversation - that you could not always agree with Dr. Pusey about the Fathers ..... I do not now remember any allusion to the Old Testament. But this may be due to my bad memory; or, if we were talking, to my deafness; or, if you wrote, to a careless way that I have of reading letters imperfectly; or from my turning the subject out of my mind, from thinking at the time that all that you meant was that you could not bind yourself to every opinion of Dr. Pusey on matters of detail, or to every interpretation of particular passages of Holy Scripture which he has sanctioned.<sup>1</sup>

Of the possibilities, the last seems the most likely. Liddon had heard what he wanted to hear. He concluded by suggesting that Gore should submit the disputed passages to a bishop. He explained:

If any of them should bid you publish, you would have something to fall back upon in the way of authority; if they should hesitate, you would have a good reason for any inconvenience which delay in publication might cause to your publisher.<sup>2</sup>

Gore was prepared to go some way to meet the request. He was sure, he said, that no bishop could suppress the essay on theological grounds. On the other hand, neither could he be expected to give official sanction to new ideas. Instead, wrote Gore:

I have consulted someone under seal of utmost confidence, whom you would really trust for age and wisdom and catholicity - I am sure you would have approved of him as adviser in the matter - and he advises me decidedly (having read the Essay) to let it

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, pp. 364-5  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 366

be. I feel I have done all I could.<sup>1</sup>

Prestige says that it was Church whom Gore had consulted, a good choice as one who is said to have known Gore's views already and as one who might have some influence on Liddon. Church recognised Gore's problem and replied:

Your trouble is a heavy one - not so much on account of the mere opposition of Liddon's views and yours, as because it may mark the beginning of a severance which is like the little crack in the glacier, and may open out into a great crevasse.

He wished Liddon had come to closer quarters with criticism but thought the critics themselves partly to blame. He wrote:

A good deal, I think, of his hatred of "criticism" arises from the insolence and brutality of the critics, which make him impatient with everything they have to say.<sup>2</sup>

He thought that, in fairness to the other writers, Gore must publish.

Gore had said that if Liddon wished to pass the essay to the Bishop of Oxford he would have no objection but Liddon thought that that would be 'a tacit assumption of authority which would have nothing to say for itself.'<sup>3</sup>

To his friends Liddon's comments on Lux Mundi were much less restrained than to Gore and showed his real feelings. To D.L. Lathbury he wrote:

I have been more distressed than I can well say by the eleven concluding pages of Gore's Essay - which has come upon me as a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. It is practically a capitulation at the feet of the young Rationalistic Professors, by which the main positions which the old apologists of Holy Scripture have maintained are conceded to the enemy, in deference to the

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, November 1st, 1889, L.4

<sup>2</sup> Prestige, pp. 104-5

<sup>3</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, November 1st, 1889, L.4.

"literary" judgment of our time. Not only could Dr. Pusey never have written these pages; it would have been difficult to have written anything more opposed to his convictions. Gore's personal attractions are so great, and his ability and reading so considerable, that he has carried all before him:- and I suspect I am very nearly alone in Oxford in feeling as I do on the subject. But I am quite clear that these pages will tell powerfully on many minds in the opposite directions of Rome and a more consistent unbelief.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon's assessment of the effect of the essay is, therefore, exactly the opposite of Gore's. He clings to the criterion of Pusey's teaching despite the advance of scholarship and is beginning to be aware of his isolation. Alarm about the consequences for Pusey House also gripped him. In February 1890, he wrote to Lord Halifax, one of the Governors, still claiming to have been taken by surprise. 'I did not suspect', he wrote, 'that he had constructed a private kennel for liberalising ideas in Theology within the precincts of the Old Testament, and so much of the New Testament as bears upon it.' And he went on:

There is, I fear, no doubt that among all older Churchmen it has, at any rate for the present, destroyed confidence in the existing management of the Pusey House, and put an end to those plans for its enlargement upon which we had set our hearts.<sup>2</sup>

Gore was also conscious of this problem. Consequently on 4th February he wrote to J.A. Shaw-Stewart, the Vice-Chairman of the Pusey House Governors offering his resignation from the office of Principal Librarian. He said, 'I do not wish to resign, but I cannot continue to hold the office except with the explicit sanction of the Governors.'<sup>3</sup> Once again he maintained that he had written to

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, November 24th, 1889, L.10.  
<sup>2</sup> Johnston, pp. 371-2  
<sup>3</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, February 4th, 1890, L.15.

Liddon indicating his views on the Old Testament at the time of his appointment and adding that he had also told his proposed colleagues, Coles and Brightman. Gore sent a copy of the letter to the Bishop of Oxford, the recently consecrated William Stubbs. At the time of writing, Gore was visiting the Oxford Mission in India and knew that there was a strong possibility that Stubbs would have become Chairman of the Governors during his absence. The election had, in fact, taken place and Stubbs wrote to Winfred Burrows, the convener of the Council, telling him of Gore's letter and asking for the longest possible notice should a meeting be required. Stubbs was in some doubt as to whether Gore's offer of resignation was final. Burrows, apparently as a result of talking with Liddon, was sure that it was. Liddon had also impressed upon him the harm that the business was likely to cause Pusey House. Burrows wrote:

I have his sanction for saying that he is most anxious that Gore should withdraw his proffered resignation. If only time can be allowed for misunderstandings to be removed, and suspicions to be allayed, and explanations made, there might perhaps be no need for the question to be raised at all, or at least there might open out other ways out of the difficulties.

The precise action contemplated is not clear but it sounds as though Liddon was hoping that Gore could be persuaded to retract the ideas expounded in the essay and perhaps thought that the Governors' efforts should be directed to that end. Burrows also said:

If the Governors are now forced to adopt one of the two alternatives, either that of giving "explicit sanction" to Gore's Essay, or that of accepting his resignation, nothing but harm, so far as one can see, must result. Anyone living in Oxford must know how Gore's departure<sup>1</sup> would shock numbers whose hesitating faith he has confirmed and emboldened; how it must

<sup>1</sup> 'Departure' was a word used by Tractarians to denote secession to Rome. It may indicate the strength of Liddon's feelings here.

weaken the Pusey House, and render it almost powerless in the face of the growing forces of incomplete belief and unbelief. On the other hand, should the Governors adopt the other alternative (and Dr. Liddon thinks it almost impossible), one cannot forecast the effect upon the laity and clergy throughout England, or what would be the complaints of the subscribers to the Pusey Memorial Fund.<sup>1</sup>

The letter clearly shows that Liddon's influence was very strong. The phrases describing the consequences of the alternative courses of action sound like his as does the interpretation given to the phrase "explicit sanction" which is taken from Gore's own letter. In a letter to Lord Halifax on March 10th, Liddon wrote:

Gore has written from Calcutta to Shaw Stewart, to place his resignation in the hands of the Governors of the Pusey House unless they can explicitly sanction his teaching.<sup>2</sup>

While there is a certain ambiguity about Gore's letter, it is unlikely that he could ever have expected the Governors to sanction his views. The most he can have hoped is that they would not regard them as undermining the Christian faith and, though not necessarily agreeing with everything he said, sanction his continuing in office. Liddon, by misrepresenting Gore here, perhaps through over-anxiety, was only exacerbating the problem. Nevertheless, Liddon was not ready to see Gore resign and perhaps he prompted Burrows to write to the Bishop:

In face of this grave situation, I venture to ask your Lordship to consider, whether you could write to Gore on his return to England, and ask him not to force you to summon the Governors and, by compelling them to declare themselves,

<sup>1</sup> The letters of both Stubbs and Burrows are in the Lux Mundi Papers, February 1890, L. 15  
<sup>2</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, March 10th, 1890, L. 13

foreclose all avenues of accommodation and explanation. You could speak with an authority to which he would surely listen: at least he might consent to let the matter wait for a while, and every day is a point gained.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon himself wrote to the Bishop on March 11th making the same suggestion. Again he spoke of Gore requesting the 'explicit sanction' of the Governors for his teaching. He wrote:

This explicit sanction, as it appears to me, the Governors could not give, without forgetting what is due to Dr. Pusey's name and memory, and to the many subscribers who have so generously endeavoured to secure a means of perpetuating, in Oxford, Dr. Pusey's theological influence.

He went, however, to pay tribute to Gore by saying:

On the other hand nobody who has lived here during the last few Years can doubt that Mr. Gore's severance of his connection with the Pusey House would be a serious misfortune to religion in Oxford. It would irritate and unsettle a large number of junior fellows, and undergraduates of the more thoughtful type: and it might have effects upon Mr. Gore himself which I do not like to suggest. His influence here has been due to a rare combination of intellectual and moral qualities; and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to replace him.

That a good man could hold such views was obviously a source of much astonishment and horror to Liddon but still he hoped that it may be no more than temporary. He went on:

I cannot resign the hope that he would be willing to reconsider positions which are not less than shocking to friends who deeply respect and love him; - but then, for such reconsideration, time is above all things necessary.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, February 10th, 1890, L. 15  
<sup>2</sup> Lux Mundi Papers, March 11th, 1890, L. 14

He asked the Bishop to delay things as long as possible. The Bishop agreed and wrote to Gore asking him to withdraw his resignation.

At the end of March, Gore returned to England and responded promptly to the Bishop of Oxford's request. He wrote:

I will, of course, do most gladly what you wish in regard to my letter offering resignation, and consider it hereby not to have been written.

His biographer says:

He added that he had attempted to remove the distrust of certain reasonable critics "by explaining two sentences in my 'corpus delicti' which I had not seen to be 'ambiguous', and by inserting in the new edition just issued a correction to embody this explanation."<sup>1</sup>

These are the alterations which appear in the fifth edition. He wrote on April 11th, 1890 to Lord Halifax a letter which indicates the distress and anxiety which he was now experiencing:

What to say about Lux I hardly know. Liddon is personally angelic to me, but I do feel that he has made the position unnecessarily difficult.<sup>2</sup>

His assessment of the part Liddon had played in the controversy is fair. He had exacerbated the situation, particularly by interpreting Gore's phrase, 'explicit sanction' as a demand for the endorsement of his teaching. He would not have been content with anything less than a full recantation by Gore. He was evidently still pressing for something like this but beginning to realise that it was not likely to be forthcoming. The letter to Halifax also said:

Gore is going to write a public letter to Canon Furse. I hope and pray, rather than expect, that it will be what one would wish.<sup>3</sup>

1  
2  
3

Prestige, p. 115

Lockhart, J.G., Viscount Halifax 1885-1934, vol.ii, pp. 31-2

Johnston, p. 382

The letter was to be an open letter of explanation which Gore proposed to write to some prominent person. It was Gore's idea and the intention was to allay controversy. Canon Furse who had been Gore's Principal during his days at Cuddesdon where he had formed a great affection for Gore and was now a Canon of Westminster was prepared to have the letter addressed to him. Gore thought it be better for it to go to the Bishop of Oxford but, in the event, no letter was actually written. Gore considered that the insertion in the new preface to Lux Mundi made it unnecessary and simply wrote an apology to the Bishop for not sending the intended open letter.

It is very hard to see what Gore could have said in it that would have made any significant difference. During the months of controversy Liddon preached two sermons in which he criticised Gore's essay without actually naming him.<sup>1</sup> In them he showed that his real objections to Gore's views stemmed from the dogmatic assumptions with which he approached the matter. The first concerned the meaning of inspiration. For Liddon it meant infallibility. After cataloguing some of the findings of the critics such as the denial that speeches attributed to Moses in Deuteronomy or to David in Chronicles were authentic and the refusal to allow that the Pastoral Epistles are Pauline, Liddon said:

if, I say, these and other such-like theories which might be mentioned could be shown to be based on fact, it would surely be shown at the same time that the Holy Spirit could not have inspired the writings in question . . . . . If the Holy Spirit is in any degree concerned in the production of its contents we may at least be sure that language is not used in it to create a false impression, and that that which it claims, on the face of it, to be history is not really fiction in an historical guise.

<sup>1</sup> The Worth of the Old Testament - St. Paul's, December 8th, 1889  
The Inspiration of Selection - St. Mary's, Oxford, May 25th, 1890

The Book of Truth cannot belie either the laws of truth or the Spirit and Source of truth.<sup>1</sup>

Liddon now moved into an even more critical area of the controversy. In the St. Paul's sermon, Liddon made similar remarks to those above but led on from them into the further matter of their implications for the doctrine of Christ. He said:

It is inconceivable that if Deuteronomy and the Chronicles were composed in the manner that is now asserted by some adherents of the new school of criticism, these books could ever have been organs of the Spirit of Truth, or could have been recommended to us by Him Who proclaimed before His judge, "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth."<sup>2</sup>

Later in the sermon, he elaborated on this in a manner which must have been very painful to Gore since Liddon is questioning the Christian judgment of anyone who accepts the views of the critics. It is another example of his tendency to ask how any good man can possibly disagree with him. Liddon said:

And if it be obvious that certain theories about the Old Testament must ultimately conflict with our Lord's unerring authority, a Christian will pause before he commits himself to these theories. He will reflect that he has stronger reasons for his confidence in our Lord than for yielding assent to the theories in question, and he will accordingly, at the least, suspend his judgment about them, if he does not forthwith modify them or dismiss them from his mind . . . . Profoundly interesting as must be the least important inquiry that concerns God's earlier Revelation of Himself, there is a question compared with which the most important that can concern it sinks at once

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Inspiration of Selection, pp. 16-17

<sup>2</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Worth of the Old Testament, p. 11

into utter insignificance. That question is whether He with Whom, in life or death, we Christians have to do, is a fallible or the infallible Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The attack on Gore was sharpened still further when Liddon said:

For Christians it will be enough to know that our Lord Jesus Christ set the seal of His infallible sanction on the whole of the Old Testament ..... Nay, more, He went out of His way ..... to sanction not a few portions of it which modern scepticism rejects.

He instanced the stories of Lot's wife, Noah and the Flood, Jonah and Daniel. Then he asked:

Are we to suppose that in these and other references to the Old Testament our Lord was only using ad hominem arguments, or talking down to the level of a popular ignorance which He did not Himself share?

Could Christ be mistaken? Liddon replied:

There are those who profess to bear the Christian name, and yet do not shrink from saying as much as this. But they will find it difficult to persuade mankind that, if He could be mistaken on a matter of such strictly religious importance as the value of the sacred literature of His countrymen, He can safely be trusted about anything else. The trustworthiness of the Old Testament is, in fact, inseparable from the trustworthiness of our Lord Jesus Christ; and if we believe that He is the true Light of the world, we shall close our ears against suggestions impairing the credit of those Jewish Scriptures which have received the stamp of His Divine authority.<sup>2</sup>

This is a very sharp attack indeed on Gore which, in effect, calls in question his standing as a Christian. He is not mentioned by

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., The Worth of the Old Testament, pp. 13-14  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 23-5

name but the reference to the 'true Light of the world' could leave no one who was aware of what was happening in the Church in any doubt about the target of the criticism.

The two sentences which Gore altered for the fifth edition of Lux Mundi occur in those pages 345-62 which had worried Liddon and they are concerned not only with the inspiration and infallibility of the Old Testament but also with the greater question of Christology. Gore recognised that the Christological reference of his treatment of the inspiration of the Old Testament was the most important.

He wrote:

The only thing that affects my own conscience is the feeling of having allowed myself to be misunderstood in the sense of admitting that our Lord could be fallible. I cannot conceive hesitating to accept as Divine Truth anything on any subject matter that our Lord taught. There is every difference between a limitation of human knowledge, motivated by love and controlled by His own will, which accepted it, and fallibility. Limitation of knowledge, voluntarily accepted, seems to me to account for this, leaving all natural science and literary knowledge also, untouched. Then I do not myself think that while our Lord teaches the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament, His words easily, or should I say fairly, admit of being regarded as positive teaching on literary questions about the Old Testament . . . . . The thing that I most wish and believe is that supposing our line were a mistake, which of course I do not think, it is simply a mistake as to what the Christian faith admits of. I am sure we all are rooted on that, and ready honestly to be controlled by that.

Forgive me, a thousand times over forgive me, the trouble I have caused you all.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lockhart, J.G., Viscount Halifax 1885-1934, vol. ii. pp. 31-2

The relation of Old Testament inspiration and dominical authority works both ways. The Old Testament is seen by Christians to be inspired as a prologue to Jesus and so helps to establish his authority. Jesus himself said, 'Search the Scriptures ..... they are they which testify of me.'<sup>1</sup> But also Jesus is seen to make an appeal to the Old Testament and thus tacitly to acknowledge its inspiration. It is in the detailing of Jesus's appeal that contemporary criticism and Gore's approach to it seemed so dangerous to Liddon. Gore wished to say generally that Jesus endorses the Jewish view of the race's history which implies the inspiration of the whole canon and that he is himself the goal of that inspired leading and the standard of that inspiration. But he did not wish to foreclose critical positions about Old Testament literature. Jesus's use, for example, of Jonah's 'resurrection' as a type of his own does not imply the historicity of Jonah nor does his use of the Flood as a typical instance of the carelessness of men before his coming have to mean that it is historical.

An important passage for such a theory is the Synoptic account of the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees about whether the Messiah could be called 'Son of David'.<sup>2</sup> Jesus refers to Psalm 110 in a way that assumes a Davidic authorship which the critics now question. Is Jesus, therefore, to be set against the critics? Gore says that the point Jesus is making is that the Pharisees are not being true to their own premises. Jesus is not making any statement about authorship but simply arguing ad hominem. But the suggestion that Christ could argue ad hominem offended Liddon. It suggested that Christ was either limited to the level of ordinary mortals in his knowledge on this subject or that he deliberately argued on the assumption of Davidic authorship knowing it to be false. Either

<sup>1</sup> John 5:39

<sup>2</sup> Mark 12:35-7

suggestion seemed to cast a slur on Jesus. Gore thought that the literary issues would only have been settled if Jesus had spoken more plainly and that nothing of what he did say gave any ground for doubting his dominical authority.

Since Gore recognised that he had not made his position plain and since he felt himself to be wholly orthodox, he changed the offending pages in the fifth edition. In the first edition of Lux Mundi, he had said of Jesus:

It is surely pressing His words unduly to represent them as positive teaching on a literary point, just as it would be pressing His conclusion unduly to make Him maintain that the relation of sonship to David was inconsistent with lordship over him: or, as in another place, it is monstrous to urge that "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but God" is a general repudiation of the claim to goodness. To argue ad hominem, to reason with men on their own premises was, in fact, a part of our Lord's method.<sup>1</sup>

In the fifth edition, this passage was changed to read:

But it must be noticed that He is asking a question rather than making a statement - a question, moreover, which does not admit of being turned into a statement without suggesting a conclusion, of which rationalist critics have not hesitated to avail themselves, that David's Lord could not be David's son. There are, we notice, other occasions when our Lord asked questions which cannot be made the basis of positive propositions. It was in fact part of His method to lead men to examine their own principles without at the time suggesting any positive conclusion at all.<sup>2</sup>

Gore made one further attempt to answer the objections and put the minds of his opponents at rest. When the tenth edition of Lux Mundi appeared in September 1890, it contained a further preface. In it

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 359  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. Fifth edition, p. 359

Gore confessed to regrets about the way in which the book had been received. He thought that a disproportionate amount of attention had been given to his essay and not enough notice taken of the point of view from which the book was produced. He reminded his readers that the purpose was 'to succour a distressed faith' by bringing the Creed 'into its right relation to the modern growth of knowledge, scientific, historical, critical; and to the modern problems of politics and ethics.' The aim, he said, was not compromise, which is often a tampering with principle 'but readjustment, or fresh correlation, of the things of faith and the things of knowledge.'<sup>1</sup> Gore looked for:

a reconciliation which shall at once set the scientific and critical movement, so far as it is simply scientific and critical, free from the peril of irreligion, and the religious movement free from the imputation of hostility to new knowledge - as free as any movement can be, which is intensely concerned to nourish and develop what is permanent and unchanging in human life.<sup>2</sup>

There the difference between Gore and Liddon in relation to the general tone of contemporary culture is seen. Liddon believes that what is new is to be viewed with circumspection by those who would preserve the faith and that in particular where contemporary scholarship seriously challenges accepted doctrine, the authority of that doctrine takes precedence and scholarship must yield. Gore believes that readjustment is possible, even though he supposes that limits must be set lest readjustment drift into revolution. So while he recognises that some Old Testament criticism is arbitrary, rationalistic, extreme and must, therefore, be rejected, in general he welcomes critical study as a real advance in analytical method in literature. There is certainly something wholly religious in Gore's

<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Lux Mundi, Fifteenth edition, p. x  
ibid. pp. x-xi

insistence that inspiration was to be found 'primarily in the substance of the books as they are given to us, not in any considerations of the manner in which they came into existence'<sup>1</sup> and something not wholly clear-sighted in his belief that because modern criticism is concerned not so much with the contents of the books as with 'the circumstances of their composition and the method by which they reached their present form'<sup>2</sup> it cannot invalidate the Old Testament as the record of God's dealings with his people or deny its inspiration. He was happy to be positive about some of the critics' findings because he affirmed that the idealising of history which had taken place, instead of obscuring the facts, had served to reveal more closely the divine workings in events and so, on Gore's definition, had affirmed rather than denied the inspiration of scripture.

