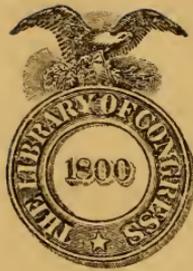


A WORKING FAITH

HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL



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A WORKING FAITH

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By

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no,

In Memoriam

GEORGE BARKER STEVENS, OF YALE UNIVERSITY;
MARTIN KÄHLER, OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HALLE-WITTENBERG;
MAX REISCHLE, OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HALLE-WITTENBERG,
THREE FRIENDS AND FORMER TEACHERS
OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

PREFACE

MAN can have no greater treasure than a vital faith. Such a faith means courage and confidence for our tasks, purpose and unity for our life, moral strength and inward peace, and that fellowship with the Highest which enriches life here and assures the life that is beyond.

Such a faith is not a creed handed down from age to age, nor a system of theology worked out once for all. Every age brings new problems threatening its security. Every age brings also its advance of knowledge and its larger experience. That is why such a faith needs to be constantly restated. That is especially true of our age. History and natural science have given us a new world. Can we hold the old faith in the new world? Every generation of thoughtful men, especially college men, has to face that question anew. That question these pages seek to answer.

But that is not all. Our faith should be richer with every generation. We see that in the field

of conduct to-day, in personal ethics, and in social morality.

“New occasions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth.”¹

That is just as true of religious thought. We are in the midst of a revival of faith. It is a deep conviction that nature is more than a machine, that life is more than material goods, that God is, and that the heart of life is the personal and spiritual. And what is more, men are seeing God and life through the eyes of Jesus Christ. But all this is no mere return to tradition. We must do our religious thinking in the new world, with all of science and all the better knowledge of history that we have gained. The new faith should be richer, more vital, than any statement of the past.

Four words suggest this change and enrichment: natural science, for God to-day is more wonderful and nearer because of the world that science has revealed; historical science, for it has made us know how rich Christianity is in its long history, and how wonderful has been the whole story of God's training of our race; the ethical emphasis, for it has been driving out the institutional and

¹Lowell: *The Present Crisis*.

ceremonial and making religion vital and appealing; the social emphasis, for it has taken religion from the clouds and made it live among men.

These pages seek to give such a restatement of faith. They seek to meet the difficulties which assail a thoughtful man to-day; to show that modern thought has brought not simply question, but enrichment; to set forth that faith in the speech of to-day; and to set it forth as a working faith, that will meet the needs of real life and grow stronger through its experiences.

There are four classes of readers to whom these words are directed. There are the students of our colleges, who need such a faith not only for their own life, but that they may render the full service for which society looks to them, the leadership which men of faith can give. There are the leaders of the young and of thoughtful folks that are older, pastors and teachers who must meet questions and doubts, and who want to bring to their students or hearers not only safe guidance, but a rich and appealing faith as a summons to life. There are the folks outside the Church, or apart from the stream of religious progress, who think lightly of religion and the Church because they

do not know these as they are to-day. Finally, there is the growing number of men and women who want such a vital faith for themselves, a faith that shall interpret the changes that they see, that shall speak their convictions, and that shall meet the needs of the individual life and the demands of the larger social life as it exists to-day.

The substance of these pages has been given in the form of addresses to college students at summer conferences and at various institutions of learning. The style of direct address has been only partly modified. The argument has been put in simple and non-technical form. Readers to whom any of these problems are new, might find it easier and more interesting to begin with chapter three and leave the first two chapters to the end.

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CHAPTER I
GOD IN HIS WORLD

“THIS is a healthy, a practical, a working faith. First, that a man’s business is to do the will of God. Second, that God takes upon Himself the care of that man. Third, and therefore, that a man ought never to be afraid of anything.”

GEORGE MACDONALD in *Robert Falconer*.

“There has never been a day when so many men were seeking for firm convictions of their own. For a conviction that is really conviction, for a faith that can really be believed, our age is still ready to hazard life itself. Human nature is not so low that it can rest in pleasure and the service of self. Men are seeking some conviction as to the meaning of life. Only, it must be a real faith. And here lies the task of the Church, its old task and its new, to bring to the men of to-day a living God and eternal life.”

ADOLF HARNACK, *Reden und Aufsätze*, II, 65.

