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'AGAINST THE STREAM.'

A FRIEND of the writer once entered into conversation with a tramp who was reclining at his ease by the side of the turnpike road. The traveller was fairly communicative, gave some of his experiences, and told where he had spent the past night. Our friend enquired, 'And where are you going now?' 'I don't know,' replied the tramp, 'the wind has gone down and I never go anywhere unless I've the wind at my back.' It is not merely on the king's highway that we find people who like to have the wind at their backs and who have no inclination for battling against the storm and the stream.

Under the title 'Against the Stream' a theological controversy has been running its course in Norway for a considerable period; and the time seems to have come when it is possible to give some indication of its nature, even if it is yet too early to sum up all the results. The name *Mod Strømmen* ('Against the Stream') was the title of a book issued by Bishop Heuch of Christiansand early in 1902, calling attention to the rationalistic tendencies which he attributed to much of the popular theology and preaching of the Norwegian Church. The name was at once recognized as an appropriate one for the book, and for the attitude its author was taking up; and articles *pro* and *con* appeared under this title in issue after issue of every newspaper and magazine in the land. In order to understand the points at stake it is necessary to go back a little beyond the year of publication of the Bishop's book, and to make acquaintance with some of the leading figures in Norwegian theology and religious life.

In the early part of the last quarter of last century throughout Scandinavia the Positivist philosophy, as represented by Brandes in Denmark, and in Norway by a host of poets, litterateurs, and young scientists, was asserting itself in a wonderful degree. The unrest occasioned thereby was possibly felt more in the theological world than anywhere else. The need of recasting the old dogmas and of modernizing the preaching of the Norwegian Church in order to make its theology more biblical and less scholastic, and to make its preaching more practical and less fruitlessly theoretic, was emphasized by several able men. The first pioneer in this crusade was Dr. E. F. B. Horn of the Garrison Church in Christiania, whose death a few years ago left a blank in the Norwegian Church which no one yet has been quite able to fill. The graphic and genial biography of Dr. Horn, written by the incumbent of Rödald, Johannes Brochmann, is a model of what such a book should be, and gives us an admirable idea of the man and his gifts. Horn was a thinker endowed with a sparkingly original mind, and he let loose a perfect torrent of articles, pamphlets, and books that set men a-thinking. He might have said with Fr. V. Baader, 'I am a seed merchant.' His church in the old fortress of the metropolis was crowded to the door when it was known that Horn was to preach, and his influence on the students and rising clergy was incalculable. Amongst other pioneers of progress were Chr. Bruun, also a Christiania clergyman, the originator and editor of the thoughtful magazine *For liberal-minded Christianity*, and for the last ten years joint-editor of *For Kirke og Kultur* ('For Church and Culture'), a name which very adequately explains itself. Prof. Fredrik Petersen, whose lamented death early this year has left another very great blank, had one of the keenest minds in the Lutheran Church, and rendered yeoman service in driving back the assaults of scepticism and unbelief, and in pointing out desirable reforms. Another champion of progress was the present Dean of Christiania, Gustav Jensen, who is probably the most highly esteemed clergyman in Norway, and has refused the offer of a bishopric at least half a dozen times. To him those in authority always apply for information and guidance when important questions arise. Jensen is the St. Bernard of the Norwegian Church, and it may be said that his influence exceeds

that of all professors and bishops and ministers of state. Another eloquent preacher was J. J. Jansen, formerly of Røken, whose influence, until his health gave way, was immense. Then we must mention Thv. Klaveness, another of the foremost preachers of Christiania and of Norway, founder and joint-editor with Bruun of *For Kirke og Kultur*, a man of indomitable energy, of marvellous dialectic skill, and of dauntless courage, whose equal could not easily be found. Before others get their thoughts in order he is on the field of fight with weapons that are keen of edge and wielded with a master hand. Some other leaders of thought have recently come to the front and must be mentioned in a word. Dr. S. Michelet, Professor of Old Testament Exegesis, has written valuable works on *The Old Testament View of Sin*, *The Old Testament View of Righteousness*; and a few months since he sent forth *Ancient Sanctuaries in Modern Light*, a series of lectures giving a clear and popular account of the acknowledged results of Old Testament criticism. Dean M. J. Færden, of Norderhov, has published a volume on the same subject as Prof. Michelet's, entitled *The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Biblical Research*. Færden's book is much more radical than Michelet's. Probably many will view it with disfavour on account of its unqualified acceptance of some of the extreme conclusions of modern criticism; but the book gives evidence of most extensive reading and expert knowledge, and the author's style is the most fluent and charming we have had experience of among Scandinavian theological writers.