On the relation of the Christological question to the Scripture, Gore again expressed his regret that he had been misunderstood as implying Christ's fallibility as a teacher. He asked leave to defer a full discussion of Christ's person until a later time. Meanwhile, he only said:

I would suggest that the longer one thinks of it the more apparent it will become that any hypothesis as to the origin of any one book of the Old Testament, which is consistent with a belief in its inspiration, must be consistent also with our Lord having given it His authorisation.<sup>3</sup>

Certainly, since nothing in Christ's use of the Old Testament depended on questions of authorship or date, in this preface he would treat only of one relation between the Old Testament and Christ, and affirm that in employing the Old Testament Christ's purpose was always to persuade men to ask where the books of the Old Testament

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, Fifteenth edition p.xix

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. xx

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. xxvi

prepared for the Incarnation, where they testified to him.

If the preface represents any advance on the essay, it is in terms of elucidation rather than adjustment. There is no change in Gore's position and it is very unlikely that this new defence of the essay would have eased Liddon's mind. In the event, Liddon died in September at Standish House, Stonehouse in Gloucestershire. He had left Oxford in the middle of July. So, although the preface is dated July 1890, it is doubtful whether he ever saw it.

Following the May sermon, the last he ever preached, in which he had dealt with the issues raised in the essay, Liddon's health deteriorated seriously and his appearances in public were severely limited. During the last few weeks in Oxford, he frequently asked after Gore but was, at first, reluctant to see him. Later he said he would be glad for Gore to visit him provided Gore would accept that he was too ill to speak. Prestige records:

Gore paid him a number of visits, but no discussion was entered of disputed opinions; Liddon was too ill to talk.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps Liddon had finally learnt a little sympathy. It is difficult to imagine their silent meeting. But apparently it was not too painful, for Gore was among the most frequent visitors during those days. They had said all they could to each other, directly or indirectly, in correspondence, sermons, and explanatory prefaces. Short of capitulation on the part of one or the other there could be no further change. Their silence expressed both the depth of personal concern and affection between them and the profundity of their theological estrangement.

Liddon had seen that Old Testament criticism had Christological implications. Gore must now have wanted to offer a new approach to Christology which would make sense of Old Testament criticism. The opportunity and stimulus to do so came soon and from, what must have been, an unexpected quarter.

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 122.

Chapter Seven - Gore's Bampton Lectures

In 1890, when, as his biographer says, 'Lux Mundi was rolling through a cycle of new editions',<sup>1</sup> the Heads of the Oxford Houses offered the Bampton Lectureship to Gore for the following year. That it should be offered, completely unsought, was quite unusual. The more normal procedure was for candidates to make application and to forward a synopsis of the lectures they proposed before any appointment could be made. With the Lux Mundi controversy now at its height, it is doubtful whether Gore had ever entertained the thought of making an application. Some previous lectures in the series had been controversial and given rise to contention but John Bampton's will laid down that the lecturers were expected to offer an apologia for some aspect of orthodox doctrine and, while Gore might have thought that his contribution to Lux Mundi was precisely such an apologia, its reception in ecclesiastical circles cannot have encouraged him to think that it would be generally seen that way by the electors for the lectureship. The Heads of Houses must have realised as they made their offer that Gore would be likely to use the occasion to expand on those Lux Mundi topics which would prolong the dispute. They certainly cannot have expected a recantation of the views he had so lately expressed.

The offer represented both a vote of confidence in Gore and the recognition that he was dealing with issues which could not be ignored. It was thus impressive and significant. If it guaranteed the Trustees a packed St. Mary's and a good sale for the published version, it also carried a risk of some embarrassment. Prestige reports that the Vicar of St. Mary's himself sought to bring a charge of heresy against Gore before the University authorities but his attempt was suppressed by the Vice-Chancellor.<sup>2</sup> The electors evidently felt that Gore and his views were sufficiently important

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 134

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 135

to be worth the risk.

For his part, Gore may well have been delighted and encouraged to receive such a highly prized invitation. Prestige reports:

Its unsolicited offer was extremely welcome to Gore, who saw in it the very opportunity which he sought for vindicating his loyalty to the Church and to the Christian faith.<sup>1</sup>

Gore worked on the lectures in the winter of 1890 while staying in Florence with three young Oxford men. Writing was interspersed with showing the delights of Florence to his friends and eating meals in the city's restaurants and the distractions may sometimes have been too great for the good of the serious task on hand. The lectures are written with charm but suffer from some imprecision and a lack of ordered sequence in the presentation. They give the impression, at least at a first reading, of being fragmented and disconnected and the systematic thought, which is certainly there, is obscured. The point may be demonstrated from Prestige's summary of Gore's lectures:

Christianity, he said, meant absolute faith in a particular Person, Jesus Christ, incarnate God. The object of the lectures was to vindicate the reasonableness of such a faith and to expound its rational meaning.

All nature, said Gore, was a progressive revelation of God, culminating in Christ and incomplete without Him. Thus, while Christ was in full harmony with the course of nature, he was as compared with it, strictly super-natural. The Gospel miracles were, therefore, not a violation of nature, but a vindication of its true, divine order on a new and unexampled level of experience. He went on to discuss the evidences for the historical character of his supernatural Christ, and to prove that the Christ of Catholic dogma was identical with the historical Christ of Scripture. Christ revealed both the

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 134

personality, moral character, and order of God, and also the ideal perfection of human nature; Gore criticised with vigour, on the basis of Scriptural evidence, both the super-orthodox dogmatists who minimised the completeness of His submission to human limitations, and also the anti-theological theorists who denied the infallible authority of His teaching and the moral perfection of His character. Christian authority was derived from Christ, as interpreted by the minds of the inspired apostles, under whose guidance the primitive churches of Christendom had been instructed and the Scriptures of the New Testament had been composed. The New Testament was the criterion of the truth of Christian teaching, and the Christ there exhibited was both the example for Christian conduct and the spiritual force by which it could be realised.<sup>1</sup>

Prestige is completely faithful to Gore's order here and this is a recognisable summary of the book. It is the result of putting together the chapter headings. But there is little sequence to the argument and it in no way does justice to Gore's work. It is not made sufficiently clear to which contemporary challenges Gore is responding. The quality of originality is not brought out and the positive Christological teaching which forms the explanatory principle of the lectures is not even mentioned. Prestige was writing a biography and not an exposition of Gore's thought. His précis is not inaccurate but it is inadequate. A better appreciation of the lectures requires not merely the repetition of Gore's synopsis but an attempt at some reconstruction of the pattern of his thought. For that, the title Gore gave to his Bampton is extremely important. He called them, The Incarnation of the Son of God.

The opening chapter provides a useful tool for the task of reconstruction. Gore begins by insisting that Christianity is 'faith

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, pp. 135-6

in a certain person Jesus Christ'<sup>1</sup> through whom we are brought into union with God. In practice, he regrets, this central requirement has been, and is, obscured in the life of the Church. Sometimes the ecclesiastical system itself is allowed to occupy the centre of the stage. Sometimes undue emphasis is placed upon saintly intercessors like the Virgin Mary and attention is diverted from Christ. Sometimes an unacceptable subjectivism creeps in and people become obsessed with the assurance of personal salvation forgetting that 'to serve Christ, not to feel Christ, is the mark of his true servants.'<sup>2</sup> At other times Christology gives way to philanthropy with a resulting 'substitution of zeal for work for zeal for Christ.'<sup>3</sup> Or again, especially in academic circles, Christianity is converted into a philosophical system and the object of interest is the system rather than the person of Christ.

But it is to an unreserved self-commitment to Christ that Christians must return. Gore thinks that this is the great difference between the Christian faith and other faiths. In other faiths it is the teaching of the founder that matters most. In the Christian faith it is the founder himself and the believer's relationship with him. From the first, Gore thinks, it was the personal impact of Jesus that drew men into discipleship and it was only gradually, through their relationship with him, that they were led 'to any real conviction of His superhuman nature.'<sup>4</sup>

Such conviction was bound to arise as fascination with his personality was enlarged by the sense of his authority. Gore says:

They listen to His words of power, as He speaks like the embodied voice of conscience, "as one having authority", convincingly yet without reason given, setting aside, as inadequate, what the lawgiver of old had spoken as God's own

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., The Incarnation of the Son of God, p. 1  
Hereinafter referred to as Incarnation.  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 4  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 4  
<sup>4</sup> Incarnation, p. 10

messenger, "It was said to them of old time ..... But I say unto you."<sup>1</sup>

It grew still further as the result of a claim, Gore thinks: which is of a piece with His general tone, and yet by itself is of staggering import, the claim to pronounce at the last the final divine judgment, not on the overt actions of men only, but on their secret lives. This claim is first expressed in regard to His professed followers in the Sermon on the Mount. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out devils, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." It makes itself heard again and again, but it culminates in the picture which our Lord draws of Himself before His Passion, when before Him shall be gathered, not His own followers only, or the Jews, but "all the nations", and He shall pass sentence on them individually, as one who knows them better than they know themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus trained men to trust him, says Gore, as 'the supreme and unfailling resource'<sup>3</sup> with a trust which went beyond anything that would be legitimate between man and man. Gore thinks that 'A mere man, however exalted, must always point away from himself up to God.'<sup>4</sup> But Christ, he says, drew men to himself 'to trust Him with the sort of trust which can be legitimately given to God only.'<sup>5</sup>

So, Gore says:

After Pentecost, the apostles had no doubt at all that Jesus Christ as Son of God was the summary object of faith and worship, and that in committing to Him their whole being, they

1 Incarnation, p. 10  
2 ibid. pp. 10-11  
3 ibid. p. 12  
4 ibid. p. 12  
5 ibid. p. 13

were not running the risk of idolatry, but were only attaining union with God through His Son by the Spirit which He had given them.<sup>1</sup>

Gore's argument is that the need for a Christology or the forming of a theory about the ontological status of Christ was the direct result of the personal impact which Christ made upon those who encountered him. In their experience he was unique and required a unique explanation. Out of their personal attachment to him and the experience of discipleship came the doctrine of his divinity. The metaphysical theory grew out of the personal relationship. The claims which Jesus made for himself and the integrity of his character were vital in drawing the disciples into the relationship and so Gore quotes with approval the dilemma which was so fundamental to Liddon's Bampton, 'aut Deus aut homo non bonus'. Gore does not question the validity of this as an effective apologetic.

He pays warm tribute to Liddon:

Among all Dr. Liddon's titles to our gratitude, none is more conspicuous than the service which he rendered when in his Bampton Lectures he put his faultless powers of analysis and expression at the disposal of his passionate faith in order to exhibit the nature and the significance of our Lord's assertion of Himself. He is identified, as with hardly anything else, with the restatement of the great dilemma based on the claim of Jesus Christ, that either He was what alone could morally justify that claim, the very Son of God, or He was indeed guilty of the supreme arrogance of putting Himself in the place of God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 15

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 16

In an appended note, Gore says that neither he nor Liddon could ascertain the source of the 'epigrammatic summary of the argument "aut Deus aut homo non bonus".' In substance the argument is found in Victorinus Afer, writing against Candidus the Arian: 'Haec dicens Deus fuit, si mentitus non est: si autem mentitus est, non opus Dei omnimodis perfectum.' Recently Liddon and Pere Lacordaire have given stress to it. It may be that Liddon learnt it from Lacordaire. (Note 5, p. 238)

Gore believes this to be a dilemma 'the force of which grows upon us' and he goes on to say:

it may be asserted here at the beginning of our discussion, that to represent our Lord only as a good man conscious of a message from God, like one of the Prophets or John the Baptist, is to do violence not to one Gospel only or to single passages in various Gospels, but to the general tenor of the Gospels as a whole.

Gore thinks there can be little doubt as to what Christianity is. But its rational justification is another matter. He says:

I do not think it can be reasonably gainsayed (1) that Christianity has meant historically, faith in the person of Jesus Christ, considered as very God incarnate, so much so that if this faith were gone, Christianity in its characteristic features would be gone also; (2) that, thus considered, Christianity is differentiated from other religions by the attitude of its members towards its Founder; (3) that this attitude of Christianity towards its Founder is (speaking generally) explained and justified by the witness of the earliest records to His personality and claim.<sup>1</sup>

Taking it for granted now that this is the content of the faith, he explains his purpose in the Bampton<sup>2</sup>. He says:

I am to ask your attention in these Lectures to the Person of Jesus Christ, with especial reference to His incarnation, that is, to the truth that being the Son of God, He was made very man; and I am to endeavour to express and justify the conviction that, however slowly and painfully, the old faith in Him is being brought out in harmony not only with our moral needs and social aspirations, but also with that knowledge of nature and that historical criticism which are the special

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, pp. 17-18

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 18

growth of our time.<sup>1</sup>

Since this statement is fundamental to the understanding of the lectures, it provides the vital point of reference for their elucidation and a framework for the reconstruction of Gore's argument. I shall select three phrases from it and use them as the bases for my exposition of his thought. The first is the phrase, 'the old faith in Him'. Gore has already made it clear that the content of the Christian faith is chiefly concerned with the doctrine of the Person of Christ. The investigation of this phrase will show, more precisely, what he understands by the Catholic faith in Christ and to what extent his views are congruous with those of Liddon. If the second and third phrases, 'that knowledge of nature' and 'that historical criticism' can be analysed and their constituent parts made clear, it will then be possible to see what Gore is seeking to respond to in the current intellectual climate. Neither of these two phrases is ever explained or defined. What Gore meant by them can only be deduced from the topics with which he actually deals in the lectures. When Gore's understanding of the traditional faith and the contemporary challenges to it is known, his purpose in stressing a distinctive interpretation of the incarnation can be appreciated and its effectiveness assessed.

The content of the first of the phrases, 'the old faith in Him', is precisely set out by Gore in the fourth lecture. He turns there to a consideration of the creeds and conciliar definitions of the early church and lists four main determinations concerning the Person of Christ which resulted from them. He says:

These definitions consist in substance of four propositions;

- (1) that as Son of God, Jesus Christ is very God, of one substance with the Father;
- (2) that as Son of man, He is perfectly Man, in the completeness of human faculties and sympathies;

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 18

- (3) that though both God and Man, He is yet one person, namely the Son of God who has taken manhood into Himself;
- (4) that in this incarnation the manhood, though it is truly assumed into the divine person, still remains none the less truly human, so that Jesus Christ is of one substance with us men in respect of His manhood, as He is with the Father in respect of His godhead.<sup>1</sup>

Gore accepts these determinations as totally in accord with the Scriptural understanding of Christ. They are, in his view, summaries of the Biblical Christian faith. They are formulas necessary to prevent Scripture from being undermined. They do not add to the content of the Church's faith. Here the views of Liddon and Gore coincide and it is plain that both men belong to the same type of Catholic theology. Gore insists, with Liddon, that it is the function of 'the church to teach' and 'the Bible to prove'. He rejects the Roman Catholic view that the Christian faith expands and develops and that the Creeds are an advance upon primitive Christianity just as recent doctrines are upon the Creeds. Equally, Gore rejects liberal notions that conciliar doctrine represents an unwelcome distortion of primitive Christianity which was undogmatic and concerned only with the moral quality of life.

Such a view, of course, requires some justification and although Gore does not spend anything like as much time and space on it as Liddon did in his Bampton, he does devote the whole of the third lecture to a consideration of the Biblical material. Unlike Liddon, he begins, not with the Old Testament, but with those epistles of the New Testament which bear the most unmistakeable signs of being authentically Pauline, namely, the letters to the Galatians, the Romans and the Corinthians. Here, says Gore, the enquirer into the historical grounds of the Christian faith:

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, pp. 80-1

finds Jesus Christ co-ordinated with God in the necessarily divine functions and offices, both in nature and grace, in a manner impossible to the mind of a Jewish monotheist like St. Paul, unless the co-ordinated person is really believed to belong to the properly divine being. So complete is this co-ordination that (to quote the language of Professor Pfleiderer) "we need feel no surprise when Paul at length calls Him without reserve 'God who is over all blessed for evermore.'"<sup>1</sup>

Gore thinks that Paul can only ascribe such honour to Christ because of what he was before his appearance in flesh. He has no doubt that these epistles teach a doctrine of incarnation. They witness, Gore says, to:

an act by which the divine Son for our sakes "became poor", depriving Himself of the riches of His previous state, in order for our redemption to become true man, in the reality of our nature "according to the flesh," and though He "knew no sin" Himself, "in the likeness of the flesh of sin." Thus in order of time, He is first divine, afterwards human. But in the order of His self-disclosure He is first human, then divine. He showed His Divinity through His humanity.<sup>2</sup>

Gore declares his conviction that Paul's teaching goes back to what he himself was taught at the time of his conversion, not more than ten years after the death and resurrection of Jesus and that it represents the original gospel faithfully. So the doctrine of a divine Christ become incarnate was settled, he thinks, at a very early stage in the Christian story. That same doctrine, in his view, is formally stated in the conciliar definitions.

When Gore turns to the Synoptic gospels, he shows that he is very much aware of the problems they are thought to raise for modern

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 59  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 59

exegetes. He acknowledges the dependence of Matthew and Luke upon Mark but is convinced that the material common to all three brings us very near to the roots of the evangelical tradition. The discrepancies between the Synoptics are not enough to invalidate the record as a whole. He says:

The Christ of the Gospels, if He be not true to history, represents a combined effort of the creative imagination without parallel in literary history.<sup>1</sup>

Mark particularly impresses Gore with its ring of historical truthfulness which is supported by the Petrine influence he detects. He finds the authority of Christ in St. Mark's Gospel particularly striking.

That authority has its source in his divinity. Gore concludes:

A sifting of the evidence discloses in the earliest Gospel the Christ of the Apostles' Creed. It affords us no justification for supposing a process of accretion by which a naturalistic Christ was gradually deified or became the subject of miracles.<sup>2</sup>

Gore knows that the Fourth Gospel presents special difficulties for contemporary readers. John, he says, relies chiefly on his own memory and long meditation on his experience of Christ. The record of discourses Jesus had with his disciples has been influenced in both form and tone by the recorder. Gore draws attention to the convention of literary freedom with regard to the reporting of direct speech which obtained in apostolic times and which the evangelist would accept as normal. Nevertheless, Gore is confident that the speeches are, in substance, dominical. Jesus, he says, did testify to his eternal relation with the Father as the Synoptics confirm. Otherwise it would be hard to account for the rise of the belief in his divinity in the earliest churches. In effect John's theology is that of Paul. He plainly asserts Christ's pre-existence and

<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Incarnation, p. 63  
ibid. p. 66

divinity and this is all the more impressive because the writer is John, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'

Gore is convinced that the apostles were reliable witnesses. They were plain men who could receive the impress of facts and they witnessed to the facts despite opposition. There was no precedent for what they had to say. It was original but the originality was due not to their imaginative invention but to the freshness and power of their new experience. Their reliability and objectivity are evident in, for example, their fairness to opponents like Pilate. That same reliability should be recognised when they report events that are unexpected or unique. We must recognise, says Gore, that:

The resurrection moulded them, they did not create the resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

At the close of the lecture, Gore jumps from the final events in Christ's incarnate life to its beginning. There are those, he says, who believe in the resurrection but not the Virgin Birth. He admits that the latter was not part of the primary apostolic teaching because this was limited to what the apostles had actually witnessed and experienced for themselves. But once the apostles believed in the incarnation, it was natural for them to want to enquire into its manner. They could question Mary and Joseph. He finds evidence that they did so in the fact that Matthew appears to have been written from Joseph's point of view while Luke tells the story from Mary's. The important thing is, he says, that:

Whatever the independence of the two narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke, at least they agree on that which alone concerns us at present, the virgin-birth at Bethlehem. Further, that event holds a firm place in the earliest traditions of East and West.<sup>2</sup>

In all this Gore is maintaining that view of the relationship

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 76  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 78

between New Testament and Church which he put forward in Lux Mundi. He sets the Bible firmly within the context of the Church. The books of the New Testament were preceded by an oral rule of faith or tradition so that the primary depository of the Christian tradition is the Church. The Bible has no independent history or authority over against the Church but as the written record of the primitive tradition it checks unwarranted or improper development in Christian thought and it guarantees the tradition.

