

PERSONALITY
HUMAN AND DIVINE

J. R. ILLINGWORTH, M.A.

PERSONALITY HUMAN AND DIVINE

BEING
THE BAMPTON LECTURES

BY
J. R. ILLINGWORTH, M.A.

Ἦν ἄρα ὡς ἔοικε πάντων μέγιστον μαθημάτων τὸ γινῶναι αὐτόν· ἐαντὸν γάρ τις ἐὰν
γνώῃ Θεὸν εἴσεται.—*Clem. Alex.*

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EXTRACT
FROM THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,
CANON OF SALISBURY

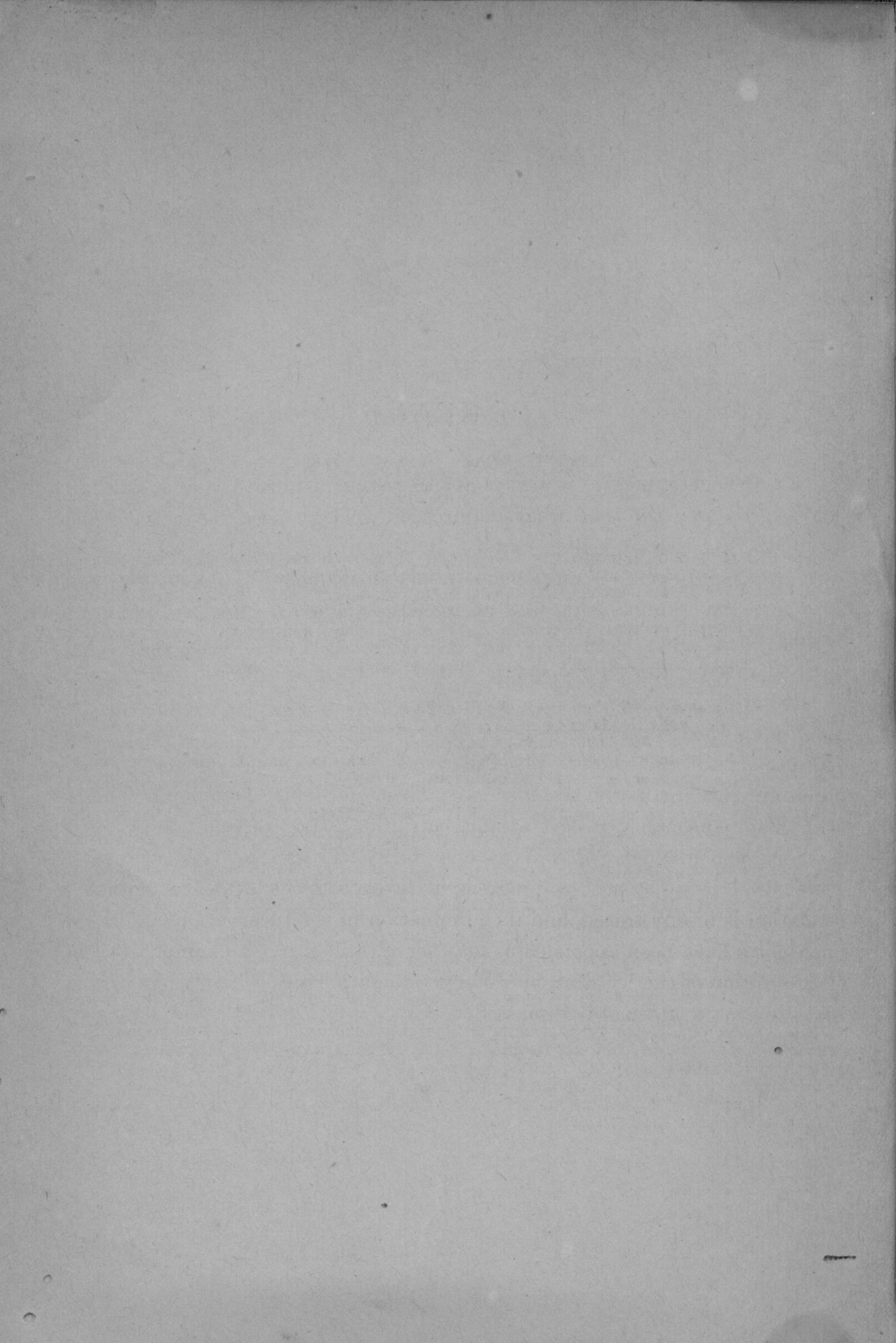
—“I give and bequeath my Lands and Estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and
“Scholars of the University of Oxford for ever, to have and to hold all and singular the
“said Lands or Estates upon trust, and to the intents and purposes hereinafter mentioned;
“that is to say, I will and appoint that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford for
“the time being shall take and receive all the rents, issues, and profits thereof, and (after
“all taxes, reparations, and necessary deductions made) that he pay all the remainder to the
“endowment of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be established for ever in the said
“University, and to be performed in the manner following :