CHAPTER I

GOD IN HIS WORLD

A WORKING FAITH

WE are to consider in these pages "A Working Faith." A faith does not mean a system of doctrine or a philosophy. It is something vital and practical. We may define it as a conviction concerning a higher Power who can give meaning to our life, to whom we look for help and whom we obey. The faith which we shall consider here is a Christian faith, because its inspiration, its ideal, and its certainty come through Jesus Christ. We shall not go back, however, to ask what all the doctrines are that have been held by the Church or that are contained in the Bible. Our aim is rather personal and practical. We are looking for something upon which to build our life. We call it a working faith for this reason: it must meet the needs of our life and stand the test of living itself. And it must meet a second test, not only that of the world of action, but of the world of

truth. We want no faith that must be walled off from the rest of our thinking. We believe with Emerson: "The Religion that is afraid of science dishonors God and commits suicide. It acknowledges that it is not equal to the whole of truth, that it legislates, tyrannizes over a village of God's empire, but is not the immutable, universal law."¹

Such a faith is not a task, but a gift. It is not a burden that weighs men down, but joy and peace and strength that girds for the task. It does not come to men and say, This is the minimum that you must believe; rather it says, This is a life that you may have. Jesus did not go about talking of the "essentials," the doctrines which a man must hold to be a Christian; He proclaimed the good news, the God in whom men might trust and from whom they might have life.

It is no wonder, then, that men are turning again to faith. Such a revival is with us now. It is true that men are not simply going back to the traditions of their fathers. That would bode ill for religion, for that which lives never simply moves backward. But the temper of men has changed. Henry Van Dyke wrote fifteen years

¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journal*.

ago his "Gospel for an Age of Doubt." To-day we need "The Gospel for an Age of Desire." The spirit of desire is present where once there was at least a touch of self-sufficiency and scorn. Science is more modest to-day. She knows her limits, alike of knowledge and of power, better than two generations ago. What our present condition is will become more clear if we turn for awhile to the age from which we are emerging.

THE PASSING AGE

The past age has been one of science. Never have the boundaries of knowledge been so rapidly extended. Molecule and atom and electron, we have probed for the last element of matter. We have searched the heavens and found infinite worlds beyond the worlds that we have seen, and we have weighed them in our balances and determined their composition. We have searched the past and compelled it to give up its secrets. No problem has been considered insoluble. Men stopped before the last and hardest, and simply said, To-morrow. That overconfidence is gone. We know to-day that the tools of science have brought us no nearer the answer to the final ques-

tions of life than we stood a hundred years ago. All our wide knowledge can give no answer to Job's ancient cry, "Oh that I knew where I might find Him!"

It has been an age of criticism. Men were in earnest. They wanted what was real. No tradition was so hoary, no dogma so long established, as to escape the test. Men wanted all the facts, and they wanted nothing else. But the age which insisted upon the real left the most real to one side. They would deal only with what they could measure and weigh. They knew the dust on their balances, but they knew not what was in man. They asked for facts, and then shut their eyes to the great facts which make for all men, even scientists, the meaning and power of life. Love and truth, right and wrong, man and God, these were outside their ken. It was science grown unscientific. To-day we are making room for the great facts of our moral and religious nature, for the whole realm of the ideal.

It has been an age of power, of material expansion and conquests. The day of iron and steam has made a new industrial world. We have en-

* Job 29: 8.

slaved the forces of earth and sea and sky, and harnessed them to our machines. The single man at the machine can do the work of a hundred men of three generations since. And so there has been a material development for which there is no parallel in history. The world's wealth to-day is incomparably greater than in any previous age. A generation ago nations gloried in that power and boasted of their advance. We are far from confident to-day. The material development has multiplied problems for us instead of solving them. Our increased material power seems only to have made our moral weakness the more plain. With all our wealth, there was never more bitter or widespread social discontent. We have wealth that is selfish and insolent, and poverty that is the more bitter because it is needless. And disease and vice and political corruption are still with us. The age of boastful power has not had power enough to solve these questions. Nor has it served our need to add science to our wealth. Only moral and religious forces may meet these needs, and only a new age of faith can supply these forces.

The experience of the past age has not been without its fruitage, even for faith. We shall not

go back to the beliefs of an earlier age. We must move on to something higher and richer, and the age of science and criticism and material development will help us. The science and criticism, as we shall see, have helped to purge out old errors and narrow views. They have driven us to a larger conception of religion. And even our material progress and social problems have helped to force religion down from the clouds of theory and sentiment and back from the dreams of another world, to face her real task of establishing a kingdom of righteousness upon earth.