The apostolic churches formed a confederation of spiritual societies linked by a common faith in the Trinity and the Incarnation and a common rule of life. In response to the threat of heresy, the churches moved from the vigorous but inexact expression of its faith to a clearly worked out theology and terminology. Gore says:

The faith of the Church as it expressed itself in life, in worship, in fervent statement, in martyrdom, was vigorous and unmistakable in meaning; it referred back for its authorization to apostolic teaching and apostolic writings; but it was a faith, not a science; a faith which in some sub-apostolic documents finds such inexact or even careless expression as impresses upon us the difference between the writers within, and those without, the canon.<sup>1</sup>

Out of a turbulent period, there emerged that balanced antithetical theology which is found in the Chalcedonian Definition. This Definition, says Gore:

can be regarded with the same truth as the expression of the consciousness of a historical society, gradually through many efforts of many individuals, elaborated into explicit and formulated utterance.<sup>2</sup>

Gore thinks that the creeds and Definitions represent the

<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Incarnation, p. 85  
ibid. pp. 87-8

crystallization of New Testament teaching. They may be expressed in the philosophical language of the day but they are a development on the New Testament only in the sense that they elucidate it. In elucidating, on the other hand, he says that, the Church also interprets and the interpretation is authoritative. So the Church is the primary authority in matters of faith but it must be able to demonstrate that its faith can be found to have a basis in Scripture.

Gore is thus revealed as a Churchman of the same kind as Liddon, steeped in the early Fathers, valuing the primitive tradition and the decisions of the Councils highly and anxious not to depart from the limits of Catholic theology but also giving a vital role to Scripture. He sounds somewhat like Liddon when he says:

Necessarily a great deal in human life changes; science grows, criticism advances, institutions vary, society makes its way to new forms of organisation, the outward fashions of life pass. All this is obvious, and inevitable, and the ground of hope for the future; but it causes all of us, who are not shallow-hearted, only to love more intensely anything in human life which does not change.<sup>1</sup>

But this emphasis upon the unchanging in Christian thought and on the interdependence of Church and Scripture limits the extent to which his thought can progress. In Lux Mundi he took a developmental view of history and of God's revelation in order to explain the imperfections of the Old Testament. There religion was seen as the sphere of constant movement from lower to higher levels of perception. That same process of development is not recognised in the subsequent Christian thought. Doctrine, or, at the least, the limits within which theology may speculate, is now seen as fixed for all time with the forming of the creeds.

The qualifying clause is necessary because Gore does see the

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 102

function of the creeds as negative rather than positive. In this large matter he differs from Liddon. With Liddon it would not be too much to say that the propositions of the creeds are the revelation of God in Christ. For Gore they are not the revelation but the attempt to articulate it and preserve it against heresy.

Gore thinks that:

The dogmas are only limits, negatives which block false lines of development, notice boards which warn us off false approaches, guiding us down the true road to the figure in the Gospels, and leaving us to contemplate it unimpeded and with the frankest gaze.<sup>1</sup>

Dogma can never be adequate as the expression of the truth of God. There is value, Gore acknowledges, in the age and the permanence of the creeds. They ask the right questions - Is Christ really God? Is his character God's character? Is his love God's love? Their answers safeguard apostolic Christianity. But human language can never express divine realities fully and, therefore, the creeds are limited in their usefulness. So, although Gore thinks that the Church is to teach and the Bible to prove, he also says:

But in fact the dogmatic decisions of the Church, like other good things, have been greatly misused. And how? By being treated as sources of our positive information about Christ, practically overriding the Gospel picture.<sup>2</sup>

To illustrate this misuse of dogma, Gore turns to the recurring question of the knowledge of Christ during his incarnation. In doing so, he discloses both his particular interest and also his reasons for insisting on the limitations of dogma. Mediaeval dogmatics, he claims, changed the Christ of the Gospels into a static figure who had no need to grow in wisdom but only seemed to do so. They went so far as to say that when Jesus said he did not know, he

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 108  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 107

only meant that he would not tell. He 'cried out as if He were desolate, while in fact He was never really deprived of the consolations of the Father's presence.'<sup>1</sup> So the living Christ of the Gospels is lost and replaced by an unreal figure. This would be bad at any time. For Gore it was a particularly sharp issue when the historical figure of Jesus was under close scrutiny from the critics and his human characteristics, especially the limitation of his knowledge, were being stressed. Gore wants the freedom to meet this challenge. Necessary though dogma may be in the refutation of heresy, it must not be allowed to override the Gospel story. In fact, says Gore, within the limits of the decrees, the theologian must be left free to re-express the faith so as to give warmth and life to their cold, bare logic. The impossibility of ever reaching a definitive positive expression of Christian truth is an inevitable consequence of the limitations of theologians as finite creatures trying to express the infinite. God requires all theologians to approach their work with a proper humility and a recognition of the sheer folly of thinking that it can ever be finished or complete. Gore says:

A constant tendency to apologise for human speech, a great element of agnosticism, an awful sense of unfathomed depths beyond the little that is made known, is always present to the minds of theologians who know what they are about, in conceiving or expressing God.<sup>2</sup>

Gore's contention that it is the old faith in Christ that he is anxious to vindicate is justified. His statement of that faith in outline by the use of the four determinations of the Councils is impeccably orthodox. Liddon would have no complaint with it. In his intention to keep strictly within the limits of the determinations

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 108  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 105

he demonstrates his Catholic commitment. But he has only stated that faith in the barest outline. He has offered no exposition of the four definitions as yet. There have been hints that when he does it will not follow the same lines as Liddon. His paraphrase of Paul's teaching, for example, suggests that he may give more stress to Christ's humanity than Liddon did, especially the words, 'He showed His Divinity through His humanity.'<sup>1</sup>

The revelation of God, Gore suggests, is a personal and dynamic disclosure not easily captured in words, never plumbed to its depths and more fluid and undefinable than credal statements might suggest. His use of the word, 'agnosticism', a relatively new word in his day, in connection with theology is striking as is his readiness to allow a creative role to theologians. He does not want to be restricted by dogma more than is absolutely necessary. He remains faithful to the outline of Catholic doctrine but he breathes a different atmosphere to that of Liddon. He leads us to expect some fresh interpretation.

That interpretation must depend on the demands of the current intellectual climate. For Gore's understanding of those, the other two phrases in Gore's opening statement must be examined. I turn first to the material that may be gathered together under the heading, 'that knowledge of nature'.

Although Christ, the Son of God incarnate, is supernatural, Gore insists that this does not mean that he is 'unnatural', by which he means totally out of place in the world of human nature. The unbeliever thinks it does. Gore contradicts him and uses the same argument from the general to the particular, from the universal experience of the natural world to the concentrated expression of that experience which Gore finds in Christ, which he used in Lux Mundi. Both the believer and the unbeliever, he says, believe in nature. To the unbeliever it is God; to the believer it is the work of God. So

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 59

there is some common ground. Some may think that nature is a closed order, pointing to nothing beyond itself, it is true, but this can only be maintained by the unwarranted exclusion from consideration of things which certainly exist within nature. Gore lists a number of such things which rule out a purely mechanical view of nature:

..... first, the metaphysician, with his analysis of sensation and experience, discloses in mind, not merely one product of nature, but the necessary constituent of nature considered as an ordered, knowable system. Again, if Charles Darwin and the scientific world whom he represents have materially altered, yet they have not fundamentally impaired the evidences in nature of divine purpose or design, nor have they touched the argument (to many minds the irresistible argument) from the beauty of nature to the spirituality of the Being which it reveals. Once more, ethical enquiry, where it is true to its subject-matter, postulates an absolute and superhuman law of righteousness, with which men are as truly brought into relation through conscience as they are, through the eye, brought into relation to the objective reality of light; - postulates also a certainty of moral obligation, which has no meaning unless man has really a free will, however limited and conditioned its freedom. And the argument mounts one step higher. The universal mind and divine righteousness which are disclosed in nature, are inseparable from the idea of personality, for mind is only conceivable as a function, and righteousness only as an attribute, of a person; and personality is the highest form in which life is known in the universe. God then, or the spiritual principle in nature is, we believe, in some real sense, personal; transcending no doubt human personality in infinite degree, yet at least so truly personal as that man in virtue of his personality is liker to God than any lower form of life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, pp. 31-32

I have quoted him at some length here because this line of argument is basic to Gore's natural theology. It is the personal nature of man that so impresses Gore and, on the assumption that the stream cannot rise higher than the source, it points to the existence of a 'personal' God and prepares the way for a doctrine of incarnation. It also, in Gore's view, shows nature to be a progress, an advance which favours the intellectual and the spiritual. To him evolution and development are synonymous. In the evolutionary process, the movement is from the inorganic to the organic, from the animal to the rational. 'From any but the materialist point of view' this represents 'a progressive revelation of God.'<sup>1</sup>

He goes on:

Something of God is manifest in the mechanical laws of inorganic structures: something more in the growth and flexibility of vital forms of plant and animal; something more still in the reason, conscience, love and personality of man.'<sup>2</sup>

He explains further:

God has expressed in inorganic nature, His immutability, immensity, power, wisdom; in organic nature He has shown also that He is alive: in human nature He has given glimpses of His mind and character.'<sup>3</sup>

But what we see in human nature leads us to expect something more. We find a moral revelation of God in nature which generates in us 'what Bishop Butler calls "the implicit hope of somewhat further"'.<sup>4</sup> Here for the first time is explicit acknowledgement of the influence of Butler's Analogy on Gore. He expands on this:

if personality, if character, is the best image of God which nature affords, then we are in a measure prepared for the

1 Incarnation, p. 32  
2 ibid. p. 32  
3 ibid. p. 33  
4 ibid. p. 34

occurrence of an Incarnation. There is a necessary kinship between God and man, and if human qualities are not the measure of the divine, yet they are cognate to them. It becomes intelligible that God should take man's nature and reveal Himself in it, without either annihilating our manhood, or compromising His Godhead.<sup>1</sup>

The coming of Christ fulfils 'the implicit hope of somewhat further' and confirms the kinship recognised between God and man. Christ is the climax of God's revelation and, in this sense, the crown of nature. He says:

In Christ not one of these earlier revelations is abrogated ..... but they reach a completion in the fuller exposition of the divine character, the divine personality, the divine love.<sup>2</sup>

The point is taken further later in the lectures when Gore claims that since man was made in the image of God, God can express himself in manhood. He says:

So akin are God and man to one another that God can really exist under conditions of manhood without ceasing to be, and to reveal, God: and man can be taken to be the organ of Godhead without one whit ceasing to be human. Here in Christ Jesus, it is man's will, man's love, man's mind which are the instruments of Godhead, and the fulness of the Godhead which is revealing itself only seems to make these qualities more intensely human.<sup>3</sup>

The supernatural Christ, who reveals God, is supernatural only in the sense that he intensifies or advances upon what nature exhibits apart from him, while at the same time he appears in fundamental harmony with the whole and is no shock to reason.

In a second line of argument, closely related to what has just been said, Gore approaches the word 'supernatural' from a different

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 34

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 33

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 117

vantage point. Until now he has spoken of Christ becoming incarnate to confirm and intensify the revelation of God, present but partially obscured in nature. He has spoken of Christ as the crown of nature's revelation of God. Now he makes the point that what is seen as supernatural is purely relative to what at any given moment is regarded as natural. Each new stage of life must inevitably appear supernatural from the point of view of what went before it. He says:

In the same sense Christ is supernatural from the point of view of mere man, because in Him the divine Being who has always been at work, in physical nature as "the persistent energy in all things," and in human nature as the rational light of man, here assumes humanity, spirit and body, as the instrument through which to exhibit with a new completeness and in a new intensity His own personality and character.<sup>1</sup>

The use of the verb 'assumes' indicates that he has not altogether abandoned an incarnational approach here but the earlier part of the passage suggests that Christ is the next stage of human development. He speaks of 'Christus consummator' and of Christ coming to 'consummate an order',<sup>2</sup> expressions which perhaps suggest that he is anticipating the view of Christ later found in the thought of Teilhard de Chardin. Attention has been drawn to the fact that Gore makes a value-judgment on the evolutionary process and finds a purposive drive in it. Now he presents Christ as the climax of the process.

But it will not do to think of Christ merely as the climax of a regular process. No sooner has Gore begun this line of thought than he feels obliged to qualify it. He cannot depart from the stress on the need for redemption which was a feature of the Lux Mundi essay. With human nature sin has come into the world and brought with it

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 35

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 36 Christus Consummator was the title of a book published by B.F. Westcott in 1886.

Cf. the discussion in J.A. Carpenter's article "Charles Gore: After Fifty Years." Expository Times vol. 94 No. 3

the violation of true humanity. Gore says:

human nature ..... presents in great measure a scene of moral ruin, so that Christ enters not merely to consummate an order but to restore it, not to accomplish only but to redeem. He is not only "Christus consummator" but also "Christus redemptor."<sup>1</sup>

Gore insists that Christ comes to undo the ravages of sin and to restore human nature to what it was meant to be. He quickens man's atrophied moral faculty and arouses the sense of sin and the accompanying moral desire which are the prerequisites for the recognition of his naturalness. Here Gore's words sound more like an exposition of the recapitulation theory of Irenaeus than an anticipation of Teilhard de Chardin.

Gore is struggling to hold together the doctrines of creation and redemption. The unity of nature and grace is a fundamental theme of the lectures. His acceptance of the Darwinian view of creation as a continuous process makes him want to see God in the whole movement bringing the universe to its fulfilment and, in particular, man to his full stature as a child of God. But he cannot forget the Fall, whether he regards it as an actual historical event or not. He must take a serious view of sin as separating man from God and requiring a radical and divine redemptive act to cancel its effect. The issue focusses the problem of the Catholic struggling to bring traditional doctrine and evolutionary theory into harmony with each other.

Gore recognises the problem and attempts to deal with it. In popular Christianity, he knows, Christ, far from being the crown of nature, has been thought of as opposed to it, or at least, isolated from it as the Redeemer. But this, he claims, is partly because many confuse 'nature' in the sense of the ordered world with 'nature' in the sense of sinful, human nature. Christ is isolated from the latter but not the former. Christ was himself without sin but he was

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 36

also fully human. In sound theology the sequence of and the fundamental unity of nature and grace, of creation and redemption, have always been insisted upon. Paul and John both speak of Christ as Redeemer and Creator. And the Greek Fathers maintain that the incarnation gathers into one and completes the previous workings of God in human mind and conscience. Christ is the intensified presence of God who is always present in creation.

Gore recognises that some will still insist that Christ appears to violate the natural world by performing miracles. Again he explains this by the sinfulness of man. Man in his blindness fails to see God in ordinary nature and so God has to use miracles as his protest against human blindness. Gore says:

In a miracle ..... God so works, that man cannot but notice a presence which is not blind force but personal will.<sup>1</sup>

In the past, says Gore, Christ appeared as totally miraculous but the post Darwinian world can now appreciate miracles in a new light. Gore now uses his understanding of contemporary science to explain the very things which appear to cut across the scientific view.

Evolution, he says, has taught us to expect new departures in its progression. They are moments 'when a fresh level seems to be won, and a fresh sort of product begins to exhibit new phenomena'.<sup>2</sup>

Christ is just such a new departure, continuous with what went before yet transcending it in a remarkable degree, one in whom the spirit dominates the material body in a new way. So Christ's miracles appear as laws of his nature. They are no more violations of nature than he is himself. They are not 'arbitrary portents' but 'redemptive acts.' They are physical acts of renewal which point us to the invisible moral miracle of forgiveness.

Gore notices a further objection to his argument. Some will say that the innovations or new departures which happen in the

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 45

<sup>2</sup> ibid., p. 47

evolutionary process from time to time help creation on to the next stage and remain part of its existence. Christ is different. Far from becoming part of the continuing experience of the world, he leaves men looking backwards for the moment of highest attainment. The analogy between Christ and the great leaps forward in evolution is, therefore, not valid. Gore counters this by saying that great geniuses never leave worthy successors and that often we do have to look backwards for our ideals. Moral and intellectual development is not generally a gradual process. To this he adds two further points. Firstly, we have to recognise the unique greatness of Christ. If God manifests himself in the world, that manifestation is bound to remain the highest. Secondly, Gore points out that Christ is not isolated at all but rather the prototype of a new redeemed humanity. He says:

If Christ is truly unique, if by the necessities of the case there cannot be more than one incarnate Son, yet He is not isolated, He has set at work a new development, which is the movement of the redeemed humanity.<sup>1</sup>

Christ, as the consummator of human nature, is also the first fruits of a new humanity.

The meaning of Gore's phrase, "that knowledge of nature" is now clearer, though not exactly defined.

It has been suggested that the primary motive behind Gore's lectures was to bring Christology into line with evolutionary thought.<sup>2</sup> Certainly he was concerned to do this and it is part of what he means by that phrase. But it is not his sole concern and should not be over-emphasised. He recognised the difficulty in holding together the idea of Christ as consummator of nature and that of Christ the Redeemer. Perhaps as a result, this 'consummation Christology' is

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 51

<sup>2</sup> Ekstrom, R., The Theology of Charles Gore, doctoral dissertation quoted by Carpenter, J., Gore, a study in Liberal Catholic Thought, p. 176

not given extended treatment and the later lectures are concerned solely with a thoroughgoing Incarnational Christology. The influence of evolutionary theory is most strongly seen in Gore's emphasis on the progressive revelation of God and in his interpretation of the Old Testament, not in his Christology.

Dr. Eric Mascall accused Gore of trying to transpose Christology into the realm of the science of psychology. Coupling Gore with Relton he thinks that they both made unnecessary concessions to the climate of the times and says:

It may perhaps be suggested that their real weakness lay in the assumption that contemporary categories of psychology were capable of providing an adequate medium for the expression of Christological doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

It is certainly true that Gore is more interested in the personality of Jesus than Liddon could ever have been. When he speaks of Jesus revealing the personality of God, he is using the word in its modern psychological sense rather than in the technical, ontological sense which it had for Liddon and which Mascall would also want to stress. But Gore does not abandon the ontological sense. For example, he says:

Remaining unchanged in personality, He abandoned certain prerogatives of the divine mode of existence in order to assume the human.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly the word is being used in its old technical sense here. The point he makes is that Christ retains his essentially divine nature despite surrendering some divine attributes. On the other hand, he also says:

It was because He was eternally personal that He had been able to give personality to a human nature.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mascall, E., Christ, the Christian and the Church, p. 38  
<sup>2</sup> Incarnation, p. 158  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 118

There despite the qualification 'eternally', the words, 'personal' and 'personality' have a psychological sense since he is talking about the capacity in human beings for love, communication and all that is included in the meaning of relationship.

It is in the incarnation of Christ that the nature of God is revealed. Above all, through it love is shown to be the nature of God - a fact which Gore finds by no means obvious apart from Christ for if love in man argues love in God, there is much to suggest otherwise. Love often appears helpless in the face of lust, bitterness, cruelty, and selfishness. The incarnation overcomes this appearance and assures us that 'love is the motive of creation and the realisation of the purpose of love is certain goal.'<sup>1</sup>

The psychological use of the word 'personality' gives a warmth to Gore's theology which is not found in Liddon. The idea that it is the 'personalness' of God, cognate with the 'personalness' of man, that is revealed in Christ helps to link nature with grace, provides a basis of natural theology and is a very attractive part of Gore's apologetic.

Gore's acceptance of an evolutionary, though purposive, view of nature ties in closely with the third phrase, 'that historical criticism', since the whole historical process is now seen as moving, developing, progressing. He showed in Lux Mundi how this enabled him to explain the imperfections and incompleteness of the Old Testament. Less stress is given to that particular implication in the Bampton but there are hints that Gore recognises that historical relativity affects theology. The boundaries of doctrine may be fixed but Gore can see the limitations of credal and conciliar terminology and the need for theologians to express the faith afresh in each generation.