The great apostle of orthodoxy in Norway has for a long period been Bishop J. C. Heuch of Christiansand. He is not so much a theologian as a witness for Christ, deserving in many respects of honour and regard. In days gone by he was an extraordinary power in the Norwegian Church; but his ultra-conservatism of mind has prevented him from advancing with the age. The interesting thing is that Heuch was the very first vigorous assailant of the Positivist tendency, and he gained great laurels in Denmark for his valiant onslaught on Brandes. When Heuch was a priest in Christiania he had all the intelligence of the metropolis assembled around him, appreciating his realistic, practical teaching. No one suspected that behind those sermons of his, sparkling with the reality of life, lay hidden the Old

Lutheran dogmatic system. But eventually it was discovered that his preaching was altogether based on the theological paradox-system of his former teacher Prof. Gisle Johnson. Heuch never saw its defects or the untenability of the old scholasticism in the face of the exegesis and biblical theology of modern times. This was very likely due to the fact that he never was a theologian in the proper sense of the term, but only a very practical pastor and preacher. In most ecclesiastical gatherings he was the doughty champion of the Old Lutheran confession, which in his early days corresponded with the general spirit in the Norse Church and prevailed until Prof. Petersen, succeeding to the chair of Systematic Theology in 1876, showed the absolute necessity for a reconstruction of the old system. But Heuch's fundamentally conservative theological position and tendencies were forgotten under the charm, the vigour and the appositeness of his practical teaching, until what has been called the 'Christiansand Polemic' broke out in 1895.

The cause of this controversy was the publication by the Rev. J. H. H. Brochmann, of the Cathedral Church of Christiansand, a brother of Dr. Horn's biographer, of a book entitled *Lov og Naade*¹ (i. e. 'Law and Grace,' an abbreviation for 'The place of the Law in the Kingdom of Grace'). Recognizing, as Brochmann says, with sorrow, the impotence of the Norse State Church and the dissolution going on within it, he aimed at restoring harmony and power by setting law and duty in their proper and recognized place within the Kingdom of Grace. The question the book sought to answer was—Has the Norwegian State Church managed to preserve its heritage inviolate, and are its priests worthy preachers of the Law and the Gospel? or has the Law been practically set aside, to the injury of the preaching, as the result of an original obliquity of vision, thus distorting, or falsifying, or minimizing the Church's teaching about the Law? Brochmann's conclusion is that, from the very first, the theory of the Law held by the Norse Church has not accurately corresponded with what was intended by Luther and the Reformers; that the Church cannot attain its purpose without revising its standards of doctrine, 'returning to the forsaken paths of our fathers'; and that the restoration of the old will

¹ Christiania, 1894.

demand, as is frequently the case, that some portions must be rebuilt. Brochmann acknowledged that in Norway from many pulpits the Gospel had been preached from full hearts and the Saviour's love had been pictured with earnestness and power, but the result had been disappointing. 'The Word of God is preached one-sidedly. Christ is preached, but the people are taught more to contemplate and listen to Him than to do what He has commanded.' He holds that in a sermon 'the humbling words, the words that go home, are the best and most precious.' Brochmann does not deny that the preacher will find a difficulty in preaching the Law so as to lead to Christ, and preaching Christ so as to secure fidelity; in preaching the Law so that it does not interfere with Grace, and preaching Grace so that it does not hinder the effect of the Law. There is an apparent chasm between the Law and the Gospel; and if the dualism is to be removed the doctrinal definition of the Law must be recast. The book enters most thoroughly and carefully into all the questions involved in prosecuting the question to be elucidated, and it specially asks for a new statement or definition of the Atonement. One would have thought that such a deliverance, wisely weighed, calmly reasoned and clearly put, could hardly fail to lead to searching of heart in the Norse Church, and to proposals for remedying the defects indicated. The book, of course, is not free from defects, and the author makes a quite uncalled-for and gratuitous charge against the Free Lutherans and other Norwegian dissenters, who in some respects seem by their freedom from State control to have been able to modify their standards in the directions desired.

Law and Grace was received at first with almost universal favour by the secular press and also by the Church magazines. But ere long the book was made the object of a vehement attack by the author's own superior, Bishop Heuch, who thereby originated the 'Christiansand Polemic,' which evoked interest in every corner of the land. Klaveness, in *For Kirke og Kultur*, ranged himself unreservedly on the side of Brochmann. Prof. Mydberg, of Upsala, championed his cause most powerfully, and his journal *The Biblical Enquirer* carried on the fight in Sweden. In Denmark and all through Scandinavian America the controversy was followed with interest and suspense; but Brochmann,

unwilling to dispute with his Bishop, left his book to speak for itself. One has difficulty in understanding the Bishop's vehemence, his inconsistency and his lack of charity. Underneath the controversy lay a great question—Is a Norwegian priest entitled freely to think about and discuss doctrinal problems, or must he have the bishop's permission to think and speak and write about the details of the Creed? Probably that was the issue that roused the Norse clergy, for undoubtedly there were many who did not sympathize with Brochmann's reasons, although they had arrived at his conclusions from other premises, and they rebelled against the Bishop's unwarranted reading of lessons to a better scholar and abler discernor of the times than himself.