CAN I BELIEVE IN GOD

The first article of any faith is God. Because ours is a working faith, we shall not talk of the being of God in itself, but shall ask rather whether we can believe in such a God, and what He means for our life and for this world. But some one may interpose right here: "What we want is something practical, and you are falling back already into dogma. It is not a theory that this world needs, but a life."

Do we need a God for our working faith? Is it not enough to say, I believe in the good will

and the kind heart? A little girl was wont to play church, and the play went something like this: "Peoples, stand up. Peoples, sing. Peoples, sit down." And the sermon that followed was always the same, "Peoples, be good." There are many sermons that are summed up in that word, but this life of ours needs far more than that. It is not enough to say, "Peoples, be good." It is not enough that we shall try to be good ourselves. Is there no power to give us victory in our own lives? And what of the world fight against the forces of evil, does the issue hang upon your little effort and mine? What is on the throne of this universe? Are the stars fighting in their courses against Sisera? Is our little kindness just a helpless eddy in a great world current that, cruel and resistless, sweeps us all on at last to the same oblivion? Or is our kindness begotten of some great heart of kindness that rules this world?

But here is another objection that is raised. Though the self-confident unbelief of an earlier day is largely gone, the voice of doubt is not yet stilled, and it tells us that we can not believe in a God in this world. In a popular way these objections may be put in fourfold form: (1) There is

no need of God for this world. The world is simply a gradual evolution to be explained by the forces that are resident in it. (2) There is no room for God in the world. The world is simply a great mechanical order, where everything happens according to law. (3) We can not know God if there be one. (4) The world is full of evil; we can not believe that a good God rules it.

There are two reasons why we may well take up these questions with care. We have already agreed that our working faith is not to be shut up in a separate compartment and kept from all disturbing facts. It must live in the whole world of our thought, and it must be strong enough to bear the burden of life's chief interest which we are placing upon it. Further, we shall find that these great questions, and the theories of science which lie back of some of them, so far from shutting us off from faith, may help to free us from casual error and drive us to deeper and larger truth. It need not be added that these great questions can not be taken up in detail. We want to face the issue fairly, but consider it only so far as it bears upon our question. The last of the problems will be considered in the next chapter. The

first three, which we may call the objections of evolutionism, naturalism, and agnosticism, we will consider now.

THE OBJECTION FROM EVOLUTION

We turn, then, to the objection made in the name of evolution. The position taken is somewhat like this: "The old explanation of the world was that of creation. Now, however, we know that the world came to be gradually, by the forces of nature herself working from within, and not by a creative power from without. These inner forces and these laws explain all things. There is no need whatever to go outside and suppose a creating God."

The one point that must be made absolutely clear here is the distinction between evolution as a working theory of science and evolution as a philosophy. The task of science is simply to explain the order and nature of happenings in the world. It tells how things behave. It is not the task of science to tell what is the ultimate nature of things or their final meaning. That belongs to philosophy. Scientific evolution is the attempt to explain how the world of nature as we know it came to be. It lays down two main principles: first, the

world of to-day came to be gradually instead of by great leaps or at some single moment; second, it came in some way by forces working within, not imposed from without.

In this broad sense we are all evolutionists to-day. We are all trying to understand things as they are by studying the history of how they became. We apply this to society and religion just as we do to geology and biology. Of course, even in science evolution is not a solution, but a working tool. Darwin's case affords a good illustration of the distinction. He showed men that evolution was the principle to be used for studying the development of organic forms. Scientists all use this tool which he put into their hands. But his solution of the problem, his particular theory of evolution, is still subject for difference of opinion.

It was not unnatural that men felt at first that the idea of evolution was an answer to all questions of life. Its good standing in science was used as a cloak to cover all sorts of philosophical shabbiness and emptiness. Two simple questions will show the failure of evolutionism as a philosophy. First, what is the ultimate origin of this world of life that we see? Second, what is its meaning and

goal? Science does not need to answer these questions, philosophy must.