His major concern, however, lies with historical criticism as applied to Scripture with its questioning of traditional views of

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 119

revelation, the date and authorship of many books and the historicity and authenticity of some sections of the Bible. Dr. Carpenter thinks that this Biblical criticism is Gore's prime concern. He says, 'Other factors were no doubt involved, but the critical approach to Scripture was primary.'<sup>1</sup> Dr. Michael Ramsey also thinks that the Biblical motive is primary and that Gore's concern was simply 'to do justice to the evangelic history'<sup>2</sup>

I think I have now said enough to show that it is dangerous to look only for a single motive behind any aspect of Gore's work. To do so is to be unfair both to the extent of his awareness of the times in which he lived and to the complexity of his thought. It may merely reflect the critic's own prejudices or preferences. Nevertheless, of those areas of thought to which Gore addressed his apologetic, Biblical criticism was for him the most urgent. It challenged the very material which guaranteed the truth of Catholic doctrine for him.

Gore recognises the difficulties, which particularly troubled Liddon, of reconciling Old Testament criticism and the endorsement which Jesus apparently gave to the Old Testament. Gore accepts that Jesus used the Old Testament as God's word to the Jews. He claimed to fulfil the Old Testament ideal. He recognised in it a special authority and inspiration. This is often taken, he knows, to mean that Jesus binds us to the traditional views regarding the authorship and literary character of its contents. But this need not be so. Gore says that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

May have been given to a Jewish writer in any literary undertaking which the conscience of his age would have approved, as His assistance certainly was given to Jewish

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter, J., Gore - a study in Liberal Catholic thought. p. 178  
<sup>2</sup> Ramsey, A.M., Charles Gore and Anglican Theology, p. 5

agents in imperfect forms of moral action: and what the divine Spirit could inspire, Jesus, in that same Spirit, could recognise and use.<sup>1</sup>

In any case, Gore adds, Jesus could do no other than to refer to Old Testament books by their recognised names.

Gore recognises that there is one special instance of Jesus's use of the Old Testament which calls for particular attention. This is the passage in Mark 12:35-37, already discussed in Lux Mundi, in which Jesus questions the Pharisees' habit of calling the Messiah, 'Son of David'. Jesus's argument rests on the Davidic authorship of Psalm 110, which is now called in question by historical criticism. He asks how the Messiah can be David's son, if David called the Messiah, 'Lord'. When Christ himself seems to endorse Davidic authorship so firmly, can it be reverent to deny it on the basis of 'a literary probability'? Gore's reply is that Jesus may not be pleading on behalf of Jewish tradition, which would be a unique occurrence in the Gospels, but simply pressing upon the Pharisees an argument which their own habitual assumptions ought to have suggested to them - especially, and here Gore cites a recurring topic, if he habitually spoke 'under the limitations of a properly human consciousness.'<sup>2</sup> Jesus often asks men questions designed to get them to examine themselves in the light of their own principles.

The effect of Biblical criticism, Gore suggests, is that it has forced churchmen to read the Bible more carefully and exactly than they did, without the presuppositions which were so easily allowed to colour its teaching. In the past dogma has sometimes blunted intellectual rigour and moral sensitivity but Biblical scholarship has now broken through the dogmatic barrier. The result is that the historical Jesus needs fresh consideration. The Bible needs to be read with a new realism.

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 196

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 199 Cf. Lux Mundi p. 359

This insistence on taking the Bible at face value leads Gore to an uncritical acceptance of those narratives in which Jesus appears to exhibit supernatural knowledge, for example, when he saw Nathanael under the fig-tree, when he foretold the finding of the coin in the fish's mouth, when he displayed inside knowledge of the circumstances of the Samaritan woman, when he told the disciples where they could find the colt. But, says Gore, if this knowledge is supernatural, it is analogous to that of the prophets and apostles. It is not different in kind to what is available to all men who are open to the inspiration of God.

Facing up to what the Bible says also means recognising instances in which Jesus's knowledge is clearly limited. For example, he expresses surprise, asks for information, shows dread in Gethsemane and needs to exercise faith and trust because his knowledge of the future is as uncertain as any man's. Gore makes no attempt to explain away the fact that Jesus admits his ignorance of the day and hour of his final coming. The Fourth Gospel unmistakably asserts that Jesus received his message and taught it under the limitations of a properly human state. And, says Gore:

He never enlarges our stock of natural knowledge, physical or historical, out of the divine omniscience.<sup>1</sup>

Despite his intention to approach the Scripture honestly and without dogmatic preconceptions, there are moments when Gore is unwilling to take Biblical statements at face value. He will not accept a literal reading of any text which hints at sin or moral limitation in Jesus such as his refusal of the description 'Good Master' or his initial reluctance to exorcise the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman. Nevertheless he is insistent that if Jesus was the Son of God, he also lived out his life under human limitations. He must, therefore, explain how these two facts about

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 150

Jesus are to be reconciled and with this he brings us to his most creative thought and the distinctive feature of his Christology.

Gore thinks that we can perceive the unity of the two natures in Christ, the divine and the human, if we have a clear grasp of the motive and method of the incarnation. In expounding this he brings together what he has said about 'that knowledge of nature' and 'that historical criticism' in a manner which, he believes, is still consistent with 'the old faith in Him'. This is the explanatory principle by which he hopes to demonstrate that Catholic doctrine can be seen to be in harmony with the new movements of thought.

The divine intention behind the incarnation was the recovery and consummation of human nature. It included the revelation of God's mind and being and the revelation of ideal human nature. The humanity, says Gore, had to 'reflect, without refracting, the divine Being whose organ it was made.'<sup>1</sup> It was essential for Christ to retain the consciousness of the Father's being and of his essential relation to the Father, continuous with his pre-existence. But, at the same time, his humanity had to be genuine otherwise he could not really enter into man's experience. He had to be subject to growth and development and to limitation. His continuous consciousness of Godhead could not be absolute and clearly it was not so. Had it been, he could not have prayed, 'Father, if it be possible' or 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' So, says Gore, in a phrase which is now vitally important to his thought, Jesus had to be: without the exercise of certain divine prerogatives.<sup>2</sup>

It follows from the pressure of these requirements that the method of Christ's coming into the world had to be that of kenosis or self-emptying.

Gore had adumbrated something of this notion in his Lux Mundi essay. There he had said:

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 156

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 157

The Incarnation was a self-emptying of God to reveal Himself under conditions of human nature and from the human point of view.<sup>1</sup>

Gore had argued that we can distinguish between the divine truth which Christ revealed and the human nature with its relation to God, its conditions of experience, its growth in knowledge, which Christ used.

In another passage which caused some difficulties amongst his fellow High Churchmen. Gore said:

He shews no signs at all of transcending the science of His age. He does not reveal His eternity by statements as to what had happened in the past, or was to happen in the future, outside the ken of existing history. His true Godhead is shown in His attitude towards men and things about Him, in His moral and spiritual claims, in His expressed relation to God, not in any miraculous exemptions of Himself from the conditions of natural knowledge in its proper province.

Gore realised that this could be, and indeed was, taken as doubting the omniscience of Christ. Consequently he changed the passage in the fifth edition to clarify his ideas. He wrote:

He willed so to restrain the beams of deity as to observe the limits of the science of His age, and He puts himself in the same relation to its historical knowledge. Thus He does not reveal His eternity by statements as to what had happened in the past, or was to happen in the future, outside the ken of existing history. He made His Godhead gradually manifest by His attitude towards men and things about Him by His moral and spiritual claims, by His expressed relation to His Father, not by any miraculous exemptions of Himself from the conditions of natural knowledge in its own proper province.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. 359  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 360

So the Christ who was of one substance with the Father, Gore asserted, must voluntarily surrender, on becoming incarnate, some of the properties belonging to the Godhead.

In the Bampton Lectures, Gore's exposition of this thesis is heavily dependent upon the ancient hymn in the second chapter of the letter to the Philippians and his words are a paraphrase of that passage. He says:

Jesus Christ then, in His pre-existent state, was living in the permanent characteristics of the life of God. In such a life it was His right to remain. It belonged to Him. But he regarded not His prerogatives, as a man regards a prize He must clutch at. For love of us He abjured the prerogatives of equality with God. By an act of deliberate self-abnegation, He so emptied Himself as to assume the permanent characteristics of the human or servile life: He took the form of a servant. Not only so, but He was made in outward appearance like other men and was found in fashion as a man, that is, in the transitory quality of our mortality. The "form", the "likeness", the "fashion" of manhood, He took them all. Thus, remaining in unchanged personality, He abandoned certain prerogatives of the divine mode of existence in order to assume the human.<sup>1</sup>

The incarnation, says Gore:

is a coming to exist for love of us under conditions of being not natural to the Son of God . . . . . What is revealed is that for our sakes the Son of God abandoned His own prerogatives in God, in order as man to merit and win, by gradual and painful effort, a glory which in right might have been His all along, the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 157-8  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 158-9

This kenotic theory of the incarnation is now seen to be the key principle of Gore's theology and the basis of his apologetic. That the primary motivation for it stems from the questions posed by the Biblical critics is strongly suggested by the fact that while Gore speaks of Christ abandoning certain prerogatives of the divine nature, the only one explicitly mentioned is omniscience. Old Testament criticism with its denial of such things as the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy and the historicity of such stories as those of the Flood and Jonah has pointed to limitations in the knowledge of Jesus. He apparently acquiesced in the opinions of his contemporaries about these matters. If he did not explicitly endorse tradition concerning them, neither did he deny it. In the light of current critical scholarship he must be regarded as either mistaken or guilty of deliberate deception. The only other possibility is that the scholars are wrong and, unlike Liddon, Gore thinks this unlikely. So the solution lies in a kenotic theology which enables him to say that, by the deliberate laying aside of the divine property of omniscience, Jesus lived his life under the conditions of a properly human consciousness. In particular, says Gore:

The record seems to assure us that our Lord in His mortal life was not habitually living in the exercise of omniscience.<sup>1</sup>

In expounding this theory, Gore does not put himself forward as an innovator in theology. It must not be thought that there is anything novel in it. He is still a Catholic and so, characteristically, Gore searches the Early Fathers for support. He finds it, again, in Irenaeus who 'recognises an occasional "quiescence" of the Divine Word to allow of the human trials of the Incarnate.' Further, he says:

Origen speaks of a self-humiliation of the Son to a "divine folly" i.e. to a human mode of wisdom . . . . Others, as St. Cyril and St. Hilary, supply us with admirable formulas for the "self-

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 159

emptying", though without applying it to the limitation of knowledge.

But he has to add:

But the study of the Fathers on this subject forces upon one the conviction that they were not facing the question exactly as it presents itself to us.<sup>1</sup>

It is also found, Gore claims, without specifying which he has in mind, in the work of 'some of the best theologians of the Anglican Church since the Reformation.'<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, he admits:

it is true that many of the Fathers, beginning with Hilary and Augustine, and almost all mediaeval theologians, decline to allow in our Lord's humanity any such limitation of consciousness as the New Testament seems to postulate.<sup>3</sup>

They did not feel the pressures, exegetical, moral and theological, to acknowledge the limitation of consciousness in Jesus that the modern theologian feels and there were reasons for the depreciation of the humanity of Jesus in the past. Not least among them, Gore thinks, was the almost apostolic authority wrongly accorded to the fifth or sixth century writer who was believed to be Dionysius the Areopagite but was actually a person of unmistakably monophysite tendency who viewed the incarnation almost exclusively as a theophany.

Gore claims that Jesus 'never yielded himself up to fallible human reasonings'<sup>4</sup> and points out that there is a difference between ignorance and error. When it came to teaching the words of God he did so with infallible authority. In other matters he shared the limitations of his contemporaries. Their assumptions were his and he employed their methods of argument. Gore's Christology has thus released him to go much further than Liddon did in this connection.

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 267

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 163

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 163-4

<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 199

But if it is the question of the human consciousness of Jesus which leads Gore to the idea of kenosis, it also ties in closely with all that he has said about personality or what I have preferred to call 'personalness.' Personality is, Gore has said, 'the highest form in which life is known in the universe.'<sup>1</sup> It points beyond a purely mechanical Nature to a personal Creator. It is the link which unites man with God. For Gore it is the basis of his natural theology. Our experience of it, as well as leading us to posit a personal God, encourages us to expect an incarnation. Moreover, although Gore does not explicitly say so, it encourages us to expect an incarnation in which it is the personalness of God, above all attributes, which is made plain. If love is the essence of personalness, then the incarnation will be supremely an act of love and what greater act of love could God perform for his creatures than the deliberate laying aside of aspects of his divinity in order to become one with them and to enter into their mode of existence. The personalness of God makes the self-emptying of Christ the appropriate method for God to adopt in incarnation. It is the supremely personal act. Gore says:

The Incarnation involves both the self-expression, and the self-limitation of God. God can express Himself in true manhood because manhood is truly and originally made in God's image; and on the other hand, God can limit Himself by the conditions of manhood because the Godhead contains in itself eternally the prototype of human self-sacrifice and self-limitation, for God is love.<sup>2</sup>

The theory which was invoked in Lux Mundi to explain the problems thrown up by Old Testament criticism is now shown to be of much wider significance. It illuminates the style and method of revelation. God's self-restraint is the reason for the progressive nature of

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, pp. 31-2  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 161-2

revelation in the Old Testament. It explains why Christ's action in performing miracles is partially dependent on the faith of the people. We must take this divine self-limitation into account in all our expectations of Christian experience and in our evaluation of the way in which the Church operates.

Jesus, says Gore, was deliberately undogmatic and left men free to make their own response to him. He says:

He appears as giving men loop-holes for escape, and not pressing conviction too forcibly upon them.<sup>1</sup>

He agrees with Liddon that the response Jesus sought in men was not merely intellectual but involved the whole person - mind, will and affections. So, he says:

The primary motive to belief is the appeal which Jesus makes to our heart and conscience and mind. The power to believe, or to maintain belief, is the gift of God which we must earnestly solicit in prayer; it is the movement of the Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, it is nonsense to expect to be convinced by the evidences for Christianity unless we come to those evidences with the necessary moral dispositions and the willingness to obey. We can never be convinced against our will. Again the echoes of Liddon are clear. But now the argument is given a theological justification by this doctrine of God's self-limitation. To leave men free to make this response God deliberately refrains from making himself too obvious and forcing his will on men. Although Christ as the revelation of God and of perfect man is the summary authority in religion, his authority is never despotic. It is what Gore calls 'fatherly'. The end of fatherly authority, he says:

is to produce conformity of character, sympathy of mind, intelligent co-operation in action. It is never satisfied with blind obedience. For this very reason, it delights in the stimulus of half-disclosures, in directions which arrest

<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Incarnation, p. 57  
ibid. p. 79

attention and suggest enquiry, but leave much to be done in the minds of their recipients. For education in sonship, it is easily possible for information to be too full, and directions too explicit, because such fulness and explicitness may tend to suppress rather than to stimulate, and secure blind obedience rather than co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

Once again, Gore ties this closely to his kenotic theory. Very properly, he says, Jesus is reserved in his communications with men. He goes on:

it did not fall within the scope of His mission to reveal His omniscience by disclosures in the region of natural knowledge, or His eternity by information about history, otherwise inaccessible, in the past or the future. He came neither to make a display of omniscience nor to relieve us from the effort of acquiring knowledge. Moreover within the spiritual region how reserved are His communications. What is given is primarily the disclosure of God's mind and will towards men.<sup>2</sup>

The true Church, Gore thinks, will imitate this ideal of paternal authority and thus demonstrate in its life the divine self-limitation. The Church of Rome practises a very different kind of authority. Gore says:

It aims at being as explicit and complete in dogmatic instruction as possible. It rejoices simply in clear and definite answers to all questions. The "peradventure" of an Augustine as to a purgatory for the imperfect after death ..... has become a positive teaching about purgatory, full of exact information. This system leaves the individual churchman simply to practise what the Church enjoins, and so to secure his everlasting salvation.<sup>3</sup>

Further, he says:

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, pp. 177-8  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 179  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 185

The Roman system not only does not encourage personal investigation, it positively discourages it.<sup>1</sup>

In so doing, it runs contrary to the method and nature of God's revelation in Christ. On the other hand, Gore says:

the Anglican ideal of authority represents satisfactorily enough the method of our Lord, in respect of that very thing which is often imputed to it as an objection; namely that it leaves so much for the individual to do for himself, and lays so much stress on historical verification, if not by every individual, at least in society as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

Characteristically, Gore adds the comment:

I may add that this ideal represents also the method of the early Church.<sup>3</sup>

Kenosis, then, supplies Gore with a means to come to terms with Biblical criticism, the confirmation of his natural theology and a justification for his churchmanship. With some of his conclusions, particularly his criticism of Rome and his defence of Anglicanism and his assessment of the role of the Christian evidences, Liddon would have been delighted. There was even an anticipation of a kenotic Christology in Liddon. But he could not follow it through and the reason is now apparent when he is compared with Gore.

Liddon projected upon Jesus his presuppositions about divinity. For him, to be divine was to be omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He had to admit that the incarnate Christ could hardly be called omnipresent. In the one case of Jesus's ignorance of the final coming, he had to allow that he was not omniscient. But he was reluctant to go further for if Jesus divested himself of all such properties, how could he reveal God? Gore's method is different. In the preface to the Bampton, written after their delivery, he

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 185

<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 186-7

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 187

explains the principles on which he tried to work. He insists that all right theory emerges out of experience and the analysis of experience. The right method in philosophy is not to argue on the basis of a priori principles but on that of a profound and sympathetic study of the facts. Here is an empiricism which was missing in Liddon and I wonder whether he could have had Liddon in mind when he said that the false a priori method was found amongst Christian thinkers as well as among the critics of the faith. Applying his principle explicitly to Christology, he says:

In the highest subject of all, the doctrine of the being of God, abstract statements of the divine attributes - infinity, omnipotence, immutability - frequently take the place of a careful estimate of what God has actually manifested of Himself in nature and conscience and Christ.

And he adds:

The religion of the Incarnation is pre-eminently a religion of experience and fact. We know what God has revealed of Himself in the order of the world, in the conscience of men in general, by the inspired wisdom of His prophets, and in the person of Jesus Christ; and the best theology is that which is moulded, as simply and as closely as may be upon what has actually been disclosed.<sup>1</sup>

As was true of Liddon, Gore's concern in his Bampton was to defend Catholic Christology. But where Liddon was content to re-assert, Gore attempted to re-express.

When the Bampton were published in 1891, Gore was still a comparatively young man. The greater part of his writing was still to come. This later writing must be examined to discover how much further Gore thought that his re-expression of 'the old faith in Him' should and could go.

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. viii-ix

Chapter Eight - Gore's Post-Bampton Christology.

Charles Gore's literary output was considerable and ranged over a wide area of Christian thought. It varied in style and content. He wrote commentaries on the epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians and on the Johannine letters. He edited a book on Church Reform and also addressed himself to Roman Catholic claims, the nature of the Eucharist and questions of church order and unity. Social questions such as the use of money, divorce, religious education and the issues of war and peace concerned him. Wide ranging interests, heavy responsibilities and involvement in many aspects of ecclesiastical and social life were not allowed, however, to deflect him from further thinking and writing on the central issue of the doctrine of the Person of Christ and the nature of the incarnation nor did he ever forsake the effort to be an apologist.

After the Bampton Lectures, Gore wrote four more volumes dealing, wholly or in part, with Christological matters. In 1895, he published Dissertations, a volume in which he dealt more fully than in the Bampton with the subjects of the Virgin Birth and the consciousness of Jesus. Of the eight lectures in the Cathedral in Birmingham in 1907 which were published along with some sermons under the title, The New Theology and the Old Religion,<sup>1</sup> one was on the meaning of Christ's divinity. And in 1921 and 1922, there appeared the first two volumes of his major theological enterprise, The Reconstruction of Belief. The first was entitled Belief in God but, significantly, was still largely concerned with Christological issues. It made evident the fact that the doctrine of Christ was still

<sup>1</sup> The New Theology was the name given to a movement in the early years of the twentieth century of which the leaders were R.J. Campbell, the minister of the City Temple, London and, to a lesser degree, Sir Oliver Lodge. They propounded a theology which was immanentist and reductionist. It attracted considerable attention for a short time. Campbell later regretted having started it and returned to the Church of England to which he had originally belonged.

central to Gore's thought. The second volume was called Belief in Christ. I shall concentrate on these four volumes in order to discover how far the thought expressed in the Bampton was repeated, expanded or even abandoned as he grew older. Was there any fundamental change in Gore's thinking? Did the emphasis shift? Were there any new departures?