“I direct and appoint, that, upon the first Tuesday in Easter Term, a Lecturer may be
“yearly chosen by the Heads of Colleges only, and by no others, in the room adjoining to the
“Printing-House, between the hours of ten in the morning and two in the afternoon, to
“preach eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St. Mary’s in Oxford,
“between the commencement of the last month in Lent Term, and the end of the third
“week in Act Term.

“Also I direct and appoint, 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 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.

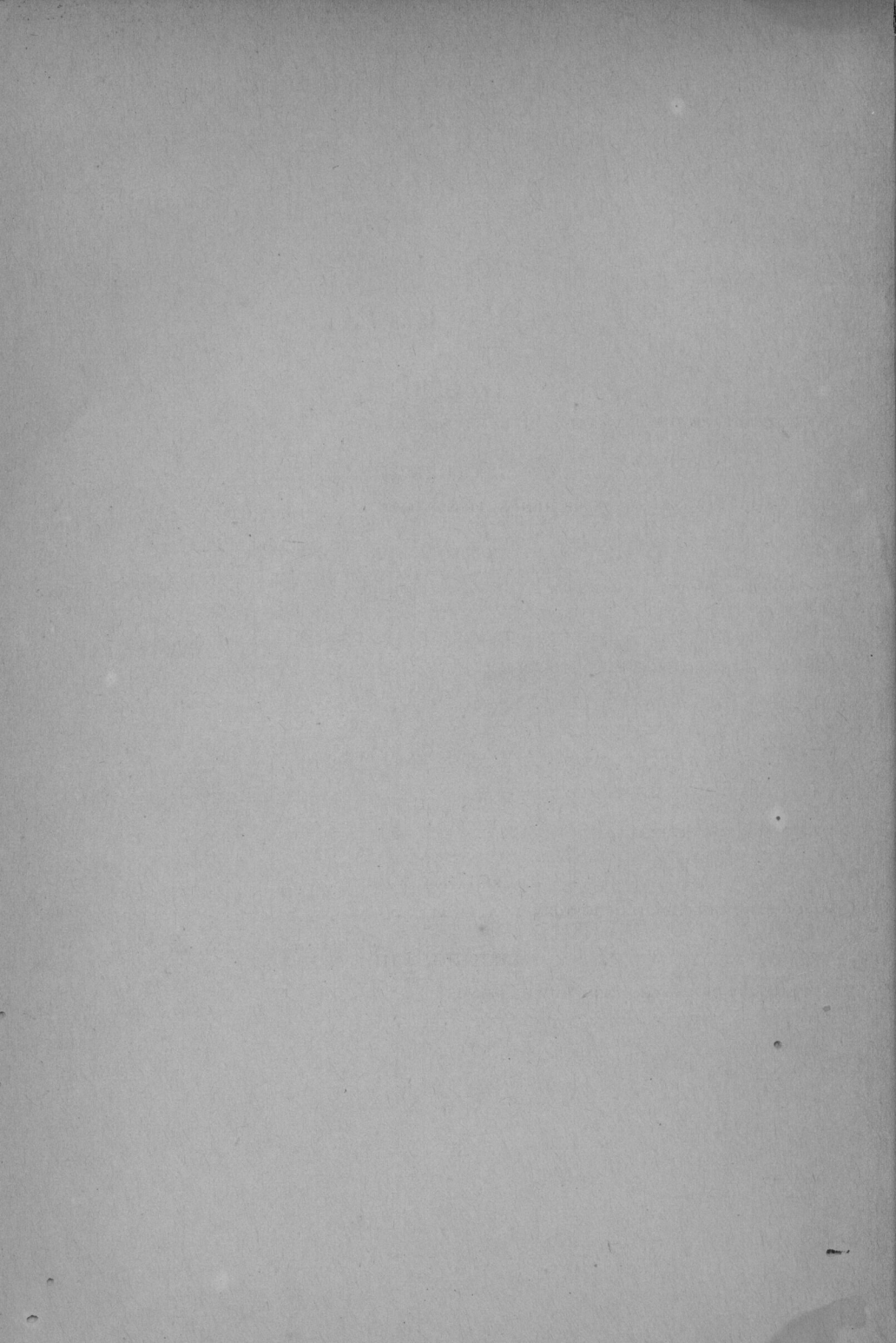
“Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be
“always printed, within two months after they are preached; and one copy shall be
“given to the Chancellor of the University, and one copy to the Head of every College, and
“one copy to the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one copy to be put into the
“Bodleian Library; and the expense of printing them shall be paid out of the revenue
“of the Land or Estates given for establishing the Divinity Lecture Sermons; and the
“Preacher shall not be paid, nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are printed.