Take the question of origin. Darwin closes his "Origin of Species" with these words: "There is a grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, while this planet has gone circling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved." Tyndall declares that he must "cross the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in matter . . . the promise and potency of all terrestrial life."³ But these first forms of life of Darwin, or this primitive fire mist of Tyndall which has the "promise and potency" of all life, are not all that is necessary for the evolutionist. You can not have evolution without variation. Where does it come from? To call it fortuitous is to beg the question. That would be a denial of the reign of law at the beginning by those who insist upon it so strenuously later on. Here is the fact of heredity that is just as necessary to start up evolu-

³*Fragments of Science*, II, 191.

tionary housekeeping. And with these granted we might as well concede the rest. That is nothing less than this marvelous world-all itself, not as an inert and undifferentiated mass, but charged with power and informed by a marvelous complex of law and order. All this we grant freely to scientists like Darwin and Tyndall, but not to the philosopher who calls himself evolutionist. The philosopher must explain. Where does he get fire and forces and laws, heredity and variation and all the rest? Until then we can not agree that he has a sufficient explanation of the world. Until that time we will simply say that modern science with its evolution has not ruled out God, but has given us a more wonderful conception of His working.

In the same way we must say that we can not accept evolutionism as a theory of the world until it can also explain the meaning and the goal of the world. Here are questions that men asked when the world was young. They will ponder them when Laplace and Darwin shall lie as far back for human thought as Saracen science or Babylonian astronomy to-day. For the end of things claims not only our deepest interest as men,

but alone reveals the true nature of being. It is not enough to study the history of the man. It is not enough to discourse about phylogenetic and ontogenetic series. We must study the man, the man at his highest, the end of the series. The real explanation of things lies at the end, not at the beginning. The key to the meaning of the world is not in nature, but in the Kingdom of God; not in fire-mist and cell, but in that

“far-off, divine event,
Toward which the whole creation moves.”⁴

It is this last step that gives us the key by which we unlock the meaning of the first cause.

THE OBJECTION FROM NATURALISM

The second objection is that of naturalism, of which, indeed, evolutionism is but a phase. The modern idea of nature is that of a constant development through inherent forces according to natural laws. What we have is just a great machine moving according to inexorable law. The form is ever changing, but every change is absolutely explained by what has gone before. The wheels move round. We have motion and change of position;

⁴Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, conclusion.

that is all. Nothing old is lost, nothing new comes in.

Before we question this new naturalism we must understand the old supernaturalism which was the popular orthodox theory of yesterday. The old theory was dualistic. It drew a line through the world. On the one side was the natural, on the other the supernatural; on the one the sacred, on the other the profane. The supernatural was the direct action of God. The natural was the ordinary course of the world. In the beginning God made the world; that was supernatural. Then He left it to go on its regular course; that was natural. Now and then, at special times and for special purposes, He reached down into the course of events to work a miracle, to inspire a prophecy, to dictate a sacred writing, to shape the history of Israel or the founding of Christianity. Other events were natural, other history was profane. The supernatural was used where the natural explanation gave out. It was this supernatural that was used to show the being of God. The supernatural became, in a sense, the unnatural, and God was shut up to one part of His world.

We can see what happened. The growth of

science extended the "natural" explanation, and every such extension seemed to cut away just so much more of the foundation of faith. Astronomy showed a universe in the making—under natural law. The new geology showed us an earth that had come to be in similar manner. Darwin was only the last in this series. The forms of organic life were the last stronghold of the old static view. Were not the various species fixed and immutable? To cross them meant sterility. They could not have come out of anything else. They must, therefore, have been due to an original act of creation. When Darwin and organic evolution came, and showed how these, too, were under the reign of law and had been brought forth by gradual evolution, it seemed as though God had been driven out from His last place in nature.

But one step remained: the theory of the conservation of energy and correlation of forces. Upon this theory men built up at last an absolute "naturalism," a real mechanical world-view. Nothing new can come into the world. What we see is simply forces changing their form. Life itself adds nothing, but simply takes and gives back again. The world is a big machine. It is a closed

circuit; there is no room for God in it, and no chance for God to break in. There is nothing but matter and motion, or matter and force.

Now, the first error in all this is one of which both theologian and scientist were guilty. The former found God and the "supernatural" only where the "natural" failed. His world was a dualism with two kinds of explanation: nature and God, natural and supernatural. He must fight for some place where nature could not explain, something that would prove God. The business of the scientist was to find the "natural" explanation, and his goal was a monism with nothing but nature and law. The fault of both was in the idea that God was absent where natural law was present. Both failed to see that orderly succession was God's way of working in His world, just as the progressive development was God's way of creation.