Gore's conscious aim in his earlier work had been to relate the Catholic faith to current movements of thought. Unless that aim were now to be abandoned, any change in his theology must obviously depend on whether Gore became aware of any fresh challenges or changed circumstances which demanded adjustments. In 1891 Gore identified his twin concerns as 'that knowledge of nature and that historical criticism which are the special growth of our time.'<sup>1</sup> Neither was then very clearly defined. In his later writings some of that imprecision is removed. The very fact that, in 1921, he is explicitly attempting a reconstruction of belief means that he must make a little clearer those things in the intellectual and religious situation which call for such new theological building. Gore enumerates the changes that have been significant for religion in the previous hundred years or more. Developments in natural science have been many. In 1907, Gore says:

The reason of contemporary unsettlement is not hard to find. Within the last century our ordinary intellectual categories ..... have been changed. For instance, the dominance of the conception of evolution - the conception, that is, of the universe with all its forms of life and all its mode of thought as being in ceaseless process of change - and the opening out of the almost infinite vistas of time in the process of the world's development; and more recently the breaking up of the idea of

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 18

solid matter into something elusive and unimaginable - such new modes of thought have had a profound effect upon the human imagination, accustomed till quite recently to regard the various kinds of things as stable and fixed, created a few thousand years ago to be what they have been ever since. The change wrought in the imaginations of men is as great as when they first found out, three centuries ago, that this world was not the centre of the universe, that there was no heaven over our heads and no hell under our feet.<sup>1</sup>

All these things, says Gore, have profound implications for religion.

Indeed, he thinks:

No one, in fact, can appreciate in any measure the change in our conceptions of the physical universe since Butler's day ..... without feeling that a convulsion in the religious world also must have taken place.<sup>2</sup>

Darwin's notion of natural selection, Gore recognises, seemed to overthrow that argument from design which was the basis of natural theology until the mid-nineteenth century. Appropriate adaptation has replaced design as the explanation for the world. The doctrine of a world made to the blueprint determined by an intelligent designer has given way to a doctrine of nature making itself. Darwin's theory has also called in question the Biblical doctrine of the origin and fall of man. Biology has reduced man to a phase, a bubble on the changing, flowing river of life and this has serious implications for the doctrine of the finality of Christ.

Prior to Darwin, Gore says, astronomy had made man's place in space negligible by removing the earth from the centre. He says:

Astronomy first had shattered the geocentric theory, by disclosing the world as only a minor planet revolving round

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., The New Theology and the Old Religion, pp. 4-5  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 5-6

its central sun, while our whole solar system was only one of innumerable systems which stretch through infinite space ..... till the brain reels beneath the attempt to realise them; and on this showing, man and his dwelling become a mere speck in an unimaginable infinitude of systems.<sup>1</sup>

Geology added to the indignities inflicted by astronomy. Gore says:

And geology had taken up the tale where astronomy left it, and rolled out its almost infinite ages while the world was in making, till man, a speck in space, became no more than a moment in time.<sup>2</sup>

If all this was a shock to the religious estimate of man, Gore notices that the actual effect upon the nineteenth century mind was not at all gloomy. It generated optimism rather than pessimism.

He says:

And the age - I speak of the Victorian age - was optimistic. Science and "secular" education were to be the instruments of unlimited progress and universal peace. Nothing was needed but to educate men and make them free to compete. Then universal competition would bring the best to the front, and mankind would go ahead to a glorious future. The universe was the scene of what appeared to be regarded as a necessary law of progress, of which science was the chief minister and instrument.<sup>3</sup>

Material progress, of a kind, was manifest in all directions. On this basis, Gore argues, it is no wonder that materialism and agnosticism prevailed. He says:

Darwin and Huxley might shake their heads and declare that science could utter no optimistic prophecies. But the spirit of the age was not to be quenched by their warnings. And

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 11  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 11  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 12

within a restricted region science responded magnificently to the task assigned to her.<sup>1</sup>

The Church has come to be seen as old-fashioned. It is the enemy of progress, 'an enfeebled tyrant which has unsuccessfully set itself to resist each advance of scientific discovery.'<sup>2</sup>

None of this is new but Gore now adds fresh concerns to his list. The first is the rise of the science of comparative religion. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, there was popular distaste for heathen religions. Judaism and 'Mohammedanism' were more highly regarded than others but the rest were held to be rationally beneath contempt, even by men like Macaulay. The new science, of which Max Muller was the most prominent representative in England, brought a new respect in which these religions were 'studied as examples of the various forms which had been taken in different races by the fundamental instinct of religion in man.'<sup>3</sup> The consequence has been the relativizing of all religions.

Gore says:

All religions, it would appear, were more or less inspired by the spirit of truth and more or less involved in error. The conclusion commonly suggested was that the distinctive and absolute claim made for the religion of the Bible would need to be very much toned down; and that, if there were to be a universal religion for our day or for the future, it must be one which would negate the exclusive claim of any one historical creed, but in which all alike could, in their real spirit, find themselves at home.<sup>4</sup>

The second is the revolt of the moral conscience against such elements of Christian belief as predestination, substitutionary

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 12

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 13

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 18

<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 19

atonement and hell. Gore knows that this challenge was not new when he wrote his Bampton Lectures and shows it by citing John Stuart Mill's protest:

I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures, and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go.<sup>1</sup>

Gore comments:

Of course it was largely an uninstructed protest. It did not recognize how much in the real Christian tradition was wholly on its side. Of course also it was an unbalanced protest, and ran to foolish excesses, so that it became fashionable to represent God as if He were a merely good-natured being, and the moral law had no severity and no eternal and necessary sanction. Nevertheless it must be recognised that the current tradition of orthodox Protestantism had offended, at certain points even violently, the real conscience of men, and the revolt of outraged conscience reinforced the rebellion against orthodox tradition which had its source in the new sciences.<sup>2</sup>

We may, therefore, expect eschatology to figure more prominently in Gore's writing than it has until now.

Thirdly, in 1907, there is the New Theology, which Gore characterises as:

a current mode of thought which in its teaching about God lays the greatest stress upon what is called the "divine immanence" in nature and man, which regards God, that is, not as the sovereign lord and judge, but as the universal Spirit manifesting Himself in all things and all men; which accepts most unreservedly the idea of development in nature and human history; which assimilates Christ to other men as being

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 20  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 20

essentially the same, and only the same, in nature; which proposes a less grave estimate of sin; which disparages or repudiates miracles in God's revelation of Himself.<sup>1</sup>

Fourteen years later, when Gore begins his Reconstruction of Belief, the New Theology has faded from view. Sir Oliver Lodge is now only referred to as 'a distinguished man of science.'<sup>2</sup> As a direct challenge to Catholic doctrine, it seems to have no continuing power in Gore's eyes but his reaction to it may be very significant and provide a clue to the way in which Gore's thinking moved in later life.

Fourthly, Gore is troubled by what he regards as a general discrediting of authority and an emphasis on the right of private judgment. This may seem a little strange for one who has deliberately adopted an empirical approach in his earlier work rather than merely rely on authority. He is now alarmed about a tendency towards intellectual and moral anarchy and undue subjectivism, a tendency in which preference and prejudice are allowed to outweigh the authority of fact and experience. Gore says:

the claim to an unlimited right to believe as one pleases is indisputable as a maxim of civil society; but there is an extraordinary lack of any balancing perception that morally the right of private judgment depends on the pains that have been taken to form the judgment by adequate and conscientious enquiry.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier, in the same book, he says that the present scepticism is due to:

confusion of mind, to an excessive deference to current intellectual fashions, and to the fact that a man has never thoroughly and systematically faced the problems . . . It seems to me that the right course for anyone who cannot

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., The New Theology and the Old Religion, pp. 9-10  
<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 250  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 22

accept the mere voice of authority but feels the imperative obligation to "face the arguments" and to think freely is to begin at the beginning and to see how far he can reconstruct his religious beliefs stage by stage on a secure foundation, as far as possible without any preliminary assumptions and with a resolute determination "to know the worst".<sup>1</sup>

The mention of 'foundations' and beginning 'at the beginning' affords a hint of the method which Gore will employ and the area on which he intends to concentrate.

Gore now comes to his major concern - the growth of historical criticism. History, says Gore, is seen to be developing and dynamic rather than static and various stages in literature can be distinguished. Myth is one such stage discovered amongst the Greeks, the Romans and the Babylonians. It is not surprising that it should also be found in the Old Testament. The same is true of legend and there is a tendency to heap upon great founders what Gore describes as 'all the gradually successive outcomes of their foundation'.<sup>2</sup> History is now seen to be mixed with edification. Echoing the statements he first made thirty-two years earlier, Gore says:

Thus the books of Chronicles were history written not as it was, but as in the judgment of the scribe it ought to have been and must have been.<sup>3</sup>

In analysing the results of all this change, Gore admits that:

The credit of the Bible was shaken and with it the credit of religion was fundamentally shaken.<sup>4</sup>

The work of rationalist critics like Strauss, Renan and Baur on the New Testament threatened to carry the disintegrating of confidence in Scripture further still but Gore is glad to note that:

in England certainly the work of Strauss and Renan never produced as much effect on the popular imagination as the criticism of the Old Testament. This was no doubt partly due to the fact

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 2  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 15  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 15  
<sup>4</sup> ibid. p. 16

that our great English scholars appeared to win a decisive victory over the destructive critics of the New Testament whose theories they seemed to show to be uncritical and unconvincing.<sup>1</sup>

He does not specify which English scholars he has in mind but it is not unlikely that, in 1921, a man of his churchmanship would be thinking especially of Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort.

His declared optimism that the challenge of historical criticism applied to the New Testament is being met and absorbed does not, however, mean that he supposes that the matter can now be left alone. A victory may have been gained for the orthodox confidence in Scripture over the more extreme Continental critics, but the time and attention Gore gives to trying to demonstrate that Catholic doctrine can accommodate the findings of the critics suggest both that he is not convinced that he has yet persuaded his fellow churchmen of this fact and that he is himself increasingly anxious, despite all his protestations to the contrary, that New Testament study is becoming more and more a threat to orthodoxy. In his Christological writings, the danger that Biblical criticism may undermine Catholic doctrine receives more consideration than any threat posed by the advance of the natural sciences. When, for example, he deals at length in his Dissertations with the subject of the virgin birth, the question at issue is not whether the biologist finds it improbable or even impossible to imagine that Jesus could be born in this way but whether the New Testament evidence is trustworthy. The general reliability of the Gospel narratives becomes an increasingly urgent matter for Gore.

He starts his reconstruction with an affirmation of his belief that Christianity rests on the historical events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth. He says:

Its dependence on historical events, or events declared to

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 17

have actually happened, is constantly spoken of as the disadvantage of Christianity, because it is thereby rendered constantly liable to attack by that singularly nervous and subtle and solvent influence, modern criticism. And thus many people, from Ritschl to Inge, have been anxious to disembarass Christianity from the elements which make it obnoxious to this sort of attack. But the question is whether they do not thereby disembarass it of its essential worth; or even whether anything is gained by calling the residuum Christianity. The strength of Christianity ..... lies, as seems to be indisputable, in its being rooted in a person of whom we have adequate, trustworthy knowledge, or, in other words, upon the substantial historical truth of the Gospels - not their critical infallibility, but their substantial trustworthiness.<sup>1</sup>

The kind of importance he attaches to the Gospels is made clearer still in his description of theology as simply the attempt to make sense of what he calls the facts. Theology, Gore says:

draws conclusions from facts of revelation. These facts are utterances of prophets and inspired men, but most of all the deeds and words of the incarnate Son. As truly as the facts of physical nature both justify and limit the conclusions of physical science, do these facts of revelation justify and limit the conclusions of theology; and where the facts cease to support theory, theory is, in theology as elsewhere, groundless and misleading.<sup>2</sup>

This corresponds to his declared intention to rely purely on 'the facts' in his Bampton Lectures.<sup>3</sup> It means that he is bound to give extended attention to the historical value of the New Testament and

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 174

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, p. 205

This use of the word 'facts' is exactly like the way in which it was used by R.D. Hampden. He also spoke of the 'facts of Revelation'. See the discussion in Swanston, H.F.G., Ideas of

<sup>3</sup> Order, p. 17ff.  
Incarnation, p. viii

especially of the Gospels. The attempt to support his Christology by a natural theology diminishes in importance and the emphasis falls heavily on maintaining the unity of Scripture and creed. The result is that Gore's apologetic becomes more vulnerable to the findings of critical investigation of the Scripture and runs the risk that his methodological need for theological data to support his theory may tend to prejudice his judgment about the New Testament material. This limiting of his apologetic method is not necessary since his natural theology had been empirically based. It rested firmly on the experience of the personal as the highest value in human experience. In no way could it be said to have emptied Christianity of its essential worth as he claims that the arguments of Ritschl and Inge have done.

There is now a very definite shift of emphasis in Gore's apologetic. It would not be true to say that he entirely abandons his psychological approach to natural theology with its concentration on personality, but it does not play nearly so important a part in his thinking as it did. History is now where the stress falls and it means the witness of the New Testament. It is vitally important to Gore to be able to rely upon the New Testament as the testimony of eye-witnesses and the result is that his treatment of Biblical criticism is necessarily cautious. This can be seen from his assessment of Mark and Luke.

Gore accepts Papias's description of Mark as Peter's interpreter who wrote down accurately the words and deeds of Jesus. He is sure that this is the John Mark of Acts 12 who had ample opportunity to hear the apostles describe what happened. Gore says:

He drank constantly at the fountain head of that oral tradition which lies behind all the written Gospels.<sup>1</sup>

Mark gives an irresistible impression of being a first hand - even

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 188

eyewitness - account. His assessment of Mark's presentation of Jesus is :

Here is the real Man in his real surroundings, as one saw and heard and bare witness.<sup>1</sup>

The one who saw is Peter and Mark's gospel has every claim to be regarded as good history.

The same may be said for Luke-Acts. It is certain, Gore thinks, that the author was Paul's travelling companion as tradition claims and there is no rival to Luke, the beloved physician. Gore says :

We do not claim infallibility for him in detail. But we have the best reason to claim for him that he is a careful and well-informed historian in direct access to those "who from the first were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word".<sup>2</sup>

Of Mark and Luke, Gore says :

we may take it for granted that in these two Gospels we have narratives by known men, whose opportunities for knowing what the "eye-witnesses" recorded were as good as could be desired, and whose narratives as we read them are, in a high degree, convincing ..... Nothing, I think, could resist this conviction, except a dogmatic presupposition that the supernatural things there recorded cannot actually have happened.<sup>3</sup>

In general, Gore believes that the New Testament documents are authentic and trustworthy although Hebrews is not Pauline nor the Second Letter of Peter apostolic. Of the documents as a whole, Gore says :

It is, as we shall see reason to believe, not historical criticism properly so called, but something quite different

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, p. 191

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 200

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 204

which has led to their being disputed.<sup>1</sup>

This is the kind of judgment which reminds one of Liddon but whereas with Liddon the emphasis fell upon the need to allow for the supernatural in revelation, Gore's emphasis is upon the authenticity of the historical record. He turns history upon the critics. They are not being good historians if they fail to take the historical record seriously.

Gore's treatment of the resurrection of Jesus illustrates this historical emphasis and his method of meeting criticism. For him the resurrection is simply the supreme miracle - another example of the working of the free and personal God active in the redemption of the world. Paul's account of the resurrection appearances, Gore sees as being in substantial agreement with the Gospels. While he recognises discrepancies between the Gospels over detail, he thinks the only serious one concerns whether the disciples met Jesus in Galilee or in Jerusalem. The problem disappears, says Gore, if we assume that Jesus intended the disciples to go to Jerusalem immediately but that they delayed. He concludes his examination of the New Testament record by saying:

My contention is, then, that the historical evidence for the resurrection of our Lord the third day from the dead and His subsequent manifestations of Himself to His apostles is in the highest degree cogent. Nothing can resist it, except the sort of treatment of the narratives which can render insecure almost any historical evidence.<sup>2</sup>

This is rather strongly put but it does not claim to be anything other than the judgment required by the evidence.

The New Testament grounds for belief in Christ's divinity are considered by Gore in the opening chapters of the second volume

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, pp. 212-3 Cf. Tyrrell, G., Christianity  
at the Cross-Roads, p. 19

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 271

of the Reconstruction of Belief. He begins with the faith of the first disciples and recognises that their answer to the question, 'Who do you say that I am?' underwent stages of development. They saw Jesus as the Christ, the Lord, the pre-existent Son of God and, finally, as very God himself. Yet these were men who belonged to the strong monotheistic tradition of the Jewish religion for whom the simple deification of Jesus was impossible. There was no preparation in Judaism for the belief that God himself would become incarnate. There were no tendencies strong enough to encourage the Jews to anticipate any such occurrence. That they should come to call Christ divine is remarkable and impressive.

Gore notices that three current schools of New Testament criticism have argued that orthodoxy has gone too far in developing this dogma. Liberal Protestantism, represented by Harnack, sees Jesus as the gracious teacher who proclaimed the Fatherhood of God, the infinite value of the human soul and the dignity of men as sons of God. It regards the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation as basically alien to the spirit and intention of Jesus. The apocalyptic school of Schweitzer and Loisy regards Jesus as an enthusiastic fanatic who believed himself destined to be manifested from heaven in the near future as the Christ or Son of man of the book of Enoch who will judge the earth and inaugurate a new age. But he did not see himself as divine or even as a messianic figure during his life. The belief that he was divine developed later. The school of Bousset and Kirsopp Lake presents Jesus as a human figure who preached about the kingdom and spiritual values and who died a loyal martyr. But it sees the supernatural features of the story as the invention of the primitive church under the influence of the mystery religions.

Gore's basic objection to all three schools is that they are

arbitrarily selective. Facts which do not fit the theory are ignored. Gore echoes the plea of Liddon that the Gospel presentation of Jesus must be taken seriously. Dogma, history and ethical teaching belong together. They are inextricably interwoven and cannot be separated.

So Gore begins his positive presentation of the Jesus of the Gospels by asserting that Jesus did make claims for himself. He thinks Jesus called himself the "Son of Man". Gore regards it as perverse to say that this was the invention of the early church when early Christians themselves never seem to have used this title for Jesus. Initially, he accepts, Jesus did not intend it in a Messianic sense. Gore is content to say:

He meant His hearers to think of Him as "the man" in some specially representative sense.<sup>1</sup>

Later, Jesus may have extended it into something more like the sense in which it is used in the book of Enoch - God's vice-gerent to be manifested in judgment at the end of the world. More strongly, Gore goes on to assert that:

Jesus was believed by Himself and by John to have been divinely certified at his baptism as the Son of God, and the temptation of Jesus involved His consciousness that He was so.<sup>2</sup>

But Gore qualifies that statement by saying that those who believed the testimony of Jesus and John believed him to be "in some sense, the Son of God".<sup>3</sup> He thinks they probably identified the phrase with "the Christ" and it may be that it was not fully understood as indicating his Godhead until Paul. Gore insists that this does not mean that it had only this lesser sense for Jesus himself. It is not only John who records Jesus making strong assertions of his status.

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 47

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 54

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 55

The Synoptics do so too. Matthew has Jesus saying, 'No one knows the Son but the Father and no one knows the Father but the Son.' This and similar passages in the Synoptics<sup>1</sup> seem to him to be little different from the Johannine discourses in import.

Gore does not doubt that Jesus saw himself as both Suffering Servant and Messiah and that it was he who identified both titles with the Son of Man. He concludes this section of his argument by saying:

We can conceive nothing further from the method of Jesus than that He should have startled and shocked their consciences by proclaiming Himself as God. But He had done something which in the long run would make any other estimate of Him hardly possible.<sup>2</sup>

Again Gore returns to a familiar argument when he says that what really impressed the disciples was not 'anything that He taught them, whether about Himself or about God or about the kingdom of God.' It lay instead, says Gore:

in "The Man" Himself - in the impression of overwhelming authority, certainly supernatural and "of God", resident in Him.<sup>3</sup>

Liddon's tendency to jump too quickly to the conclusion that Christ is divine is found also here in Gore. There is a considerable gap between authority and divinity. When Gore produces his evidence for making the jump, he sounds exactly like Liddon. He thinks Jesus spoke as being infallible. He was not afraid to admit ignorance but whatever he taught, he taught as if it were certainly true. He betrayed no sense of his own sinfulness and his claim on men was exclusive. What is more he spoke at times as if he were the final judge of men.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 11:27; 24:36; Mark 13:32; Luke 10:22.