“Also I direct and appoint, that no person shall be qualified to preach the Divinity
“Lecture Sermons, unless he hath taken the degree of Master of Arts at least, in one of the
“two Universities of Oxford or Cambridge; and that the same person shall never preach the
“Divinity Lecture Sermons twice.”



PREFACE

AN apologetic preface is always apt to savour of unreality, as it naturally invites the criticism that what requires an apology need never have been printed. Yet it is difficult to publish anything upon a serious subject without some expression of one's sense of its inadequacy. I will merely say, therefore, that the following lectures make no claim to originality; they are simply an attempt to arrange and summarize what has already been expressed with greater amplitude and fuller authority elsewhere; in the hope of attracting some, whose leisure in these eager days may be limited, to reconsider the important question with which they deal. Their main contention is that, whereas physical science has nowise weakened, critical philosophy has distinctly strengthened the claim—the immemorial claim—of human personality, to be a spiritual thing; and, as such, the highest category under which we can conceive of God. And as this conception would lead us to expect a progressive revelation, the evidence of such a revelation is briefly traced, and its culmination in the Incarnation vindicated. Such notes have been appended as may serve to illustrate and emphasize the main position of the lectures, by reference to authorities where their various issues are more adequately discussed.



CONTENTS

LECTURE I

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTION OF HUMAN PERSONALITY	PAGE 11
--	------------

LECTURE II

ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTION OF HUMAN PERSONALITY	22
---	----

LECTURE III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTION OF DIVINE PERSONALITY	33
---	----

LECTURE IV

ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTION OF DIVINE PERSONALITY	44
--	----

LECTURE V

MORAL AFFINITY NEEDFUL FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF A PERSON	57
--	----

LECTURE VI

RELIGION IN THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD	68
--	----

LECTURE VII

RELIGION IN PRE-CHRISTIAN HISTORY	80
---	----

LECTURE VIII

JESUS CHRIST THE DIVINE AND HUMAN PERSON	91
--	----

NOTES	103
-----------------	-----

PERSONALITY

HUMAN AND DIVINE

LECTURE I

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTION OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

WHEN Xenophanes, in a passage now almost too familiar for quotation, first brought the charge of what is called anthropomorphism against religion, he initiated a mode of criticism which has not yet grown old. Again and again in subsequent history the same charge has been made and met; yet it survives, and in the present day is being continually urged, as a plea for the adoption of agnostic opinions. 'The lions, if they could have pictured a god,' says the old Greek thinker, 'would have pictured him in fashion like a lion; the horses like a horse; the oxen like an ox'; and man, it is implied, with no more justification, as inevitably considers him a magnified man. In our own day Matthew Arnold has employed his graceful pen to the same effect, though with less than his usual grace; and still more recent critics have reiterated the complaint. Meanwhile, as the phenomena of savage belief, with which we

are now so well acquainted, may be easily adduced in favour of a similar conclusion, the reflections of *Caliban upon Setebos* have come to be regarded in many minds as at once an adequate illustration and complete condemnation of all theology.