How theology has profited by this schooling of science we shall see later. Now we must look at the other side. Again, it is not the scientist, but the philosopher, that we are criticising. I might better say the dogmatist. The dogmatist is the man who is so in love with his theory that he shuts

his eyes to the facts. Sometimes he is in the theological camp, but not always. It is dogmatism that we have here, not science, and the real scientific spirit must correct it. For the spirit of modern science is the desire to see things as they are, and to see all things.

The trouble with naturalism is that it is unscientific; it leaves out of account the most real and fundamental fact of life. That is the fact of personality. Our conception of reality to-day is dynamic. Matter itself we conceive in terms of action, of force. It is not some dead, inert thing that is real only because you can not destroy it. Nothing is real except as it works, as it has power, life. But the most potent of all reality is the personal. What difference does it make that you can not weigh it or measure it? We see what it works. Look at human history. Just as soon as the personal appears, we have new forces, new laws. The physical is the setting for these forces, conditioning them, used by them. But the heart of history is the personal, and there lies its motive power. One name is enough to prove it. Jesus means more than a new dream in the hearts of men. Nineteen centuries are the continuous register of His su-

premacY over material forces as well as over the hearts of men. The changed boundaries of empire, the migrations of peoples, great voyages of discovery, new industries and new institutions all bear witness that this Person is the greatest fact and the greatest power in the world.

The same is true in the common life of to-day. The crises in our life bring it out, whether for man or nation. Then we see that it is the personal and ideal that rule, not the physical and natural. The highest power with the men of the *Titanic* was not physical. It was our fine personal ideals of loyalty, courage, duty, self-sacrifice. These words do not stand for anything that you can weigh or measure. You can not set them forth in natural law. If they are real, the scheme of naturalism breaks down. If naturalism be right, then such words are the breath of fools. If the only power be physical, if the only standard be the measure of force, what folly to save weak women and children, and let the strength and skill of manhood go down! But the world saw in the deeds of that hour not the delusion of a moment, but the finest fruitage of the spirit of our race. The power that could move men to such deeds,

and then bow a whole world in homage before them, is the highest power that the world knows.

Our social life to-day is showing this same power of the personal and ideal. It is easy enough to discern the material forces that are at work in our modern political and industrial life. Too often our institutions have been merely the organs of selfishness and brute force. To-day they are undergoing a change. It is the human, the personal, the ideal that is coming to the fore. And these impalpable forces, breathing a love for man and a passion for righteousness, are overturning ancient institutions founded on force and greed, and shaping the order of a new age. Love, truth, right, home, country, God—these ideals are the final interests of our human life, and by these men live and die to-day. It is a petty and purblind scheme of things that can not find room for them.

But that is not all. The personal demands not only room, but the first place. If it be real, it must be the highest and the key to all the rest. You must rule it out altogether, or you must put it first. It is supreme or it is nothing. The naturalistic thinker rarely has the courage to accept the logic of his position. He holds to his mechan-

ical scheme, but wants to smuggle in the ideal by some back door. He holds to a mechanical, naturalistic theory of evolution, but is always borrowing for it some garb of Christian thought to make it seem a hopeful and benevolent progress. He tries to rear a structure of justice and mutual regard on the sands of his brute struggle for existence. We can not allow that in logic, we dare not build upon that for life. If the ideal is real at all, then it is the key to all the rest. And we hold with Professor James that it is the fruit and not the root that decides. Naturalism breaks down as a theory of life. The personal is real and is first. Not only is there room for God, but the deepest reality that we know points inevitably to Him.

THE OBJECTION FROM AGNOSTICISM

There remains the objection of agnosticism: We can not know God, even if there be one.

Now, there is a wholesome agnosticism which has a place in our faith. Faith does not mean omniscience. Theology has known too much in the past. We have speculated and dogmatized about first things and last things and the inner depths

of the being of God, and we have been too much wont to identify faith with our declarations about these things. Faith is a personal trust. But it still remains that we must know God in order to trust Him. We do not ask to know the mysteries of His nature, but can we know Him as such a righteous and loving Being that we may commit our life to Him?