Bishop Heuch stamped Brochmann as a rationalist and heretic, declaring that he turned Christ into a lay figure to be used only because He was there and could not decently be passed by. His 'theory of justification' is 'as old as rationalism itself'; it is 'in sharp contrast to the Church's doctrine.' 'The God and the children of God whom Brochmann represents are the old progeny of rationalism, to whom he has given new clothes that he may decently present them as his adopted children.' He 'converts God into a genial old optimist.' 'If Christ had never been born it would not have mattered much.' He holds that Brochmann's preaching is quite silent about what we call 'Christ in us,' and that this silence has gone on 'Sunday after Sunday for years.' 'To Brochmann grace in Christ is not all,' and in his preaching we do not learn 'that we in Jesus Christ, our God and brother, have a real Saviour who does and suffers for us all that we cannot ourselves accomplish.' Consequently Brochmann's teaching is non-Christian.

This was a terrible onslaught by the Bishop on the priest of his Cathedral Church, and one is inclined to fancy that there must be more than the book behind the charges. But it was the book that was challenged, and the Bishop had to justify himself from the book. He ingeniously disarms criticism by saying, 'I am no scholar and am unable to quarrel with Mr. Brochmann for his exegetical interpretations, or to examine the whole apparatus he has employed to set up his system.' But this is just a confession that he is not entitled to criticize, nor able to appreciate the proofs produced, partly from Scripture, partly from the nature and essence of the Christian faith, which had led

Brochmann to the conclusions arrived at. The only justification attempted by the Bishop is quite inadequate to convict Brochmann of being a rationalist, or of heterodoxy; and the two or three passages Heuch quotes are severed from the context, and are incapable of bearing the interpretation placed upon them.

The Bishop writes, ‘Some may deny me the right to hold that *Law and Grace* contains pernicious heresy, but since I hold that opinion I have not been able to act otherwise than I have done.’ What is expected of a bishop who detects ‘pernicious heresy’ in one of the clergy in his diocese, especially in the Cathedral Church? Is it sufficient that he write a few newspaper and magazine articles? If he is watching over the interests of his diocese he ought to warn the congregation against the heretical teaching of the priest, and to report the matter to the Church authorities and demand the removal of the heretic. As a matter of fact, *Law and Grace* gave no warrant for the Bishop’s vehemence. Brochmann’s book shows that he is no rationalist. He believes in the Divinity of Christ, the miraculous conception, the resurrection of the Lord, salvation of grace through Christ, the second advent, the authority of scripture, and so on. The Bishop would never have succeeded in convicting Brochmann of heresy; and he seems at length to have recognized the fact, for he neither denounced him in the Cathedral, nor reported him to the Department of State for the Church. Heuch gave out that he was writing a book fully setting forth his charges against Brochmann and others who held views of a similar nature or tendency that were deserving of vituperation and condemnation. But he wisely let the matter drop; the book did not appear, and Brochmann remained in possession of the field. Bishop Heuch now takes up quite a gracious and friendly attitude to the author of *Law and Grace*, since he has come to understand what Brochmann from the very first had told him, that if he knew him, if he would take the trouble to understand him, he would find in him an ally rather than a foe. The Bishop, however, was to learn that although Brochmann was unwilling to do more in the prosecution of his crusade, yet other men were ready to take up the parable against the Norwegian Church and its theology; and these went further far than Brochmann, and their views were worthy of much more scathing denunciation.

Some two years ago Klaveness set the whole of Norway in commotion by a lecture in which he attacked the Christiania public for their homage to the Danish poet Drachmann and the singer Miss B. Lassen, who had openly transgressed all the ordinary conceptions of permissible intercourse between a married man and an unmarried woman. *Morgenbladet*, one of the leading journals of Norway, and many other newspapers, repeatedly attacked him. Even the *Luthersk Kirketidende* kept him at a respectful distance ; and the Bishop of Christiania was induced by Miss Lassen's relatives to give Klaveness a public rebuke. But other ministers, among them Brochmann, took the side of Klaveness ; and in the end he and his co-editor of *For Kirke og Kultur* won the day. But Klaveness was so exhausted by the numerous blows and attacks directed against him that he had to obtain a long leave of absence in order to recover strength.

He had scarcely returned from abroad before he appeared at the Conference of Lutheran Clergy, at Lund in Sweden, in 1901, and delivered a lecture on 'Modern Indifferentism and the Church,' which gave rise to a most heated discussion both at the meeting and following it.

