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*Descriptive Prospectus on Application.*

# EVOLUTION IN CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

BY

PERCY GARDNER, Litt.D., F.B.A.

Our theology has been cast in a scholastic mould. We are in need of, and are being gradually forced into, a theology based on psychology. The transition, I fear, will not be without much pain; but nothing can prevent it.

ARCHBISHOP TEMPLE: *Memoirs*, ii, 517.

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## PREFACE

IF any explanation of the reasons for publishing this little book is needed, it may be very briefly given. The writer may claim to be in a sense a connecting link between the old Broad Church and the new Modernism, since he was a personal follower of Maurice and Kingsley, and has lived into the times of Tyrrell and Loisy.

Recently the broad party in the English Church, which after the death of Maurice and Stanley seemed for a time to be quiescent, has shown signs of a revival of activity. It has many adherents among the more thoughtful of the clergy. It has an organisation, the Churchmen's Union, which has already held some very successful conferences, and which has, in the *Modern Churchman*, an able organ in the press. The party has no hostility to either High or Low Church, both of which, in fact, have of late made definite progress towards its point of view. But it does claim



to be represented, like those parties, on important committees of the Church.

But the broad party of the twentieth century bears but a moderate amount of resemblance to the Broad Church of the nineteenth. In the last generation the breadth was largely emotional and commonsense, mere generosity of spirit and a love of liberty. At present its foundations are far more deeply laid in philosophy and in psychology. It is based upon evolution in science and critical method in history; and it demands, not that the great truths of the Christian religion shall be given up, but that they shall be considered afresh in the light of growing knowledge, and restated in a way suitable to the intellectual conditions of the age. Those who make such demands are often attacked as mere intellectuals, and they are told that they have no message for the people. In the first place, this is not true. No doubt an appeal to the better-educated and more thoughtful classes cannot take quite the same form as a popular appeal. But it is manifest, from the appearance and the success of the book called *Faith or Fear*, that a popular treatise parallel to some of those which have been published by more reflective writers appeals to the soldier in the trenches and to the man in the street. There

is a popular as well as a scientific demand for a closer hold upon the great realities of religion as distinguished from the external forms under which they are presented by the Churches, for a religion which will bear the light of day and the discussions of the lecture-room.

But, in the second place, the whole history of Christianity shows that fresh developments of the faith must first appear in works addressed to the thoughtful, and afterwards be made popular by great preachers. When one thinks of the great figures in the history of doctrine, one cannot set any of them down as only popular orators—Clement and Augustine, Abelard and Thomas Aquinas, Calvin and Erasmus, De Maistre and Newman all first addressed an inner circle; though the results of their work were afterwards wide.

That the English Church stands in need of a fresh impulse of enthusiasm and devotion, of a stronger sense of her mission and a closer touch with the people, is generally recognised, and was proclaimed by the authorities who organised the recent Church Mission. But it is equally true, though less generally felt, that she needs a great raising of the intellectual standard in her clergy. Those who are well acquainted with the theological colleges deplore the low standard of intelligence there

allowed. And unless religion satisfies the mind, as well as the heart, a painful clashing occurs, which destroys a clergyman's power for good.

It is not easy to find a name for the modern broad school in the Church. The term liberal has predominantly a political meaning. The term broad may indicate mere laxity and indifference. I have decided boldly to adopt the term Modernist. It also is unsatisfactory, for what is modern is by no means always in the line of progress. And the Roman Curia has attached the term Modernist to a circle of beliefs which seldom if ever was found in the mind of a single thinker: it has created a sort of clothes-horse, on which to hang any views which it regards as dangerous. But we must reflect that nearly all party names were originally the invention of enemies, including even the name Christian; and we may hope to rescue the term Modernist from ignoble use.

This is not a mere personal *apologia*. If I thought I was merely expressing personal views, I should regard my utterance as of small importance to anyone except myself: but I believe, on the contrary, that I represent a general drift of opinion. I do not mean that my colleagues of the Churchmen's Union, or Broad Churchmen in general, would as a