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 68

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 49

Gore's conviction is that whatever the disciples were moved to call Him:

Beyond all possibility of question, and seemingly by His own deliberate intention, Jesus, so far as they yielded their faith to Him, was taking the place of God, or in the modern phrase gaining "the values of God", for their souls.<sup>1</sup>

This passage plainly shows the link in Gore's mind between the personality of Jesus and the person of Christ. The psychological impact which Jesus made upon his disciples led them to give him "the values of God" and ultimately to regard him as God himself incarnate. The base for the doctrine of Christ's divinity is found in the historical person. The events of his life and 'The Man Himself' are, therefore, of enormous interest and importance.

Gore says that contemporary interest in the life of Jesus is considerable. The tendency though is to emphasise his manhood at the expense of his divinity. Gore says:

All our modern Lives of Christ, and books about Christ, give the fullest interpretation to His manhood and call attention to the overwhelming evidence which the Gospels give us of the human spirit - reason and will and feeling - in Jesus. Present-day enthusiasm is all for the full manhood. The question with us is only whether this reality of His manhood is consistent with personal Godhead.<sup>2</sup>

Gore does not wish to be outdone by anyone in the degree of interest he shows in the human Jesus and his enthusiasm for understanding the historical figure but he is quite sure that the modern tendency is too one-sided and unbalanced. It does not reflect the Gospel picture accurately. To demonstrate the point he turns to the Fourth Gospel, currently regarded by some as unhistorical, the later reflection

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, pp. 52-3  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 211

of a mature Christian rather than an eye-witness account. Gore believes it is the work of John the disciple and that critics suffer from a prejudice against the apostolic authorship of the Gospel which overlooks the firm impression of a first-hand witness which the Gospel makes. In any case, Gore argues, whoever the author is, the critic still has to reckon with the Fourth Gospel 'both as to its incidents and its teaching, as making an historical claim which cannot be ignored.'<sup>1</sup> Here, perhaps more obviously than anywhere else, dogma, history and ethical teaching belong together and the entire historical record must be taken seriously and honestly without prejudice. Not unexpectedly, Gore finds the insistence on the divinity of Christ to be very strong in this Gospel. The fourth evangelist, he says:

believed that Christ, the Son of Man, was the eternal Son of God, who is very God. He identifies Him with Jehovah of the Old Testament, for he speaks of Isaiah, as having seen His (Christ's) "glory" when, in his vision in the temple, he saw the form of Jehovah sitting upon His throne; and he represents the penitent Thomas as calling the risen Jesus "my Lord and my God".<sup>2</sup>

John, says Gore:

plainly believes the eternal Son of God to have come or been sent into the world by God as man - the Son of Man. But there does not seem to me to be any trace of a belief in a pre-existent man or Son of Man. It was the pre-existent Son of God who was sent into the world as Son of Man and who after His death and resurrection carried that manhood into heaven.<sup>3</sup>

The historical evidence for the divinity of Jesus, according to Gore, is persuasive, as it is found in the Gospel account of the

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 110  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. pp. 114-5  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 115

ministry of Jesus. Two events in the life of Jesus, however, stand out. They guarantee the historical argument and call for special consideration. They are the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ. To his insistence on the historical character of the latter can now be added his equal certainty about the former.

Gore acknowledges that Mark, John and Paul are all silent about the virgin birth. His explanation for this is that the original function of the apostles was to be witnesses to Christ. For this it would have been improper to have gone beyond what they themselves had seen in the public ministry of Jesus. Paul was not an eye-witness and, in fact, Gore thinks 'his function was that of the theologian rather than that of the witness.'<sup>1</sup> But it is evident from his epistles that Paul's preaching often contained 'a considerable element of evangelical narrative' and it is not inconceivable that at times this included the account of the miraculous birth of Jesus. More positively, Gore says:

What we can maintain, with great boldness, is that St. Paul's conception of the "second Adam" postulates His miraculous birth. "Born of a woman," "born of the seed of David according to the flesh", He was yet "from heaven": born of a woman, He was yet a new head of the race, sinless, free from Adam's sin; a new starting-point for humanity. Now considering how strongly St. Paul expresses the idea of the solidarity of man by natural descent, and the consequent implication of the whole human race in Adam's fall, his belief in the sinless Second Adam seems to me to postulate the fact of His Virgin Birth; the fact, that is, that He was born in such a way that His birth was a new creative act of God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, p. 10  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 11

Gore is also sure that, while John does not speak of the Virgin Birth, he was aware of it. For instance, John tells us that Mary clearly recognised her son as a person capable of doing miracles at the wedding in Cana and Gore thinks the most natural explanation for this is that Mary knew of his miraculous origin.

The major sources of evidence are the accounts of the Virgin Birth in Matthew and Luke. Gore acknowledges that they are different and even, in places, incompatible. The reason, he thinks, is that they were dependent on different source-documents. He repeats the explanation employed in his Bampton Lectures<sup>1</sup> that while Luke is written from Mary's standpoint, Matthew's is written from Joseph's.

Gore does not pretend that he can answer every question that may be asked about the Virgin Birth. But he expresses his confidence that the tradition concerning it goes back a very long way indeed. He says:

in the creed-like formulas of the churches the statement of the Virgin Birth had its place from so early a date and along so many different lines of ascent as to force upon us the conclusion that already before the death of the last apostles the Virgin Birth of Christ must have been among the rudiments of the faith in which every Christian was initiated.<sup>2</sup>

The historical evidence for the virgin-birth is, therefore, strong but Gore now changes the line of argument to one which Liddon employed. He says:

To clinch the historical evidence for our Lord's virgin birth there is needed the sense, that being what He was, His human birth could hardly have been otherwise than is implied in the virginity of His mother.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 78  
<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, p. 42  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p.64

Gore asks the sort of questions Liddon would have asked. Could the incarnation of the Son of God possibly have taken place by the ordinary process of generation? Would this not involve the creation of a new human person rather than the enfleshing of the Son of God without change of person? In a sentence which recalls the 'evolution - new departure' language of the early Bampton, <sup>1</sup> Gore says:

Jesus Christ was a new departure in human life.<sup>2</sup>

More than that, Gore calls him the sinless Second Adam, 'Himself the New Man, He can make all men new.'<sup>3</sup> And Gore is sure that this new moral creation requires a new physical creative act.

This line of argument is repeated in two volumes of the Reconstruction of Belief. Gore says:

I must confess that I cannot imagine how the birth of the really sinless man could have occurred without some physical miracle, so sure do I feel that sin has somewhat affected the physical stock; and I once drew from Huxley the admission that if he believed - what he did not - that Jesus was strictly sinless, he would suppose that that involved as well a physical as a moral miracle. Nor can I conceive how the birth in the flesh of the divine person of the Son could have been mediated by purely natural means.<sup>4</sup>

Again he says:

I cannot but repeat here that what St. John suggests and the Church has emphasised does appear to me to hold good viz. that anyone who grasps the contrast between the sinless Christ and the sinful world ..... - and who accepts Christ as the Second Adam, the new creation in which our manhood is renewed, so far from finding a difficulty in the Virgin Birth will welcome it as in the highest degree acceptable and congruous in His case,

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 47  
<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, p. 65  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 66  
<sup>4</sup> Gore, C., Belief in God, pp. 281-2

if not rationally necessary.<sup>1</sup>

It might be said that Gore is showing his own dogmatic presuppositions here and theological necessity is influencing his reading of the New Testament. But he is aware of the danger. He says:

I am not laying all the stress on this sort of logic. I would, here and elsewhere, keep a priori arguments in their place. But this logic seems to me at least strong enough to clinch the historical argument or even to condition the historical discussion by an antecedent expectation that the birth of the Second Adam must have been physically as well as morally miraculous.<sup>2</sup>

Had he pursued the a priori argument critics would have been able to use his own argument against him, namely, that he was relying on prejudice rather than history in making his judgments. But the a priori case is incidental to Gore's argument. His real contention is that the virgin birth is a major 'fact' of the life of Jesus, supported by evidence from the Gospels which Gore deems persuasive, and that it clinches that historical evidence which leads to the conclusion that humanity and divinity are united in Jesus Christ.

But if the history reveals the fact of that union, the study of the history must also teach us something of the manner and method of the union. Gore has spoken of the 'moral miracle' which is entailed in God becoming man. There are two sides to that miracle. The first is in the sinlessness of the human Jesus. The second is in the fact that by becoming incarnate God himself becomes subject to temptation and even susceptible to sin. Otherwise sinlessness means nothing. Gore firmly rejects any suggestion that Jesus did commit sin. He says:

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, pp. 278-9

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, pp. 66-7

It is, of course, sometimes pleaded that we have no right to claim for our Lord moral perfection in the fullest sense - that in fact He disclaimed such goodness when He said to the young man "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." But it is, I think, certainly a mistake so to interpret His words. In the Gospels generally our Lord seems to present Himself to His disciples as an infallible guide and teacher and pattern.

Gore takes this so far as almost to spoil his own argument for the genuine humanity of Jesus when he says:

There is not in all our Lord's words (other than the words in question) the slightest sign of the consciousness of sin or of the fear of going wrong.<sup>1</sup>

The last phrase comes close to ruling out the reality of Jesus's temptation which is certainly not what Gore intends but the words in parenthesis save the sentence. The fact that Jesus experienced temptation and could have sinned reveals the extent to which he lived under truly human conditions.

The apparent limitations in Jesus's knowledge do the same. Human experiences are attributed to Jesus which are inconsistent with practical omniscience. Gore says:

Thus He expresses surprise at the conduct of His parents, and the unbelief of men, and the barrenness of the fig-tree and the slowness of the disciples' faith. He expresses surprise on many occasions, and therefore, we must believe, really felt it; and on other occasions he asks for information and receives it, as when He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration and was presented with the child which the disciples had failed to cure.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 186  
<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, pp. 81-2

Gore thinks that Jesus's prayers suggest that the future is not clear to him as also does the Cry of Dereliction from the Cross. As well as apparently being ignorant of some things, Jesus never enlarges our stock of natural knowledge, physical or historical, out of the divine omniscience. Gore says:

Thus there is no sign whatever that He transcended the knowledge of natural things common to His Palestinian contemporaries.<sup>1</sup>

The 'facts', despite some which suggest supernatural knowledge, require the conclusion that Jesus, sometimes at least, acted under the limiting conditions of human life. Gore's explanation is that the eternal Son in becoming incarnate abandoned those 'divine prerogatives inconsistent with a proper human experience.'<sup>2</sup> But the abandoning of these properties was not absolute. Gore asks:

But are we to posit this abandonment as absolute? Did the Son actually cease to mediate the procession of the Holy Ghost in divine being and to uphold the worlds in being? Such a position, I repeat, could not be maintained unless the divine revelation positively and expressly forced it upon us. But it does not; on the contrary there is reason to believe that the apostolic writers contemplated the continuance of the divine and cosmic functions through the Incarnation ..... We must hold to the reality of the humiliation, and, if we can see no further, we must be content to hold that, even in a way we cannot conceive, this state of limitation within the sphere of the humanity must have been compatible with the exercise in another sphere, by the same divine person, of the fulness of divine power.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 188  
<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, p. 204  
<sup>3</sup> ibid. pp. 206-7

Nothing here, Gore claims, is contrary to the decisions of the ecumenical councils; indeed, it is nearer to them than other theories.

Gore believes that the personal life of the Word was lived from two centres, the divine and the human. He acknowledges that this is difficult to conceive. He asks:

Especially in regard to knowledge, does it mean anything to suggest that He, the same eternal Son, should in one sphere not know what in another, and that His own proper sphere, He essentially knows?<sup>1</sup>

He begins his answer by reminding his readers that difficulty in conceiving is not the same as irrationality. Then he says that sympathy or love is the keynote of the incarnation. To sympathise is to put oneself in another's place. God's sympathetic entrance into human life may well have involved, Gore says:

a real "forgetting" or abandoning within the human sphere of His own divine point of view and mode of consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

Gore argues that the gap between divine and human consciousness must be immense. God respects man. He allows him real, if limited, freedom. But man's freedom limits God's power and foreknowledge. God's method in creation is, therefore, that of self-restraint. Why should not the same be true in incarnation? Gore says:

the method of God in history, like the method of God in nature, is to an astonishing degree self-restraining, gradual, we are almost driven to say, tentative. And all this line of thought - all this way of conceiving of God's self-restraining power and wisdom - at least prepares our mind for that supreme act of respect and love for his creatures by which the Son of God took into Himself human nature to redeem it, and in taking

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, pp. 215-6  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 219

it limited both His power and His knowledge so that He could verily live through all the stages of a perfectly human experience and restore our nature from within by a contact so gentle that it gave life to every faculty without paralyzing or destroying any.<sup>1</sup>

The theory of kenosis is the explanatory principle for Gore in interpreting the incarnation. It is also a chief aid in his apologetic. It helps him to come to terms with historical criticism and with other challenges. One of his concerns was the 'revolt of the moral conscience' against traditional eschatological teaching. A major part of the debate about the limitations of Jesus's knowledge centred around this very matter. He declared himself ignorant of the day and hour of the end of the world. The kenosis theory has no difficulty in explaining his ignorance since knowledge of the last things is precisely the sort of divine prerogative which would have rendered Christ's humanity unreal. The fact that Christ's knowledge on this was limited should help men to accept their own ignorance and not expect to know too much. Gore acknowledges the gruesome nature of much of the language and art concerning hell. He thinks that the indiscriminate condemnation to hell of unbaptized babies, the non-Christian world, the non-elect and the heretical, which some Christians have assumed in the past, has discredited the doctrine of judgment. But he cannot overlook the fact that some teaching about hell is clearly found in the New Testament. He is relieved to find Paul talking of 'eternal destruction' at times rather than 'eternal punishment' but the fact of judgment as an element in Christian teaching he finds inescapable.<sup>2</sup> Gore says:

It seems to me that any believer in the God of the prophets and of our Lord must believe with them in a Day of God, as bringing

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Dissertations, p. 224

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., The Holy Spirit and the Church, pp. 306ff

the present age, or human history, to its climax. God, for all His long tolerance of human wilfulness and arrogance, must one day come into His own in His whole creation and everything must be seen in its true light as what it is really worth. That is the "day of judgment" in its essence. And no believer in Christ can doubt that this final disclosure of things as they really are will be the manifested victory of Christ. His judgment on men and things will be shown to be the final judgment and the judgment of God.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus taught the fact of judgment. The sinless one will confront sin and reveal it for what it is. More than this cannot be said. Both to try to be too precise in doctrines and to be angry because doctrinal expression revolts sensitivities or because of ignorance are equally unreasonable. Men have to accept their ignorance of the final character of divinity for in the revelation in Christ God also restrained himself. Gore says:

The real conviction must come from the study of the positive picture of the Gospels. It must be the gradually growing assurance that this picture is not one which can be due to human invention or imagination. It must overwhelm us with the sense of its truth, and with the sense that only the doctrine of the Incarnation can really interpret it or account for it.<sup>2</sup>

That doctrine was formulated in the decisions of the ecumenical councils of the Church. It is claimed that their purpose and achievement was to defend the doctrine of the Bible and the tradition of the Church against the invasions of destructive interpretations of Christ. Gore agrees with these judgments but asks whether those decisions did not add unnecessary encumbrances to the faith. Does the Chalcedonian definition confuse the picture of Christ with its language about two natures? Does it tie the Christian religion too firmly to a temporary phase in philosophy with its use of terms like

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, pp. 149-50  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 194

'substance', 'person' and 'nature'? Gore's answer is a qualified 'No' and the qualification has more to do with the practical use to which the Definition has been put than with its content. It has been treated as a positive source of information instead of a warning against misleading lines of development.<sup>1</sup> He says:

I do not then think that the Chalcedonian formula ..... requires revision in itself; but if we would justify it, we must recognise very frankly that the purpose of the dogma was negative ..... and we must insist that for our positive conception of the person of Jesus we need constantly to study with unembarrassed eyes the picture in the Gospels and the doctrine of the Epistles.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of all this, Gore makes a very significant change in his argument in one passage of the Reconstruction of Belief. Early in the Bampton Lectures Gore declared his readiness to agree with Liddon that the choices regarding Christ's status could be presented in the form of the dilemma, 'aut Deus aut homo non bonus.'<sup>3</sup> In 1907 he again affirmed the dilemma when he asked:

Is not the old dilemma true: either He was God or He was not a good man?<sup>4</sup>

Again, early in Belief in Christ, he says:

There is an old saying of unknown origin - either Jesus Christ was God or He was not a good man - which critics sometimes treat with great derision. I do not think it can be so derided.

He goes on to say:

There is more in it than they seem to recognise ..... Did He not exhibit the sort of exclusive claim which suggests nothing

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Incarnation, pp. 106 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 228

<sup>3</sup> Incarnation, p. 16

<sup>4</sup> Gore, C., The New Theology and the Old Religion, p. 106

else but the "jealousy" of God? And is it not the supreme sin of pride or arrogance for any man, even a commissioned prophet, to allow himself to assume this exclusive position? .....

The implication of infallible, exclusive authority which seems to inhere in the words and tone of Jesus does seem to me to express, if not the jealousy of God, then some such quality as lies at the heart of all spiritual tyranny and false sacerdotalism?<sup>1</sup>

This dilemma has been a thread running through all the writings of both Liddon and Gore. It is a cornerstone of their theology and apologetic.

At a later point in the same book, Belief in Christ, Gore poses a very different dilemma. He says:

I do not think there is any doubt that we have in our day to choose ultimately between the incarnation doctrine of St. Paul and St. John and the Creeds and, on the other hand, the conception of Christ as the best, or one of the best, and most inspired of men, who left to men the heritage of the grandest teaching about the fatherhood of God, and the possibilities of humanity, and the purest example of love and sacrifice, and who, after His death, was deified only in the imagination of His disciples.<sup>2</sup>

At first sight this would appear to be inconsistent with the old dilemma. The possibility that Jesus could be seen as the best of men is precisely what that denied. If his own self-assertion was mistaken Jesus could not be good since he would be guilty of gross insincerity and pride. But Gore is not denying the continuing validity of that argument. Given the assumption that the New Testament is an accurate and reliable account of the life and teaching of Jesus that dilemma still stands. What Gore is saying is that that assumption is no longer accepted by all. An increasing

<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 53  
ibid. p. 172

number of scholars is questioning the whole nature of the New Testament. They allow to the later Church a creative role in the composition of the New Testament and in the development of Christology and in so doing they threaten Catholic doctrine. They are selective in their acceptance of what Gore calls 'the facts of Revelation.' The examination of Gore's work in this later period has shown him opposing those who wanted to reduce or even to eliminate the supernatural and dogmatic elements in the Gospel account of Christ and so break up the unity of dogma, history and ethical teaching. He had been defending the old dilemma. The admission of another alternative suggests that the possibility of a human Christ, raised to deity, either at baptism or resurrection, by God or later in the imagination of men is one which Gore was increasingly ready to consider.

Writing about current works of Christology, Gore said:

Present-day enthusiasm is all for the full manhood. The question with us is only whether this reality of His manhood is consistent with personal Godhead.<sup>1</sup>

The same question might be asked in another form, Could Gore reconcile the tradition represented by Liddon with his care for his contemporaries and their awareness of the historical and psychological disciplines or must he settle for one and surrender the other? It is the question with which this study began. It is now possible to offer an answer.

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 211

Chapter Nine - Conclusions

Gore was Liddon's protégé, the man to whom he looked as his natural successor in the role of guardian of Catholic doctrine. Liddon's enthusiasm for the appointment of Gore as the first Principal Librarian of Pusey House showed the extent to which he believed that Gore stood within the same tradition as himself, owing allegiance to Pusey. Gore, for his part, thought that he fulfilled Liddon's expectations and that he was faithful to the orthodox faith. Yet Liddon was profoundly disappointed and hurt by what he saw as a shift in Gore's thought. He died convinced that Gore had betrayed Catholic doctrine by surrendering to the pressures of contemporary criticism. That judgment must now be examined.

Liddon's primary concern was with the preservation of the unchanging and eternal truths of the Christian faith. When Christ became incarnate, Liddon said:

He brought from heaven a Body of Truth, containing whatever we now know in respect of questions which must always possess the deepest interest for the human soul. He told us all that is to be apprehended here concerning life and death, and God and eternity. Thus the essential faith of Christendom is fixed.<sup>1</sup>

That 'essential faith' must be defended against the attacks of the 'liberals' and 'rationalists'. Liddon could allow no compromise. In the end, what was important in new thought would be seen to be in harmony with orthodox doctrine. Everything else would be shown up as the passing fancy it really was.