Now the plausibility, and therefore the malignity, of this fallacy consists in the fact that it is half a truth; and as there can be no question of its immense prevalence in contemporary thought, nor of its disintegrating effect upon religion, and through religion upon society, an apology will hardly be needed for one more attempt to reconsider the argument from human to divine personality. This can, of course, only be done in outline, if it is to be done within moderate compass: but outlines—mere outlines—are not infrequently of use, as enabling us to estimate in a single survey the number, the variety, the proportion, the reciprocal interdependence of the diverse elements in a cumulative proof. They supply that synoptic view which, while immersed in the controversial pursuit of details, we are apt to lose, and which is never-

theless essential to our judging the details aright, as parts of one articulate whole.

Accordingly, the object of the following pages is to review our reasons for believing in a Personal God; reasons in which, from the nature of the case, there is no novelty, and which have been stated and restated time out of mind; but which each generation, as it passes, needs to see exhibited afresh, in their relation to its own peculiar modes of thought.¹ This will involve a brief analysis of what we mean by personality; and as the present fulness of that meaning has only been acquired by slow degrees, we shall need first to cast a glance over the principal stages of its development.

Man lives first, and thinks afterwards. Not only as an infant does he breathe and take nourishment and grow, long before the dawn of conscious reason; but his reason, even when developed, can only act upon experience, that is upon something which has already been lived through. He makes history by his actions, before he can reflect upon it and write it. He takes notice of the facts of nature before he can compare and criticize and shape them into science; while history and science in their turn supply material for further thinking, and are examined and sifted and generalized and gathered up into philosophy. And though, of course, reason has an eye to the future, and works with the view of preparing for fresh developments of life, its foresight must spring from insight; it can only predict what is to come by discovering the law of the phenomena, the formula of the curve, the lie of the strata in the past. It follows

from this that thought is always in arrear of life; for life is in perpetual progress, and, while we are reflecting on what happened yesterday, some further thing is happening to-day.

'When philosophy,' says Hegel, with a touch of sadness—'when philosophy paints its grey in grey, some one shape of life has meanwhile grown old: and grey in grey, though it brings it into knowledge, cannot make it young again. The owl of Minerva does not start upon its flight until the evening twilight has begun to fall.' Consequently no system of philosophy, no intellectual explanation of things, can ever become adequate or final. Reason is incessantly at work, to render more and more explicit the implicit principles, or principles which are implied in life; but there is always an unexplained residuum, an unfathomed abyss in the background, from which new and unforeseen developments may at any moment, and do from time to time, arise.

On the other hand, it must not rashly be concluded from this, that thought is an impotent abstraction, a pale imitation of the full-blooded reality of life, like a faded flower, or sad memory of pleasure past and gone. We do indeed in the course of our thinking often deal with abstractions, isolated aspects of things—such as quantity, quality, and the like; but only as a means to an end, a subordinate phase in an organic process. Thought as a whole does not tend towards the abstract, but towards the concrete. It issues, as we have seen, from the lesser to reissue in larger forms of life, as fruit issues from a flower to reissue in fresh seed of flowers. It penetrates the dull mass of life till the whole becomes luminous

¹ See Note I.

and glows. It is an inseparable element of the highest life; or rather it is life raised to its highest power. Thus a man lives, and as he lives reflects upon his life; with the result that he comes by degrees to understand what is within him; his capacities, his powers, the meaning of his actions; and as he does so he ceases to be the creature of mere outward circumstance, or mere inward instinct: he knows what he is about, and can direct and concentrate his energies; his life becomes fuller, richer, more real, more concrete, because more conscious; his thought is not a mirror which passively reflects his life, but, on the contrary, his life is the image, the picture, the music, the more or less adequate language of his thoughts. Or again, a great historical movement, in religion or in politics, will often begin blindly; stuttering, stammering, striking at random; till in process of time it gradually awakes to its own true meaning, and grows intelligent, articulate, effective, the recognized expression of a grand idea. Thus in a sense we may say truly that thought realizes or invests things with more complete reality, and so that only what is rational is real.