Well, what do you mean by knowing? The people who make this objection usually mean one of two things. It is either knowledge through senses: what I can see and touch; more exactly, what I can measure and weigh and count. Or else it is logical knowledge: I know what I can demonstrate. I can prove to you, for example, that the sum of the squares on the two sides of a right-angled triangle is equal to the square on the hypotenuse.

I am quite ready to admit that by neither of these ways may we know God. We can not see Him, we can not demonstrate Him. But that is not the only way of knowing. Such a scheme again leaves out of account the deepest realities of life, life itself to begin with, and love and truth and right and trust and men and God. These, as

we have seen, are the actual forces in our life; they are the realities by which and for which men really live. This is the world of the personal. Our ambitions and hopes and joys and fears, all that gives purpose and power to our life centers here. That is as true of the philosopher and scientist as man, as it is of the rest of us.

But we must go further. How are these men so sure that they can know "things" at all? I do not begin with any world of things. There is no way by which things can walk into me so that I can get hold of them immediately. All that I have is certain feelings and ideas, something that is going on in me. I begin with this personal world in me, not with any world of things. My first step as scientist or philosopher is an act of faith. I will trust these feelings as giving me some kind of reliable report of the world without. I will trust these processes of thought. And I venture to believe that there are other beings who feel and think as I do. I believe this, though I can not see their thoughts or weigh their feelings or demonstrate that there is in them such a world as I know myself to be. Here, to begin with, we have self and truth and trust and other selves.

We have not seen them or demonstrated them. We have accepted them in order to live, and there is nothing more sure for us than these. Once started, we find that this faith works. But without such a working faith we can not move a step toward the knowledge of the world of things.

This third way of knowing, then, is the most important. You may speak of intuition or what you will. It is not simply a theory of knowing, but a theory of what is real. The real things in life are the vital and personal, and we know these not by mere feeling or by mere intellect. We know them by daring and living. We must look at this further as it applies purely to the human before we ask the final question, Can we know the personal God? How do I come to know any of the moral and spiritual elements of life, right and justice and love and good-will? First comes a conviction, an intuition, some sense that these are and are real. Then comes a venture, a surrender to these as that which is worth while. Then comes the knowledge that is given in the actual commerce of life, something far broader and richer than our first vision, at its best something big enough to satisfy our life and strong enough to hold it.

Here is friendship, love. I can not know the soul of another; there is no logic to prove affection. There is a conviction, a venture, an experience. We know only as we dare. All marriage is a noble adventure where it is not an ignoble bargain. The great treasures of life, truth and loyalty and love and the rest, are never known from the outside. They can never be demonstrated to sight or reason. They belong to those who live. They are known only from within.

But some one will say, Have I any right to venture like this upon the unseen and the undemonstrated? Back of that question is a worship of the merely logical, from which we are fortunately escaping. A man's first obligation is not a perfect logic, it is life. "Speculation is a luxury," as Bergson puts it, "while action is a necessity."⁵ Otherwise our ideal would be the centipede, who never moved because he had no sufficient reason for stirring any one of his hundred legs before the rest. The urgency of common life has kept us from such folly. We have acted without waiting for logic, and better knowledge has come with the acting. What is true there is true in the higher

⁵ *Creative Evolution*, p. 44.

realm. The treasures of life have come to those who dared.

“Are there not, Festus, . . .

Two points in the adventure of the diver:

One—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge;

One—when, a prince, he rises with his pearl?”⁶

All this, with equal right, we apply to our knowledge of God. He is the final justice and truth and right and love. He is the Person that is back of all personal. Why can He not speak to me as truly as my friend? You can not picture how? No more can you with your friend. Waves of sound that smite the ear, waves of light that beat upon the eye, these and the touch of a hand are all that come to you, and all this is physical. How the soul of your friend comes into your soul, that is another thing. You can make no picture of that, but you are sure it is real. Has the Infinite Person less chance to speak to us than the finite friend? What happens between us and God is just what takes place when we know the ideal and personal in human relations. Somehow in the heart of man there has been wrought the conviction of God. To that conviction men have given themselves in lives of trust and obedience. It has up-

⁶Browning, *Paracelsus*, I.

held them in sorrow. It has given peace and joy, It has transformed the spirit of their life. And through the life the knowledge of God has grown, the God of righteous demand, the God of gracious help, the God of merciful pardon.