Klaveness began his lecture by proposing the questions : Why do not our men go to church ? And what must be done to draw them ? Men, he says, do not despise religion or deny faith in God or Christ ; they do not attack the Church or its doctrines, or its service, or its priests ; they let these go for what they are worth. But they reserve to themselves the right to do as they please ; and as they think they have no need for the Church they choose to be indifferent. These are men with modern culture ; and this modern culture has a wonderful faculty for spreading far and wide. This religious indifference of men is at least in part a heritage from the free-thinking propaganda of the last generation.

One great stone of stumbling to which Klaveness directs attention is, that Church leaders and priests are often afraid of free enquiry and scientific examination of the Bible and its dogmas, a fact of which Bishop Heuch's action in the 'Christian-sand Polemic' supplies an instance. Yet it is liberty that has brought to Europe and to particular countries such immeasurable progress in moral as well as in material respects. Norwegian

preachers, in many cases, are not only afraid of progress, but they oppose it ; and the most vehement resistance of the truths which science has discovered and of the political and social reforms which the age demanded has come from the Church.

These and other causes have exercised an influence ; but the main cause of the desertion of the Church by the modern man is the preaching. The 'whine and pulpit jargon' (Klaveness never minces words), which preachers have inherited from former days, will not be tolerated now. And the matter of the preaching is not much better ; although the Gospel itself contains all that is needed to attract and charm, the attractive notes are drowned by notes that repel.

Now what are these ? Among others he specifies the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas as they are set forth in the Lutheran Church standards, dogmas which nowadays no man without special theological training is able to understand or accept. To modern thought they are unintelligible, and the modern man is a *thinker*. The modern man has even more difficulty in accepting that which occupies most space in sermons, viz. the doctrine of the Atonement in connexion with the order of salvation. The modern man, he says, cannot reconcile the old dogma of *satisfactio vicaria* with his conceptions of law and justice. That is bad enough ; but it is worse when one minute men hear that Christ has done and suffered all in their stead, so that they need not do anything except only to believe themselves saved through Christ ; and next minute they are warned not to deceive themselves, for salvation is not so very simple : in order to be saved one must go through a succession of stages linked together—awakening, conversion, justification, regeneration, sanctification. Is it strange if many prefer in the circumstances to keep away from the church where such conflicting doctrines are taught ?

Practically there is a great gulf between Culture and the Church. Culture has gone steadily forward, but the Church has lingered behind in the orthodox dogmatism of the seventeenth century and the pietistic ideas of the eighteenth. The Church lies stranded in a by-past age, and the modern man will have nothing to do with what is wrecked or absolutely out of date.

Klaveness instances the Inspiration dogma. No scientific theologian now holds the old mechanical Inspiration theory.

Science, consequently culture, has quite given it up. But Theology has not yet managed to formulate a new theory of Inspiration which has met with general acceptance. Theology gropes and fumbles; and so the exploded theory of Inspiration, discarded by Theology, is taught in the schools, and is preached from the pulpits, inevitably drawing upon the Church the charge that it teaches what it no longer believes.

Klaveness points out that the ancient Church appropriated ancient culture, and obtained from it method and form and a fullness of thought which it combined with the Gospel. Then it gave the age its culture back as a Christian view of the world which conquered the age. The Church of the Reformation did something the same with the Humanism which was the culture of its day. The Church of the present day has not risen to the occasion. It has made attempts, such as rationalism, speculative theology, and the Ritschlian theology; but only rationalism ever looked like succeeding. The Church life of the nineteenth century has been a reaction; and the reaction was warranted and brought its blessing. But we cannot live on reaction without suffering. Life demands progress. Culture has progressed; but the Church has not, and so an increasing indifferentism has taken possession of the cultured throng.

Now what must the Church do to meet this indifferentism? Klaveness answers that the natural conclusion from his premises is, that the Church should appropriate the culture of the present day and give it back to the age as a Christian view of the world suited for present needs. But for that a religious genius like Augustine or Luther would be required; and such a genius does not come at call.

He therefore says: Let the clergy preach the Gospel and thereby, if possible, change the indifferentism into love for Christ. That is a matter of course; but what else must be done? Modern men will not come to hear. Can we compel them? It will not do to use compulsion. The Church has tried that often enough, and it partly does so still—compulsory confirmation, first communion, forced catechization, to some extent (e. g. in the case of soldiers) even compulsory church attendance. But it is not seemly that the Church should rely on the State; and the Church must do without the aid of the State.

How is it to be done? Let the Gospel be preached so that by its own inherent power the message will draw the indifferent so that they *must* hear, and then they will be convinced of its truth. But it is of no use trying, as so many do, to terrify men with the pangs of hell. A sensible man will not be forced or terrified into believing. He only believes what his conscience has testified to be the truth. And he cannot believe anything else, even with hell before his eyes. Consequently the whole style and character of preaching must be changed.