Now in nothing, perhaps, is this order of development from life to thought, from fact to explanation, better exhibited, than in the process by which man has come to recognise what we call his personality, all that is potentially or actually contained within himself—in a word what it means to be a man. Uneducated races, as we know, tend to personify or animate external nature; and though this, of course, implies some consciousness of their own person-

ality, it is obviously an incomplete and unreflective consciousness; for it has not yet reached that essential stage in definition which consists in separating a thing from what it is not. This distinction of the personal from the impersonal region, or, in other language, of persons from things, would appear to have been a gradual process. And even when we reach the climax of ancient civilization, in Greece and Rome, there is no adequate sense, either in theory or practice, of human personality as such. This may be seen, without at present pausing to define the term, by looking at two of its obvious characteristics. Personality, as we understand it, is universal in its extension or scope—that is, it must pertain to every human being as such, making him man; and it is one in its intention or meaning—that is, it is the unifying principle, or, to use a more guarded expression, the name of the unity in which all a man's attributes and functions meet, making him an individual self. And on both these points the theory and practice of the ancient world was deficient. Aristotle, its best exponent, views some men as born to be savages (*φύσει βάρβαροι*), and others as destined by nature to be slaves (*φύσει δοῦλοι*), whom he further regards as living machines (*ἐμψυχα ὄργανα*), and women, apparently in all seriousness, as nature's failures in the attempt to produce men. And Plato before him, despite of those flashes of insight which are beyond his own and most subsequent ages, had, on the whole, taught much to the same effect. And this is an accurate philosophical summary of the practice of pre-Christian society. On the other

hand, in his psychology and ethics Aristotle fails to unify human nature. In the former he leaves an unsolved dualism between the soul and its organism, the active and receptive faculties (*νοῦς ποιητικός* and *νοῦς παθητικός*); while in the latter he has no clear conception of the will, and hardly any of the conscience—the two faculties or functions which alone identify our various scattered emotions and activities with our real self. And here too he is only reflecting the facts of contemporary society, which was characterized by a fatal divorce between the various departments of life, the public and the private, the moral and the religious, the intellectual and the sensual; excellence in one region being easily allowed to compensate for licence or failure in another. Here and there may be found sporadic exceptions to this as to all other historic generalizations; but they are few and far between, and nowhere rarer than in the class where we should most naturally have expected to meet them—the professed teachers of philosophy. As a rule it is beyond dispute that neither the universality nor the unity of human personality, its two most obviously essential features, were adequately understood in pre-Christian ages; though stoicism was beginning to pave the way for their recognition. But the advent of Christianity created a new epoch both in the development and recognition of human personality. Its Founder lived a life and exercised a personal attraction, but is expressly reported to have told His followers that the full meaning of that life and its attraction would not be understood till He was gone: ‘When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, . . .

He shall glorify me, for He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.’ ‘He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.’ The fact of the unique life came first, the new personality; and then the gradual explanation of the fact, in the doctrine of the person of Christ; an order which is already observable in the contrast that we see between the synoptic and the fourth gospels. In the same way the early Christians began by feeling a new life within them, due, as they believed, to their being in spiritual contact with the living person of their Lord; and enabling them to say ‘I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me.’ ‘Let us therefore do all things as becomes those who have God dwelling in them!’ Then they went on, according to their capacity and the necessities of the time, to give a reason for the hope that was in them. And even in so doing we notice that the first apologists chiefly appeal to the striking contrast between the life which Christians led and that of the cruel, immoral, superstitious, sad, suicidal world around them. Only as time went on, and Christianity came to assume a place of prominence in the great intellectual centres of the world—Antioch, Athens, Ephesus, Alexandria and Rome—were the intellectual presuppositions of this life unfolded; and the Christian theology—that is, the authorized explanation of the Christian facts which had begun with the writings of St. Paul and of St. John—was thus by slow degrees developed.

Our present object, it must be remembered, is purely historical, and we need not therefore pause either to

¹ Ignat. *Ep. ad Ephes.* 15.

defend or criticize the precise form which the development of Christian doctrine assumed. Some development or other must have taken place; for the world cannot stand still. Thoughtful men must meditate upon the things which they believe, and endeavour to give articulate expression to what is implicitly contained in the principles by which they live; while the missionary desire to commend their creed to other minds, and the consequent encounter with intellectual opposition, will naturally increase the need of theological definition. Questions must be asked and answers given; and sooner or later a great religious movement must be philosophically explained. But the philosophical explanation of Christianity, despite of all that has been crudely urged against its metaphysical subtlety, was eminently conservative, sober-minded, slow. The air was full of wild and seductive systems of speculation; and individual Christians were diverging into strange opinions upon all sides. And when the general councils were called together, to correct them, there was indeed much to be deplored in the historical circumstances of their assembling, as well as the tone and temper of many of their members. Yet all this does but emphasize the comparative moderation of their collective voice. Their undoubted purpose, as viewed by themselves, was to define and guard, and to define only in order to guard, what they conceived to be the essence of Christianity, the divine humanity of Jesus Christ, and that with a strictly practical aim. For personal union with the living Christ was felt to be the secret of the Christian life. And had Christ been a mere man as with