In contrast, Prestige rightly says of Gore:

The central appeal of Catholics was directed to what was constant and unchanging in the Christian religion. But in their expression of this permanent body of truth, he bade them adjust

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford,  
p. 32

themselves to the various needs of man intellectual, moral and rational, in each successive age.<sup>1</sup>

Gore took a profounder view of man's changing understanding of himself and of his world and thought that the 'old Faith' could not fail to be affected by it. At the very least, the language in which the old orthodoxies had been dressed by the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries would have to undergo some change. The Church needed to be freed from the distortions which later theology, especially mediaeval theology, had employed as the means of safeguarding patristic doctrine. Gore was more strongly insistent than Liddon that new truth had to be taken seriously wherever it came from and was convinced, or claimed to be, that since the source of it all was the same Holy Spirit, there was nothing to be feared from it. He wanted to claim for himself and to allow to others the freedom to follow truth wherever it led him. He said:

I have, ever since I was an undergraduate, been certain that I must be in the true sense a free thinker.<sup>2</sup>

His biographer says:

In this spirit of free enquiry unfettered either by the pre-emptions of authority or by the a priori preconceptions of anti-supernaturalists, he sought to approach and review the whole subject of the existence and dispensation of God.<sup>3</sup>

Gore claimed that this was the only way in which a scholar could do his work. He said:

The vocation of a scholar requires that he should think freely. It is mocking him to tell him to investigate and form judgments of truth, and at the same time to dictate to him what those judgments are to be. He must be free to go

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 499

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 463

<sup>3</sup> ibid. pp. 463-4

where the argument, duly weighed, leads him.<sup>1</sup>

Gore's theology of the general working of the Holy Spirit in the world would have led him to say these things at any time. The urgency was made greater at this moment because of his realisation of the enormous intellectual challenges that were facing Christianity.

Gore regards this situation as unprecedented. The theologians who shaped Christian doctrine in the past had nothing like this to contend with. He says:

But neither the Fathers nor the Schoolmen had to face an intellectual world in which empirical science and historical criticism had become the dominant factors ..... And to bring the faith to be at home in our modern intellectual world may be a harder task even than that set to Fathers and Schoolmen. Nevertheless, it is the task that is set us, if we believe the faith to be the truth. And there is no way to effect a new synthesis of faith and knowledge except by thought and examination which are both Christian and free ..... Half the attendants at our churches today are unfeebled in the spiritual life because they entertain a suspicion that what they hear from the pulpit is not true and will not bear sifting. Nothing will remove this pressing uneasiness except the widely spread conviction that the scholars of the Church are facing the light and the Church is eager to learn from them. We must refuse, then, any conception of faith such as would restrict or lay in fetters the free thought of its scholars.<sup>2</sup>

The difference in tone and approach between Liddon and Gore here is marked. Liddon's alarm at the state of the intellectual climate was always expressed more passionately and the hostility

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., The Holy Spirit and the Church, p. 188  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 191

of the world towards the Christian faith was assumed. For example, he had said:

There are forces abroad in the world of thought which, if they could be viewed apart from all that counteracts them, might well make a Christian fear for the future of humanity. .... Never since the first ages of the Gospel was fundamental Christian truth denied and denounced so largely, and with such passionate animosity, as is the case at this moment in each of the most civilised nations of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Where Liddon's instinct is to resist, Gore's is to listen and to consider. Gore thought it useless for the Church to attempt to deny new movements of thought in the name of dogma. He said:

And just as it was fatal for the Church to claim the power to lay a restraining hand on the freedom of astronomical science, because its results were disturbing to those who had been taught to believe that all the statements of the Bible on all sorts of subjects were infallibly true, so it is fatal for the Church to claim to restrict the sphere of historical criticism. It must be applied to the history and documents of the Bible, Old Testament and New, as to all the documents which claim to be human history and human literature. What we have a right to demand is that it shall be a really historical criticism, and not inspired by a dogmatic belief, which has no claim to call itself historical science, that there can have been no such events as are called supernatural.<sup>2</sup>

This enthusiasm for free enquiry and openness to new truth is made possible for Gore by the fact that he shares Liddon's confidence that, when all has been said and done, the basic truth of the Christian faith will remain untouched. In the preface to Lux Mundi

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 506

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., The Holy Spirit and the Church, pp. 266-7

he expressed his conviction that the great changes demanded by new thought would involve only 'the outlying departments of theology'.<sup>1</sup> In 1926, he says:

I do not doubt that traditional theology needs a great deal of revision in the light of modern knowledge - that, for example, the idea of the Bible as being on all subjects as 'the infallible book', and the idea that the stories in Genesis of the creation and fall of man are historical records, deeply as those ideas have entered into theology have to be abandoned or very radically modified, together with a large part of the heritage of Calvinism; but also I cannot doubt that the extent of the necessary abandonments is being very grossly exaggerated and that there is a royal highway, or via media, between what the Americans call fundamentalism, or, as I should prefer to call it, blind conservatism on the one side and radical modernism on the other.<sup>2</sup>

Such confidence is natural in someone who earnestly believes, as both Liddon and Gore did, that God the Holy Spirit is the source of all truth. It tended with Liddon to generate a facile optimism about the durability of Catholic doctrine together with a reluctance to take contemporary intellectual movements seriously even though he denounced some of them harshly. In Gore, on the other hand, it produced a willingness to listen, to explore new ideas and to make some adjustment, where necessary and possible, in Catholic formulation of doctrine.

Gore shows a much greater appreciation of humanity than Liddon possessed. Liddon sometimes spoke of it quite derogatively. In one of his early sermons he talks of 'the dark prison-house of the human spirit.'<sup>3</sup> For him, humanity is nothing without God. Gloomily he says that it cannot even know love without Christ. Gore, on the other

<sup>1</sup> Lux Mundi, p. viii

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Can We Then Believe? p. 11

<sup>3</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, p. 203

hand, finds that the love he meets in humanity offers a point of contact with love in God. The 'personality' of man is cognate with the 'personality' of God, using the word 'personality' in its psychological sense. Personality as the highest form of life we experience defies all purely mechanistic explanations of the universe and, on the principle that the stream cannot rise higher than its source, offers a pointer to a personal God. Further, it stimulates in men the anticipation of an incarnation or makes the incarnation an entirely appropriate way for a personal God to reveal himself to men and act for their redemption.

When Liddon talked of Christ's humanity, he insisted that it was impersonal. Christ became not a man but man, the Second Adam. Gore repudiates the notion of impersonal humanity. He says:

Also we should deprecate the unguarded use of a phrase which became current among theologians - we mean the phrase which describes Christ's manhood as "impersonal". All that this really means is that the manhood had no separate personality. There was only one person - the eternal Word - who exists eternally in God, who was active in the whole universe, and who at last was incarnate in Jesus Christ. But when He took the manhood, complete in all human faculties and activities, He became to it the centre of personality. He made it personal. Thus the humanity of Jesus in the Gospels has nothing of abstract universality about it. It is no mere veil of the Godhead. It is, indeed, intensely individual.<sup>1</sup>

This passage is a good example of the confused way in which Gore uses the word 'person' and its cognates but also a clear demonstration of a concern to remove the unreality which had often surrounded the humanity of Christ in Catholic thought.

Both psychology and biology seem to have encouraged Gore's

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, pp. 227-8

most speculative and imaginative thought. He so revises the orthodox presentation of Christ as to suggest that his divinity was revealed to men, not through the display of those things traditionally regarded as the essence of divinity, such as omnipotence and omniscience, but through the intensification in his incarnation of what are valued as the most truly human qualities, namely, love, self-sacrifice, generosity and grace. What greater manifestation of love could there be than the voluntary relinquishing of some of the divine properties for the sake of man? So Gore presents a Christ who is the crown of the revelation of God in human nature. He is also the consummator of nature in the sense that in his life human nature is raised to its ideal, its perfect exemplification.

Gore, then, can employ concepts drawn from modern science in order to build a natural theology and also to expound a revised theology.

But it was with historical criticism, much more than science, that Gore was concerned and it is here that the difference of outlook between the two men is most apparent. This can be seen in relation to the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. They agreed that the Church had never defined what it meant by inspiration. Liddon came to the Bible with firm a priori preconceptions. For him the Bible was a unity of inspiration and inspiration necessarily involves infallibility. His sermon on 'The Blessing of Jael' was considered in which he said:

If Deborah's blessing on Jael is uninspired, it is hard to claim inspiration for any part of her song; and if Deborah's song is not inspired, it would be difficult to say what portions of the Book of Judges are.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon, H.P., Sermons on Old Testament Subjects, pp. 86-87

Liddon is bound by a view of inspiration as verbal and he must find that inspiration throughout the Bible. Unless every part of Scripture is inspired, he finds it hard to know how any can be. Inspiration of this kind is easily linked with a need for infallibility. Indeed, it depends upon it. Liddon does not deny, even with this strong view of inspiration, that there can be some progression of thought in the Bible. Each part of Scripture must be, as he says, 'in correspondence with the rest.'<sup>1</sup> But this is not to say that the revelation of God cannot be more immediate and thoroughgoing in one part than in another. He says:

Different degrees of light do not imply any intrinsic contrariety . . . . . The unity of consciousness in a human life is not forfeited by growth of knowledge or by difference of circumstances or by variety of experience.<sup>2</sup>

It would, therefore, be wrong to suggest that the crudity of his remarks about Deborah's song represents the whole truth about him. There are 'different degrees of light' in Liddon's writing too and he has his more subtle moments. But he did not always carry through this kind of thinking and it was characteristic of him to suggest that one chink in the armour of inspiration would be enough to destroy the whole.

Gore could also use phrases like 'unity of inspiration' but to him they mean something quite different. The inspiration he has in mind is not so much the inspiration of the text itself as of the writer. It consists in his ability to discern and trace for his readers the hand of God in the affairs of the Israelite people. The Bible reveals history as the unfolding of God's purposes. In that process a greater degree of development can be recognised, and would be expected, than Liddon can allow. Gore can accommodate

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, pp. 46-7  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 48

the possibility of mistakes and blind alleys where Liddon cannot. So Gore can cope with inaccuracies in history or primitive 'science' and need not even be too worried about the moral enormities of parts of the Old Testament. He would not find it necessary to argue for the specific inspiration of the blessing of Jael. He is not so vulnerable to the Old Testament critic.

For him the doctrine of inspiration does not necessarily imply the infallibility of the author or the text and so he can enjoy much greater flexibility. He finds the inspiration of Scripture in its witness to the work of God in the world and not in the literal accuracy of every statement. And the vital thing about Gore's theory of inspiration is that it is shaped by his critical study of the Scripture. He does not superimpose his preconceptions upon the Bible and then have to struggle to defend them when they fit badly. Rather, he reads the Bible for himself and listens to the critics and forms his theory on the basis of what he finds. Liddon's method precludes the acceptance of the findings of the critics and means that he is always fighting a rearguard action.

So much is clear, at least where the Old Testament is concerned. Where attitudes to the New Testament are concerned, Gore begins to reveal that he also has prior considerations which impair his objectivity. There is considerable agreement between Liddon and Gore about the reliability of the New Testament witness and the unity of its thought concerning Christ. Gore says:

The conclusion which we are bound to reach is that in St. Paul's Epistles and in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in St. John we get a definite and explicit theology of the Person of Christ as the divine Son incarnate. The different writers have each of them his own point of view, but on the whole their theology is identical ..... there is nothing in the New Testament which indicates a rival

theology to St. Paul's.<sup>1</sup>

This is very similar to what Liddon would have said. Disagreement over New Testament matters, apart from the nature of Jesus's use of the Old Testament in certain passages, is hard to find. The reason lies in the authoritative role both men give to the Bible.

Both men believe that it is the Church's task to teach the faith and the Bible's to prove it. The Church existed for some time without a Scripture. During that time it communicated the tradition received from Christ through the Holy Spirit. The New Testament eventually grew out of the Church and is not an independent authority over against the Church. Rather, it is part of the tradition. Positive teaching comes from the Church and the Church interprets the New Testament. But the New Testament, as witness to the primitive tradition, acts as a check on the Church's teaching. The Church may only teach what is present, at least in latent form, in the New Testament. It has no right to invent new doctrines. Both men reject the idea of development in doctrine except in the sense of explanation and elucidation. The Creeds and conciliar definitions are the elucidation and formalisation of New Testament thought.

Liddon and Gore are thus in unison in reading the New Testament from the standpoint of Nicea and Chalcedon. It follows that if they are patient of a challenge to show the propriety of this reading-back they will themselves presuppose that the Christ of the Creeds is the Christ of the New Testament. And this means that the free enquiry that Gore claimed to prize so highly is not, after all, permissible. He cannot be truly open to New Testament criticism. Anything which casts doubt on a Nicene interpretation of the great Christological passages must be rejected. The Fourth Gospel, in particular, must be defended against any suggestion that it is not

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, pp. 132-3

an accurate account of Jesus's own teaching. And the idea of varieties of theology in the New Testament must be approached with great care. It must be possible to demonstrate a profound unity beneath any apparent diversity.

As well as restricting flexibility in the understanding of Scripture, the notion of 'the Church to teach, the Bible to prove' also restricts doctrinal flexibility - as indeed it is intended to do. It does so not only because the New Testament is a check on the Church's thought but also because the word 'Church' really means the Church of the Creeds and Councils. The Church which teaches is the Church which first gave formal definition to Christian doctrine. The understanding Liddon and Gore had of that doctrine in relation to the person of Christ is clearly expressed by each man in his Bampton Lectures. Liddon says he is to defend the view that:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, being truly and perfectly Man, is also, according to His Higher Pre-Existent Nature, Very and Eternal God; since it was the Second Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity, Who, at the Incarnation, robed Himself with a Human Body and a Human Soul.<sup>1</sup>

Gore sets out his understanding of Catholic Christology in the form of what he sees as the four main determinations of the early Councils:

- (1) that as Son of God, Jesus Christ is very God, of one substance with the Father;
- (2) that as Son of man, He is perfectly Man, in the completeness of human faculties and sympathies;
- (3) that though both God and Man, He is yet one person, namely the Son of God who has taken manhood into Himself;
- (4) that in this incarnation the manhood, though it is truly assumed into the divine person, still remains none the less

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 34

truly human, so that Jesus Christ is of one substance with us men in respect of His manhood, as He is with the Father in respect of His godhead.<sup>1</sup>

There is fundamental agreement between Liddon and Gore, then, on the fixed boundaries for orthodox Christology. Yet within that agreement there are differences of style and approach. Gore has already been quoted as saying that traditional theology needs revision. Another quotation helps to give a little more precision to what he is saying. Gore says:

I do not think then that the Chalcedonian formula ..... requires revision in itself; but if we would justify it, we must recognise very frankly that the purpose of the dogmas was negative ..... and we must insist that for our positive conception of the person of Jesus we need constantly to study with unembarrassed eyes the picture in the Gospels and the doctrine of the Epistles.<sup>2</sup>

Gore is making a distinction between theology and formal definition. The latter is fixed for all time and cannot be revised. But its purpose is negative rather than positive. It warns the theologian of possible false lines of development in his thought. It provides the limits within which he may work. Theology's task is more positive. It is to elucidate the doctrine. Keeping Jesus and the events of his life in sight, it must seek to discern their significance and what God was doing in them just as Old Testament writers did with the events of Israel's history. Theology must communicate the living, dynamic Christ enshrined but, perhaps, devitalised in the definition. Theology, therefore, stands in constant need of revision in the light of the sharper appreciation of the 'facts of revelation' which historical criticism brings but always within the limits set

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, p. 81

<sup>2</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, p. 228

by the Church's Councils. Doctrinal definition cannot be revised. This is what Gore is saying and in this he differs from Liddon. For Liddon, it might almost be said, doctrine and theology are one. For him, the revelation given in Jesus Christ is not the living, personal self-disclosure of God that it is for Gore but the 'Body of truth' which is the Church's doctrine. It is positive and is to be taught in the time-honoured language in every age. Within the unity of their commitment to conciliar definitions, there is, therefore, a marked difference of outlook and tone. Liddon came to mistake it for a fundamental divergence over doctrine.

The discussion of this issue was several times focussed on a detail of New Testament interpretation. Old Testament criticism provoked questions about the use Jesus made of the Jewish Scriptures. When he referred to Old Testament events without questioning their historicity, was he positively affirming it? When he referred to Old Testament 'authors' like Moses and David, was he endorsing the traditional ascription of the Pentateuch and some Psalms to these men? Liddon thought that the plain sense of the passages concerned required an affirmative answer to such questions and that, therefore, the acceptance of critical findings which denied such historicity and authorship implied that Jesus was either mistaken or dishonest. Since he assumed that divinity involved infallibility this must also mean that the divinity of Jesus was compromised. Although, in the Bampton Lectures,<sup>1</sup> Liddon declares his intention to rely on history rather than dogma in defending Catholic Christology, in this matter it is his dogmatic presuppositions which colour his opinions.

Gore, on the other hand, was determined to hold to the facts and to try to understand the unity of humanity and divinity in Christ in the light of them. Amongst the facts, he included the findings of the critics. It was clear to him that the divinity of Jesus did not guarantee infallibility in everything he said. In his use of the

<sup>1</sup> Divinity, p. 154

Old Testament, Jesus was at one with his contemporaries. He was limited by the condition of contemporary human knowledge. Gore explained this by the principle of kenosis. The limitations of humanity were voluntarily adopted and some of the prerogatives of Godhead surrendered in Christ's coming into the world.

Liddon had himself allowed the principle of kenosis in order to explain the one case of stated ignorance on the part of Jesus<sup>1</sup> but he was unwilling to extend its use to cover these further problems in Jesus's teaching. He said:

That He was ever completely ignorant of aught else, or that He was ignorant on this point at any other time, are inferences for which we have no warrant, and which we make at our peril.<sup>2</sup>

He could justify the one case by arguing that there is a difference between limitation of knowledge and error. But this is not the whole point for him. His own word, 'peril', is significant as an indication of the strength of his feeling on this matter. He was terrified of anything which endangered his dogmatic presuppositions about the divinity of Christ. So the discussion of the human knowledge of Jesus was, to him, a highly emotive business. He could not be dispassionate about it and it shows in his language. What to Gore was an 'adjustment' in traditional theology was to Liddon a 'concession' or, even worse, a 'capitulation'.<sup>3</sup>

The major difference between the two men lay in their approach to revelation. Liddon thought of it as propositional. Jesus revealed 'a Body of Truth'. Liddon saw his task to be to defend that truth as he understood it. Gore thought that revelation was given in history, in people and events. The propositions taught by the Church were guidelines for the elucidation of the revelation in history. The understanding of the revelation must involve taking account of everything which natural science and historical criticism

<sup>1</sup> Mark 13:32

<sup>2</sup> Divinity, p. 475

<sup>3</sup> Letter to D.L. Lathbury, Lux Mundi Papers, November 24th, 1889, L.10

offered to make the facts clearer. Gore did not abandon the tradition of Pusey and Liddon as far as the dogmatic content was concerned to anything like the extent that my original citation from Bowen suggests nor would he himself have said that the Catholic view of Christ had collapsed.<sup>1</sup> But in his attempt to employ a different method of doing theology to that of Liddon he was seriously misunderstood by him.

Gore's object was to revise Catholic Christology so as to revitalise it in the contemporary situation. The fact that three of his later works were given the overall title, The Reconstruction of Belief, indicates the thoroughgoing and ambitious nature of his purpose. Yet little is to be found in those volumes which was not anticipated in Lux Mundi and the Bampton Lectures. In the more speculative and adventurous aspects of his thought it is even possible to detect some retreat. This can be demonstrated from Gore's brief concern with the New Theology of R.J. Campbell and Sir Oliver Lodge. He summarises it in this way:

The mode of thought which is known as the New Theology is connected in all its parts. It concentrates its attention upon God as the universal Spirit, manifesting Himself and realizing Himself in the universe. Especially in the development of man's nature upward from the animal to the spiritual does it look for this revelation of God.

And, from the ethical point of view, the highest point of achievement hitherto attained is found in Christ. In Him, as in no one else, we can really see God incarnate: we can see, that is, that humanity is really divine and God is really human. And, in the light of that vision we are to go forward to realise our divinity or divinize our manhood.