Preachers must place themselves with brotherly sympathy by men's sides and enter into their thoughts and feelings. In this way they may form some idea of what amount of religious truth their hearers can receive, and learn how to preach that it may be received. That was how Jesus and the apostles acted. They gave the religious truth which their hearers could bear. If the pulpit is to win the educated men of the present day it is necessary to find their *hearts*. The modern man feels himself under a supreme power, which never fails to return a crop not only of what an individual sows but also of what his ancestors through generations and the society round about have sowed. Life becomes a burden, and men are ever sighing, in secret, for a Father's heart on which they can lean and to which they can bring their pains and griefs.

Now what must be preached to such a generation? Will it do to refer to Adam's guilt and sin, and to explain that God reckoned Adam's guilt to Christ, and Christ accepted it and paid the penalty; and that we receive the benefit of Christ's sacrifice by faith so that God imputes it to us for righteousness? Such a system of imputing and reckoning and appropriating is far too involved, to say the least. Christianity must be simple in order that men may grasp it and believe. Preaching must be simple like that of Christ. The preacher's message should be like this:

'The Father-heart you sigh for, you children of the twentieth century, may be found. The Power which rules the world, and whose adamant consistency you feel, has such a Father-heart. However much it may seem so, that power is no blind fate; it is a Father, a holy Father, who wishes His children to become perfect and who therefore punishes their sins and trains them strictly; but yet a Father who forgives the penitent child,

forgives everything, forgives wholly and fully; who comforts the suffering child; who blesses the obedient child, and trains him for His kingdom.'

That is the Gospel of Christ. Jesus preached that with His lips and with His life; and He sealed that preaching with His blood on the Cross; and God sealed it by raising Christ up from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand. And thence His Holy Spirit issues and seals that Gospel in the hearts of all that are opened to receive Him. It becomes a divinely witnessed truth which no biblical criticism and no exegesis can undermine. Thus we can show the race what is the kernel of the Gospel: God's Father-heart opened and revealed to us in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son.

Of course, sin must be spoken of too, and so spoken of that men's eyes may be opened to its iniquity. Yet here most preachers try to bring men to a confession of sin by teaching the dogma of man's total depravity and maintaining that this depravity must be felt or there can be no salvation. Now it is by the Law that the knowledge of sin comes. The legal way to work a knowledge of sin is to preach morality, down-right Christian morality; and it is easy to point here to the law of cause and effect, a lesson present-day men will not deny or overlook.

But it is of no use to teach men that God's Law is so hard that ordinary mortals cannot fulfil it. Even the Gentiles do by nature the things which the Law requires. But if we assert what is not true, we make the Law of none effect. When Paul says that by the Law is the knowledge of sin, he means not that such knowledge comes only by hearing, but that the knowledge comes by a man doing what the Law requires. Christ said, 'This do and thou shalt live,' and He left His hearers to find out by experience. Consequently from the pulpit there must be heard a living witness of the full forgiveness of sins for all who do God's will and regret their sins; and there must be an urgent call to every man: 'Come in Jesus' name with your errors and mistakes and pray for forgiveness and you will receive pardon, and together with pardon peace and hope.' What the age sighs for is the forgiveness of sins and the assurance of salvation; and preaching must give that assurance. And it can be given if the pulpit will

let Christ's person and life and death and resurrection explain the holy, merciful, Father-love of God.

A priest need not confine himself wholly to such preaching as has been indicated. If he has more which is his own personal experience, and if he is certain his hearers have the power to receive more, then he can give more. But the preacher must confine himself, if he is to gather round him those who are indifferent, to such simple subjects as have been indicated, for comparatively few have the qualifications for receiving more. And even faithful church attenders are not able to take in much more. Our artificial exegesis and complicated dogmatics fly over their heads. They secretly sigh for what is simpler and more practical.

In fine, preachers must get away from the preaching 'whine and jargon,' and begin to speak of God calmly, naturally, and directly, as ordinary cultured people usually speak to each other. And there must be shown consideration for the modern man of culture, who has his very good sides. If he is to be won for Christ it will be by setting forth a fuller and simpler Christianity than the old. The modern man is here, and the Lord gives the pulpit the task to win him for the kingdom of heaven. To win him, preachers must love him, love him with all his faults and weaknesses and sufferings and fermenting unrest and doubts. The modern man has often been unjustly condemned; he has often been unwarrantably wounded. He must be loved. Preachers need a new baptism of the Spirit. They should pray for the fullness of the Spirit that they may be able to understand the age, and feel for it, and find their way to its heart. 'Oh, for a clergy anointed by the Spirit of the Lord to preach the Gospel to the children of our age.'