the Ebionites, or a mere appearance as with the Docetes, or a Gnostic emanation, or an Arian demi-god, the reality of that union would have vanished. 'Our all is at stake,' Athanasius truly said, in justification of his lifelong conflict. This was the real contribution of the general councils to human history; the more and more explicit reassertion of the Incarnation, as a mystery indeed, but as a fact. The various heresies which attempted to make the Incarnation more intelligible, in reality explained it away; while council after council, though freely adopting new phraseology and new conceptions, never claimed to do more than give explicit expression to what the Church from the beginning had implicitly believed. And we may fairly maintain that modern research has made the historic accuracy of this claim even more apparent, than when Bull defended it against Petavius, or Waterland against Clarke. Thus, then, Christian theology arose, like all other human thought, in meditation upon a fact of experience—the life and teaching of Jesus Christ; and having arisen, reacted, also like other human thought, upon the fact which it explained, illuminating, intensifying, realizing the significance of that fact. Opinions, of course, differ upon the value of this result, according as men believe or deny that it was due to the guidance of the Spirit of God. But our present concern is with a point of history, which admits of no denial, an inevitable but indirect and incidental consequence of the theological ferment of the first Christian centuries, viz., the introduction into the world of a deeper if not an altogether new conception of human personality. God had become man,

according to the Christian creed, and the theological interpretation and application of this fact threw a new light upon the whole of human nature. Men may deny its right to have done so, but they cannot deny the fact that it did so, which is all with which we are now concerned. Not only had human nature in an unique instance been personally united to God; but the whole human race, whether male or female, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, were declared capable of a communicated participation in that union; and this at once threw a new light upon the depth of latent possibility, not only in the favoured few, but in man as such. Again, the holiness which this union demanded, and which was emphatically a new standard in the world, admitted of no dualism. Men were bidden to bring their entire nature into harmony with the law of conscience, focussing thereby their various and divergent faculties and thoughts and feelings in a central unity. The heterogeneous elements were forced into coherence. Man was unified. And further, the sense of responsibility and accountability, which all this implied, led to more elaborate examination of the will and its freedom (*τὸ αὐτεξούσιον*), while the clearer conviction of immortality and judgement emphasized the personal identity of man. Here, then, were the various factors of what we call personality, being gradually thought out. Nor was it only a work of thought. Man's personality was being actually developed. It was becoming deeper and more intense. A new type was appearing, and attempting to explain itself as it appeared. And meanwhile the Trinitarian controversies were ventilating

the question of the relation of subject to object, the question upon which the nature of self-consciousness, and therefore of personality, depends. This took place mainly indeed in the ontological region, as was inevitable from the state of philosophy at the time, but still not without a sense that man was, metaphysically as well as otherwise, made in the image and likeness of God (*εἰκὼν καὶ ὁμολοῖσις*). And though it was not till a later age that the results of this analysis were at all fully transferred from theology to psychology, yet the real foundations of our subsequent thought upon the point were undoubtedly laid in the first Christian centuries, and chiefly by Christian hands.

It is, of course, impossible to trace minutely the development of an idea whose elements gradually coalesced, as floating things are drawn together in the vortex of a stream. Many minds and many influences contributed to the result, while the monasteries provided homes for introspective meditation. But for convenience of summary and memory three names may perhaps be singled out, as at least typical, if not actually creative, of the chief epochs, through which the conception of personality has passed—Augustine, Luther, Kant.

Augustine had his predecessors, especially Origen and Tertullian, in their very different ways; but in introspective power he far surpasses them, as, for instance, when in the *Confessions* he sounds the abyss of his own being:

‘I come to the spacious fields and palaces of memory, wherein are treasured unnumbered images of things of sense, and all our thoughts about them. . . . There in that vast court of memory are present to me