For what Christ is, we are all in various degrees capable of

<sup>1</sup> Letter to D.L. Lathbury, Lux Mundi Papers, November 24th, 1889 Cf. p. 1 of this thesis.

becoming. We are all potentially sons of God, or Christs. However much hidden or overlaid, the divine nature is in all of us, and is capable, especially under the influence of Christ, of being evoked into active and effective life. So, as man advances, will God become more and more incarnate in all humanity, or in other words the real identity of Godhead and manhood will become more and more evident.<sup>1</sup>

Whether this is an altogether accurate summary does not matter. What does matter is that this is the way Gore sees the New Theology. Clearly it deviates radically from orthodox Catholic theology. Christ is different from men in degree but not in kind. His uniqueness is lost and so also is the radical sinfulness of man. Man as he is described here does not stand in need of redemption but only of growth. The union of God and man is a gradual process apparently to be brought about by human effort. Some of this - and the last point in particular - is quite alien to Gore's mind. But what is more striking is the fact that other parts of it are remarkably similar to lines of thought suggested by Gore himself in Lux Mundi and The Incarnation of the Son of God. There he spoke of the universal Spirit of God, manifest in the universe. He described the movement of creation from the animal to the spiritual as a revelation of God and as something which led us to expect a more complete revelation such as is found in Christ. Christ was spoken of as the consummation of nature. In him, Gore claimed, we see both God incarnate and perfect man or man as God intended him to be. And in the stress on the personal nature of man as a reflection of the personalness of God, demonstrated in Christ, there was a suggestion of both the divinizing of our humanity and the humanising of God. Gore came very close to saying, if he did not actually say, that

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., The New Theology and the Old Religion, pp. 84-5

Christ's difference from us was one of degree and not kind.

This line of thought is not extended in Gore's later work. The attraction of the idea of the personality of God and its use in natural theology is occasionally evident. So too is the presentation of Christ as the crown of the revelation of God in nature. But mention of them is brief and incidental. They receive no extended treatment. Gore criticises the New Theology when it seeks to push the same tendencies further.

The speculative, venturesome Gore of the early work has gone. The innovator now appears as the traditionalist. More and more his concentration is upon the support which the New Testament witness affords to Catholic Christology. History is his main preoccupation and his treatment of it is very conservative. In an age in which New Testament scholarship is very active in England and in which changes in it are taking place of which Gore has shown himself to be aware, his own understanding of the New Testament, its unity of thought and its historical reliability, shows no change. His knowledge of the critics' work brings him to the recognition that there are those who can seriously imagine that Jesus was simply a good man but it does not affect his own estimate of the New Testament as a reliable guarantee of the soundness of Catholic Christology. In 1922, Gore writes:

The conclusion which we are bound to reach is that in St. Paul's Epistles and in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in St. John we get a definite and explicit theology of the Person of Christ as the divine Son incarnate. The different writers have each of them his own point of view, but on the whole their theology is identical. There are other documents of the New Testament which, taken by themselves, give us no clear theology of Christ's person, but there is nothing in the New Testament which indicates a rival theology to St. Paul's,

or what was later called an adoptionist Christology. Such a Christology did appear in the second century ..... But it must be held to represent a falling away from the standpoint which is either energetically maintained or implied in all the documents of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

These are very much the conclusions he reached in the Bampton Lectures thirty years earlier.<sup>2</sup> In one who showed himself to be so open to Old Testament criticism and who was influenced by it, this standstill in relation to the New Testament must be significant.

It must be asked why the early venturesomeness was not maintained. One suggested answer can be rejected quickly.

Professor James A. Carpenter wrote:

A good case can be made out for the argument that the Lux Mundi episode, that is, Liddon's condemnation of his essay and the consequent pain it brought to Gore himself, developed in him a sort of "Never Again Complex" and served to suppress his boldness in speculation, causing him to direct his thinking, however unconsciously, into more traditional channels.<sup>3</sup>

But the Bampton Lectures written in the aftermath of the controversy do not reveal any suppression of boldness in speculation. It is in those lectures that the attempt to relate Christology to evolutionary theory is found. It is there that the natural theology based on the psychological understanding of personality is worked out. Most significant of all, the acceptance of Old Testament criticism and the suggestion that Jesus's knowledge and teaching were limited by the contemporary understanding of the Old Testament, which were the matters around which that controversy raged, were

<sup>1</sup> Gore, C., Belief in Christ, pp. 132-3

<sup>2</sup> Incarnation, pp. 54ff

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter, J.A., Gore - a study in Liberal Catholic thought, p. 39

actually reasserted rather than denied in the Bamptons. Moreover, where these things are touched upon in the Reconstruction of Belief, they are reaffirmed. There is no sign that Gore ever attempted to regain the favour of those whom he had offended by any recantation of the views stated in Lux Mundi. Gore's exposition of the kenotic theory of the incarnation was offered in order to strengthen his view of the limitations of Jesus's knowledge by providing a theological basis for it.

To imagine that Gore could ever be persuaded to change his opinions because they were unpopular or out of line with those of his friends is seriously to misunderstand him. E.S. Talbot, who was perhaps nearer to Gore than anyone apart from Scott Holland, once wrote to him asking:

Why is it that we two, who share the same tradition and are accounted to be of the same school of thought, so often find ourselves at odds with one another and rather cross with one another?

Gore replied:

That is just it, you and I always assume that we think alike, and do not face the fact that we do not.<sup>1</sup>

It was not timidity or the fear of the opinions of his fellow Churchmen that made Gore fail to continue his speculative work in Christology.

A much more significant comment on Gore was made by the man whom he opposed so strongly at times, Hensley Henson. Henson, a liberal in theological outlook, compared Gore with himself and wrote:

Temperamentally and confessedly Gore was an institutionalist, a Catholic to the finger-tips. I was an individualist, in temper and habit a Protestant.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 423

<sup>2</sup> Henson, H.H., Retrospect of An Unimportant Life, vol. i, p. 208

The accuracy of this assessment of Gore is seen most plainly in the years following 1902 when Gore became a bishop. His biographer describes his policy:

Gore would impose no theological test on the laity beyond the dictates of their own conscience. But accredited teachers, from whom solemn professions were exacted, stood in a position altogether different. For them to retain official status while publicly repudiating official teaching seemed to Gore a glaring instance of intellectual immorality.<sup>1</sup>

No doubt other bishops would have felt the same but few, if any, excelled Gore in the vigour with which they opposed this sort of theological inconsistency where they saw it.

In 1911 a book was published by J.M. Thompson, an Anglican clergyman, entitled The Miracles of the New Testament. It disowned the miraculous element in the New Testament completely. Some thought it could safely be ignored since it was a second-rate work. Others wanted to meet it by counter-argument. Gore was amongst those who wanted disciplinary action taken. He wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, saying:

I think quite deliberately that we cannot as bishops be silent without conniving or tolerating. What is occurring is that we are being deliberately challenged to be silent. What it is desired to create is an atmosphere in which the consent of the common mind of the Church can be pleaded for an interpretation of assent to the Creeds which ignores or denies the facts. What is therefore necessary from us is a deliberate expression of refusal to connive.<sup>2</sup>

Characteristically Gore was worried by the threat to the 'facts' of revelation. He put down a motion for Convocation. Davidson counselled delay and Gore withdrew the motion. The matter was

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 193  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 344

settled when Talbot cancelled Thompson's licence.

The preamble to the Resolutions to be put before Convocation, written by Gore, is firm indication of the issues which concerned him. It read:

That in view of the fact that ordained ministers of the Church of England in recent years have published works, in which the actual occurrence of the miraculous events recorded in the Creeds - Our Lord's birth of a virgin mother and His resurrection on the third day from the dead - is either brought into doubt or positively denied .....<sup>1</sup>

Gore, of course, even in his most speculative days, had not wavered in his adherence to faith in these two events but it is easy to see why he should shift his emphasis from the speculative aspects of his Christology to the more orthodox when the latter were, as he thought, under attack. It is also interesting that he should describe the events as 'recorded in the Creeds' rather than in the New Testament. Perhaps it indicates his increasingly Catholic emphasis.

Other bishops were less offended. For instance, Bishop Chase of Ely was simply content that such books as Gore mentioned had been few and far between.

But a volume of essays entitled Foundations, edited by B.H. Streeter, published in 1912, caused Gore great anxiety because of what it said about the Resurrection of Christ. Gore asked Davidson for the chance to discuss the whole subject at a private meeting of Bishops. The Archbishop granted the request in January 1913 but it did not meet with everyone's approval. Bishop Jayne of Chester wrote to Davidson, asking:

Are Bishop's meetings to become largely gatherings at which the Bishop of Oxford delivers constant, copious and highly

<sup>1</sup> Bell, G.K.A., Randall Davidson, vol. i, p. 672

impassioned, if not minatory, allocutions to his brethren? This may be a hygienic safety-valve for him, but he has, I think, done something to change the atmosphere of the meetings. I raise these points with very genuine admiration for his many high qualities, and not without a readiness to be convinced that his modus operandi is valuable, if it does not become dominant. I am bound to say that, at first sight, his latest subject for discussion opens up a vista of awkward possibilities of other subjects.<sup>1</sup>

Gore was not content with the private meeting and talked publicly of resignation, a possibility which troubled Davidson. He feared that if Gore were to resign, the case might be somewhat akin to that of Newman before him. He thought it would unsettle many clergy, perhaps encouraging them to look towards Rome, because it would suggest that 'the Anglican position as now interpreted' had become untenable. Davidson saw a danger of a great schism within the Church with one part going this way and the other into what he called 'a crystallised Harnackism'.<sup>2</sup> He thought it unwise to press the situation so hard. If Gore and others persisted and persuaded the bishops to sanction tough resolutions against those who had doubts and felt it necessary to suspend judgment on certain issues, Davidson thought it might be necessary for him to resign since it would indicate that he was, as he said:

growing to be out of touch with the strongest advances in the Church, or rather that these are growing to be out of touch with me. And I said that I should not remain at the helm if I found myself trying to steer a course clearly contrary to the best Church of England feeling and spirit.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bell, G.K.A., Randall Davidson, vol. i, p. 673

<sup>2</sup> Gore had become Bishop of Oxford in 1911.

<sup>3</sup> ibid. p. 673

ibid. p. 675

Eventually a settlement was reached in a debate in Convocation in 1914 which lasted for two days. A resolution<sup>was</sup> proposed by Winnington-Ingram, the Bishop of London, reaffirming one passed nine years earlier, which said,

That this House is resolved to maintain unimpaired the Catholic Faith in the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, as contained in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, and in the Quicumque Vult, and regards the Faith there presented, both in statements of doctrine and in statements of fact, as the necessary basis on which the teaching of the Church reposes.<sup>1</sup>

It went on further to say:

the denial of any of the historical facts stated in the Creeds goes beyond the limits of legitimate interpretation, and gravely imperils that sincerity of profession which is plainly incumbent on the ministers of the Word and Sacraments.<sup>2</sup>

Gore was satisfied with this reference to the 'historical facts' and withdrew the threat of resignation.

The controversy shows that Gore now thought of himself as the guardian of orthodoxy and even that he was prepared to push his idea of what that involved to the point of putting some pressure on his fellow bishops to fall into line with him. He called for discussion but he does not give the impression of being ready to hear another point of view. If the Archbishop will not act, then he must accept Gore's resignation. Gore will have no dealings with those whose Christology has any hint of heterodoxy, nor with those who are too timid to discipline them. And this is the man who edited Lux Mundi! The irony of the situation cannot have been lost on Streeter.

But, apparently, Gore did not notice it for within a few years he was involved in another similar situation. This time he was even

<sup>1</sup> Carpenter, S.C., Winnington-Ingram, p. 147  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 148

more self-consciously the lone champion of orthodox Christology.

He said:

I do not think there is any bishop besides myself who is prepared to go against the Archbishop in this matter.<sup>1</sup>

'This matter' was the consecration of Hensley Henson as Bishop of Hereford. In 1917 Lloyd George wrote to Henson, who was then Dean of Durham, inviting him to accept nomination for the vacant see of Hereford. Henson had no hesitation in accepting. But Henson was no more orthodox in Gore's eyes than Streeter and Thompson. In The Creed and the Pulpit Henson had written in a similar vein to that of the others on Christological matters. When the appointment was confirmed and announced, Gore wrote to his fellow bishops saying:

I think Dr. Henson falls outside the limits of tolerable conformity as recognised in our recent declaration in Convocation. I think we ought not to accept him as a brother bishop: I am in my own mind convinced that I cannot.

He went on to declare his intention to protest and urged them to do the same. Characteristically he concluded:

If the protest is unavailing, I see no course practicable but to resign from the episcopate.<sup>2</sup>

On January 3rd, 1918, Gore wrote to Archbishop Davidson asking him to refuse to consecrate Henson. He said of Henson:

His treatment of the Virgin Birth seems to me incompatible with personal belief in its occurrence. Again, he expressly repudiates belief in the "nature-miracles" recorded in the Gospels as wrought by our Lord. He writes explicitly, "From the standpoint of historical science they must be held to be incredible." But the birth of a Virgin mother, and the bodily resurrection of our Lord - that His body did not "see corruption" but was raised again the third day to a new and

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 399

<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 395

wonderful life - are similar "nature-miracles" ascribed in the Gospels to the same power and Spirit of the Father as the miracles upon nature worked by our Lord during His ministry. I can conceive no rational ground for repudiating the latter as incredible and believing the former. The Dean himself seems incidentally to include both classes of miracles in the same category. He does indeed confidently and constantly affirm the truth of the Resurrection of Christ; but he seems to me by "resurrection" to mean no more than personal survival. He repudiates again and again any insistence upon the "empty tomb", and declares it to have no significance. But the empty tomb was an absolutely necessary condition of any such resurrection as the New Testament postulates. If the tomb was not empty, Christ was not, in the New Testament sense, risen again. On the whole I am led irresistibly to the conclusion that, though he nowhere explicitly expresses in so many words his personal disbelief in the physical miracles affirmed in the Creeds, he does in fact regard them as incredible . . . . I am amazed at the naive confidence with which he assumes that the theological ideas of the Creed and the New Testament, to which he gives noble expression, can survive unimpaired when the miraculous facts have been repudiated - an assumption which the history of recent criticism in Europe generally seems to me to negative. But that again is not my point at present. I am now concerned only with the conditions on which a man can sincerely profess the Creeds and exercise his ministry in the Church of England.<sup>1</sup>

Again Gore concentrates in this letter on what he sees as the 'historical facts' of the Virgin Birth, the nature-miracles and the resurrection of Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Bell, G.K.A., Randall Davidson, vol. ii, pp. 859-60

Henson was certain that Gore would not be alone in his protest.

He wrote:

It is plain enough that the Farnham section of High Church Bishops will support Gore with ample professions of personal distress in the process! Talbot, Gore, Burrows, Ingram, Gibson and probably Lang will go together, and they will draw to their side Watts-Ditchfield certainly, and probably some more Evangelicals.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Wace, the Evangelical Dean of Canterbury and Lord Halifax were also firmly with Gore so there was little justification for Gore feeling alone in the fight. The fact that he did so only serves to emphasise the manner in which he saw himself as the champion of orthodoxy.

The matter was settled when Davidson wrote to Henson telling him of the apprehensions many felt about his disbelief in the Apostles' Creed and especially the clauses referring to Christ's birth and resurrection. He wrote:

I replied to them that they are misinformed, and that I am persuaded that when you repeat the words of the Creed you do so ex animo and without any desire to change them.

Henson, he knew, might not wish to make a statement on which the motives might be misconstrued at this moment but perhaps he would allow Davidson to publish the letter along with 'a word of reassurance from yourself'. Henson replied:

It is strange that it should be thought by anyone to be necessary that I should give such an assurance as you mention, but of course what you say is absolutely true.<sup>2</sup>

The letters were duly published. Gore accepted the reassurance,

<sup>1</sup> Henson, H.H., Retrospect of an Unimportant Life, vol. i, p. 236 It is not clear what is meant by the Farnham section but it may include the names listed. Farnham was the seat of the Bishop of Winchester who, at this time, was E.S. Talbot.

<sup>2</sup> Prestige, pp. 400-1

withdrew his protest and, for the moment, had no further need to threaten resignation.

Henson may be right in calling Gore 'an institutionalist, a Catholic to the finger tips'. Perhaps it was more than the sacramental element which attracted Gore to Catholicism so strongly as a child. But the purpose of this description of the controversies in some detail is to show that there was more to Gore's stand than this. It was not a simple case of a rigid disciplinarian resenting those who stepped out of line, an institutionalist disciplining rebels. The real issue was about the relation of theology and history. Thompson, Streeter and Henson were all threatening those 'facts of revelation' - the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ - which Gore saw as clinching the historical evidence for Catholic Christology. In the controversies he was not retreating into the old Puseyite stance and opposing new thought with dogma. He was consistent with his preferred method of relying on the facts. In trying to deny the facts, these modern writers were undermining Catholic Christology, as Gore saw it. Given the stress that Gore placed on the New Testament events as history, it is difficult to see how Gore could have done any other than to resist the findings of the more liberal New Testament scholars. At a time when those events were being questioned, it is not surprising that his attention moved from the development of a more speculative Christology to the defence of the New Testament history.

The result was that Gore did not feel himself to be recognised fully by either the Catholic or the Liberal wing of the Church. Writing to a friend in 1917, he said:

I do not think you have made a muddle of your life but certainly I have made a muddle of mine. I suppose I shall never know in this world how far it is my fault. I do not

see that it is, though I want to see. But I remain embracing with all my conviction an ideal of Liberal Catholicism which, it appears, no one is willing to listen to, neither "Catholics" nor "Liberals" nor the man in the street, nor anybody else except a very few old ladies and gentlemen. I suppose God has other purposes for the world and the Church. The only thing is to keep a good conscience and do one's best.<sup>1</sup>

The 'muddle' was due to the fact that Gore's Christology centred on two incompatible principles.

The liberal aspect of Gore's thought was expressed in the principle of kenosis. Originally intended as a means to the explanation of the limitations of Jesus's knowledge, it was extended to become the key to the whole of God's dealings with men. God's method is always that of self-restraint, self-limitation. In his Bampton Lectures, Gore showed the extent to which this insight had come to colour all his theology. It set the seal on his natural theology for the self-giving of God in the incarnation was the concentrated expression of the personality of God which is reflected in the personality of man. As it explained the limitations in Christ's knowledge, so it explained the limitations in man's. For the sake of man's freedom, God does not disclose himself to man completely or conclusively. He restrains himself in order that man should enjoy the liberty of making his own uncoerced response to God. Gore even justified the exercise of authority within Anglicanism on the basis of kenosis. Unlike the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, it is not absolute and does not demand blind obedience.

Gore said:

It delights in the stimulus of half-disclosures, in directions which arrest attention and suggest enquiry, but leave much to

<sup>1</sup> Prestige, p. 407

be done in the minds of their recipients.<sup>1</sup>

The Anglican Church, therefore, reflects the self-restraint of God.

But the Catholic aspect of Gore's thought was expressed in the principle, 'the Church to teach, the Bible to prove.' In this principle Gore found his authority. In his considered statements he did not give the literal force to the word, 'prove'. He did not claim conclusive evidence for the truth of Catholic Christology. He wrote:

Historical evidence, let me repeat, cannot create faith, but it can, and it does, satisfy it where it exists, and rationally justify the venture that it makes.<sup>2</sup>

But sometimes the tone of his writing belies such measured statements. He uses expressions like 'to clinch'. In the exercise of episcopal office, there were areas of doctrine in which he did not recognise any self-restraint or half-disclosure on the part of God and could not allow much freedom to the mind of the recipient. In practice, he found it impossible to live with the uncertainty implied in the theory of kenosis. He needed the guarantees of Catholicism.

Liddon preached a magnificent, supernatural Christology. It was exact, coherent and robust. Where new thought threatened to undermine it, he resisted stoutly in the name of God, believing that accommodation only leads to that reductionism which is infidelity. Even when the threat arose from within the discipline of theology, from the closer study of the Bible and from what it revealed about the methods of the Holy Spirit, he saw no alternative but to resist if Catholic truth was to be maintained. His courage was impressive but it risked obscurantism.

Gore took contemporary intellectual developments more seriously.

<sup>1</sup> Incarnation, pp. 177-8  
<sup>2</sup> ibid. p. 73

He longed to respond to them and to adjust theology so that both science and historical criticism could be seen to be in harmony with it. He was not wholly unsuccessful. If, in the end, he disappointed, it was because his adherence to Catholic principles prevented him from following the most distinctive emphasis of his Christology to its logical conclusion. If at the end he seems the sorrier figure, it is only because, rightly, he attempted more.

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This booklist is divided into three sections. The first two contain books by the two theologians studied arranged in order of publication. The third lists in alphabetical order other books consulted. The edition used is the last mentioned in the entry of the book. The place of publication is London unless otherwise stated in the entry.

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