When Klaveness delivered his lecture at Lund, and when Jansen reviewed Harnack's *Essence of Christianity* in a way which even his friends disapproved, Bishop Heuch again took up his pen, considering that now he had something more dangerous still than *Law and Grace* to battle with, and his book was issued under the title *Against the Stream*¹. No religious or theological book has caused such a sensation in Norway. It went through

¹ *Mod Strømmen*, Christiania, 1902.

six editions in a single year, and that in a country with only half the population of Scotland; and it has called forth support and opposition in every dale and hamlet of the land. It has been followed by *Svar* ('Rejoinder') from the Bishop's hand, in answer to the attacks made on him and his position; and the controversy is only now beginning to subside. Not merely the theological and religious press but the daily newspapers and weekly journals teemed with articles, reviewing the various phases of the controversy. Laymen held great gatherings and passed votes of thanks to the Bishop for his book; and even from America such a congratulatory address has recently come. Last year Heuch was invited to Stockholm to a clerical congress, where he was fêted in an extraordinary fashion; and King Oscar took the opportunity of decorating him with the Grand Cross of the Order of the North Star.

Bishop Heuch's book is uncompromisingly conservative. It was called forth, as we have seen, by the lecture of Klaveness at Lund, and it deals both with that lecture and with certain related modern tendencies. The Bishop skilfully avoids attacking Gustav Jensen (the only person he seems to be afraid of), not so much because of the views he holds, since Jensen is distinctly progressive and outspoken, and his theology is very liberal in expression and tendency, as because of the universal popularity and authority of the man. But he hales before his tribunal Profs. S. Michelet and Lyder Brun, with Chr. Bruun, Jens Gleditsch, and others. It is even said that, when his former friend and colleague Dean Færden sent Heuch his book on *The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Biblical Research*, the Bishop returned it unread. One interesting fact is that in *Against the Stream* Heuch most significantly avoids Brochmann and *Law and Grace*; partly, doubtless, because he had burnt himself severely in the former controversy, partly because he had come to see that Brochmann was after all not so radical and certainly not nearly so extreme as Klaveness and the others, whose opinions were, as he believed, so flagrantly unorthodox, rationalistic, and heretical.

Heuch is a fearless warrior wielding his sword with a skill and vigour that many a younger man might envy. However much we disagree with his treatment of his opponents and his mode of setting forth his views, we must admire his evident honesty

of purpose, his vigour of language and his clearness of expression. But when he blames his adversaries for want of clearness the charge returns upon himself; for the lack of understanding is not due so much to the obscurity of the writers as to the Bishop's inability to look at the questions from their point of view. Perhaps, also, he is incapable of grasping the fact that they are trying to meet new conditions of life and tendencies of the age which he either does not see or does not appreciate, conditions and tendencies with which he certainly does not sympathize.

Against the Stream is controversial from first to last. It is directed against the attempts of certain Norwegian theologians, some named, others unnamed, to throw a bridge over the chasm between the modern consciousness and the Christian faith, between culture and Christianity; attempts which Bishop Heuch thinks will only lead to rationalism and freethought, and are merely an echo from extreme German theology.

In his introduction Heuch tries to show that during the last decade the word *Christian* has gradually gone out and been replaced by *religious*; that the Norwegian clergy are seeking more and more to 'convert their sermons into religious lectures, so stripped of everything definitely Christian that the preacher might just as well be a Jew or a Unitarian.' This method of procedure will make religion more palatable and marketable, they seem to think, and 'it is better to get a little sold, than to be left with the whole stock on hand.' But this stinting of the Christian preaching, until it contains merely universal religious truths, is a treason against Christianity. Christianity is the personal relation to God through faith in Jesus Christ. What God demands is not that we shall attempt to do as much good as possible, but that we shall confess the evil of our utterly depraved hearts. Morality, he holds, in multitudes of cases, leads only to self-righteousness, and thereby becomes a hindrance to the salvation of the soul. 'The full-toned preaching of the Gospel is to these moralists a nauseous drink composed of unsalted silliness, unsettled extravagance and mawkish sentimentality, which they cannot swallow.' It may be 'very difficult to say what relaxes and deadens consciences more, whether a life in vice or the ordinary self-righteousness of respectability which satisfies itself with always fulfilling something of the law.'

The 'new preaching' which is demanded by Norwegian 'theological authorities' consists in the attempt, out of respect to the great majority in our age who have a weakly developed religious sense, to show them a way to heaven 'meanwhile, without their having anything at all to do with Christ, by merely praying the good-natured Universal Father to forgive them their sin because they are sorry and have good intentions.' These preachers will, according to the Bishop, 'meanwhile' first make the godless rationalists, and thereafter Christians; although German rationalistic theologians, from whom Norwegian 'scientific theologians' have derived their novelties, only try to make people rationalists. And then they clothe their preaching with some rags of Christian precept which conceal what is underneath. The Bishop says that, of course, none of the new men deny the Divinity of Christ, but all the same they reduce Him to a religious genius, practically saying that God has come into the world without serious purpose. What really faces us is this: 'Rationalism preached by Christian men who know not what they do.'

In the section on 'The Words of the Cross,' the Bishop attacks the scientific theologians who try to explain the connexion and reasonableness of the thoughts which are realized in the work of salvation; but they only manage 'to illuminate Mont Blanc with a night-light.' Their many theories of the Atonement merely serve to make the Christian faith ridiculous. Heuch says that according to Klaveness Christ's death on the Cross was necessary as a 'seal' of His preaching of God's love. Thereby the crucifixion becomes nothing but an ordinary martyr-death. If it was nothing more, there was no necessity for God to send His Son into the world at all.

Another characteristic of modern preaching, in the Bishop's eyes, is the increasing use of the name 'Jesus of Nazareth.' That name was used in the Bible by those who did not believe on Him. 'That the German rationalists who deny Christ's Divinity represent Jesus as a mere man is only natural; to them He is but the prophet from Nazareth. But that our transition theologians, who assert that they believe on Christ as God and Man, and do believe so, can fancy that they may follow the Germans here is to me inconceivable.'

Heuch also discusses the danger which threatens the faith

from Biblical Criticism, if it is not properly met. It is not through erudite studies we come to certainty about the truth of God's word, but through the power of the word itself. It would not be a good thing if it should be said, 'This man is clever enough to be saved, but that man is not sufficiently endowed to attain to a scientific knowledge of the truth.' The Church would then be dependent on the shifting views of science. 'If we are to be the slaves of men, then it would be better to believe the Pope than the theologians. For the Pope is only one, and his teaching is ever the same; but the theologians are as numerous as the flies in summer and so are their scientific results.'

The Bishop attacks all who wish progress in theology and preaching; 'not only the new theology, but, in a certain sense, all theology even the most orthodox, since I deny its right and power to prepare more or less logical theories in defence of God's great works.' Theology has at all times injured the faith, therefore 'Away with all theology' is the burden of the Bishop's book. Theology, of course, has always had a desperate inclination to think. The only theology that Heuch will have is a theology that *must* not think. Immediately there is a conflict between faith and thought, the door is slammed in the face of thought, and the Bishop cries *Credo quia absurdum*. The theology of every age has been based on reason; but it is very significant that Heuch closes his book by telling us that *rational* is synonymous with *rationalistic*.

The Bishop expects opposition to his book, but he does not fear the opposition; nor does he fear defeat. Only, he is afraid that the conflict will challenge the personal relation to God of the various individuals mentioned, and he does not wish that; he has only aimed at what they teach, not at what they are.

Against the Stream is really an assault on theology, and it passes sentence on theologians. The assault is vehement, and the sentence is the extreme penalty of the law. The Church is called to arms to rise and defend its sanctuaries. The Bishop's strong words are the words of a man with intense convictions; and such a man's words are seldom without effect. But unfortunately Heuch has laid himself open to charges of unfairness, lack of charity, and even dishonesty; and as these have been

brought home to him the case he tried to make out has in many respects suffered if not failed.

Klaveness has defended himself by declaring that the Bishop has misinterpreted his teaching, and he has published *The Conflict of To-day*¹, a volume of sermons bearing on the points specially aimed at by the Bishop. In this volume, and in his larger and very popular *The Gospel for To-day*², he has set forth his views plainly and clearly. He wishes all to know exactly what he does preach and teach, and why. In many cases the Bishop has undoubtedly misinterpreted or misunderstood Klaveness, but there are striking blanks showing that Klaveness does not preach 'the whole Gospel.' Yet absence of mention does not warrant the charge of denial of the truths; and the burning eloquence and human sympathy manifested show the preacher's love for souls and his love for the modern man, and quite explain his immense popularity.

Then again, four of the leading writers and theologians challenged by name in *Against the Stream* subscribed a disclaimer, categorically denying that they held certain of the views attributed to them, and they maintained that no fair-minded reader could place on the language they had used the construction Heuch had given it. In various instances, to make his case strong, the Bishop has taken clauses or sentences from their contexts, and at least in one important passage he changed a word so as completely to pervert the sense and meaning of the author. And by his silence, as well as by repeating in subsequent editions of his book instead of withdrawing the assertions or misinterpretations complained of, the Bishop has alienated the sympathy and lost the support of many who sided with him in his main contention. In Norway, as in other lands, there is a tendency to side with the weak and with those unfairly treated whatever the rights of the case may be.

The Bishop himself is excessively sensitive to criticism and opposition. One is unconsciously led to fancy that his vanity has been touched by the opposition he has met. He seems to have been popular at school and college and as a minister in his pre-episcopal days. But he seems to be afraid of his reputation

¹ *I Dagens Strid*, Christiania, 1903.

² *Evangeliet forkynndt for Nutiden*, 3rd ed., Christiania, 1902.

now that so many, whom he expected to support him, have upbraided him for his unchristian mode of fighting and for his lack of charity.

His health broke down under the strain of the controversy, and it was only with difficulty and with the aid of his secretary, to whom he dictated his *Rejoinder*¹, that he got ready the book. It summed up what he had to say in meeting arguments he could not overlook, and it repeated practically without discount all he had said about the 'transition theologians' and the tendency of the 'new preaching' in *Against the Stream*.

Heuch's main charge against his opponents, then, is that they are secret rationalists and are prepared to convert the Gospel into nothing but morality. They most indignantly and unani- mously deny the charge. Klaveness goes further than any other and further than most are prepared to go. But he is no rationalist, if his sermons are any criterion of his creed. He distinctly maintains the Divinity of Christ, the miraculous Con- ception, the genuineness of the miracles, the Resurrection, &c., although it must be acknowledged that he makes less of the Atonement than is desirable, and his doctrine concerning it is not cast in the usual mould. So far as the evidence goes, although there are some indications that the waves of rationalism from Germany are lapping the Norwegian strand, not one priest or theological professor in Norway is to-day a complete rationalist.

The impression as to the main results of the controversy which remains, after perusing carefully newspaper columns, magazine articles, pertinent pamphlets, and the controversial books, is that there was some reason for the Bishop's protest against the neglect of certain fundamental truths, and against the emphasis laid on less essential points of the Christian faith and life. In Norway, the essence of Christianity, the Atonement of Christ, may have been in danger of being forgotten or lost sight of, and possibly in some quarters there may have been a desire to replace Christianity with a universal religion based on the first article of the Apostles' Creed. But the Bishop's book would leave on one the impression that the preach- ing in Norway is far worse than it really is; at any rate, the

¹ *Svar*, 3rd ed., Christiania, 1903.

volumes of sermons published by those challenged do not warrant the grievous charges made. Extreme supporters of the 'Higher Critical' views of the Old Testament and Harnack's *Essence of Christianity* have also driven some into Heuch's camp. But, on the whole, the Bishop suffers because he does not understand the theology he challenges. His lack of theological insight is very manifest. He owes that it has never been easy for him thoroughly to master an opponent's line of thought and that he has never been in the proper sense a theologian. And this defect so mars and confuses his polemics that he attributes, as we have seen, to his opponents views totally at variance with those they really hold.

The Norwegian Church will probably thank the Bishop for the action he has taken for the sake of the issue and of the main question, and will forget all the rest; although it is not certain that this will satisfy Heuch. The controversy has certainly cleared the air, and has made plain what exalts Christianity above all other religions—Christ the Redeemer; so that, in the first place, the modern idea of a common religion, a mixture of religions, becomes an absurdity, a meaninglessness. Faith in God is common, even faith in a merciful God; faith in a life beyond with rewards and penalties might also be accepted; a claim for love and other virtues too. But that which makes Christianity to be Christianity, is Christ, the Redeemer, and without Him Christianity is annulled. If a mixed religion were originated in which the only elements taken from Christianity were faith in a merciful God, a demand for a moral life, and belief in future rewards and punishments, then Christianity would be really excluded from the mixed religion.

In the second place, the controversy has brought clearness as to how many Christians in fact have not reached any further than to the first article of the Apostles' Creed. In short, the controversy has made clear what is the essence of Christianity. But the weakness of Bishop Heuch's standpoint is that he can be satisfied with an untenable theory of the Atonement which makes Christ's sacrifice a sacrifice in the Old Testament style and spirit, only much greater. It is not seen why Christ might not just as well have been the Redeemer if Herod had slain Him and poured out His blood with that of the Innocents at

Bethlehem. The weakness in Heuch is that his theology, without his knowing it, is scholastic rather than biblical; when it comes to the point, it is even rationalistic in so far as it is a product of human reason, of human thinking, but not faithful to revelation, biblical.

Along with Gustav Jensen and the recently deceased Prof. Fr. Petersen, there is no doubt that Thv. Klaveness and Bishop Heuch have been the best men of the Norwegian Church for many years. Norway may well thank God for them. The two opponents, Heuch and Klaveness, have both in a high degree 'the failings of their virtues'; and the one has no right to say to the other 'I have no need of thee.' *Against the Stream* and the subsequent controversy have led the Norse in every corner of the country to think and speak about religious and theological questions with results that can only be for the good of the Church and the benefit of true religion. Klaveness and those who support him will doubtless see that Heuch and his comrades neither lead Norway back to a cast-iron orthodoxy nor bring about a paralysis of theological thought. And Heuch and his host will be able to give the opposite tendency, the 'transition theologians' and the champions of the 'new preaching,' a forcible lecture on reverence for the old doctrines, a lecture which it will probably do them no harm to hear. Bishop Heuch will thus by his vehement appearance *Against the Stream* have helped to turn the stream into a better channel.

J. BEVERIDGE.