The sin of our lives is not too great trust, but too little. The right to believe is not the right to be credulous. It is not the surrender of our right to think. It does not mean that we shall take unthinking all that comes from past tradition or present authority. It is just the right to trust the highest that comes to us, to believe that truth and right and love are real, and that their name is God. There is a third great mainspring of life besides hunger and love, and that is faith. There is a third need besides food and a friend, and that is the Supreme Friend, God. The old theories as to the origin of religion are passing away. It did not begin as an institution devised by priests, nor as a theory to explain the world. Religion sprang out of the needs of man, and it lives because it meets those needs. The right of faith is the right to live, to live our life at its highest and fullest. It is not only right, but duty. The highest that comes thus to us and works conviction ceases to be

a mere appeal and becomes a challenge. What shall we do with it? Life is imperious. Whether it be the problem of hunger or of truth or of God, its first demand is not logic, but action.

And what lies beyond the venture and the deed? The fine word of John's Gospel gives answer: "He that willeth to do His will shall know."⁷ We may not begin with the "I know," but out of the years in which we trust and obey and walk humbly with God there comes forth ever clearer and richer and stronger the knowledge of God. In that certainty men have gladly yielded life itself. And the language of such experience has always been, not I think, but, in Paul's word, "I know whom I have believed."⁸

What we have been considering so far has been not simply so many objections to be answered. We have been getting material for the question to which we now turn: What is this God whom we need for our working faith, and what is His relation to the world? It is a threefold that we need: (1) We need a God who is in His world. (2) We need a God who is more than this world, who is working out His purpose in it. (3) We need a God with

⁷ John 7: 17.

⁸ 2 Tim. 1: 12.

whom we can have fellowship. These three we need: the presence, the purpose, the person.

GOD AS PRESENCE

We need God as a Presence. Science has given us a new world. We look at the sky at night. Beyond us stretch the infinite spaces peopled by flaming worlds beside which our earth is but a grain of sand. We look back in time. It is no longer the story of the few thousand years that began with Eden and man. To what primeval mist must we go back in thought! What a tale of being moving through endless cycles, before our world even comes into sight! Just as wonderful is the story of the world of the infinitely small, as we follow molecule and atom, ion and electron to the end of our knowledge.

All this is giving us not a lesser place for God, but a larger vision of His being. There is no world apart from God. There is no life that is not in Him. The old idea is gone of a finished and inert world which has some kind of being outside of the God who made it. The atom, which once marked for science the last indivisible element, is now found to be only a world beyond the world that we knew

before, with whirling electrons moving in their orbits. And who knows what we shall find the electron to be? Our new idea of the world is dynamic. And all that vibrant power is one, and that oneness is in God. In the same way the thought of development has given us a truer and more intimate idea of God in His world. The idea of creation is not lost. As we have already seen, evolution is the name for a method, and not the answer to our question as to cause or meaning. We still say, "In the beginning God;" and we declare over against the world as the only answer to its riddle, "God created the heavens and the earth."⁹ But how different our picture is! The world is in the making. Not six days, but endless ages give the story of its creation. And God does not stand outside the world as its carpenter, but moves in it as its shaping and informing life. "Of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things."¹⁰ The whirling electron infinitely small moves in Him. The circling worlds are His deed. The prayer that rises in us is the gift of His life. This is the new world that we can only understand by the doctrine of His presence.

⁹ Gen. 1: 1.

¹⁰ Rom. 11: 36.

“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush aflame with God.”¹¹

Day by day His presence creates this world anew.
Day by day His shaping power leads it on toward
its goal.

The truth of this Presence helps us understand the meaning of natural law. Natural law is not a separate being or power that is above things and rules them. To speak of law in this way is neither science nor philosophy; it is only mythology, even though we dress it in modern terms. Laws are the observed ways in which things behave. So science must say, and it can say no more. For us, however, laws are simply the thoughts of God expressed in His world. We hear a great deal about the reign of law and the uniformity of nature. And men have thought of this great truth as a sort of cast-iron mold which shuts in things and men and God. What it really means is that God is trustworthy. The heart of the world is order, and not chance. God will not do one thing to-day and another to-morrow. He will be true to Himself. Men may build their knowledge and their lives upon that. “Seedtime and harvest, and

¹¹ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, VII.

cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”¹² But to use such a thought against God’s free action in His world, against God’s guidance of nations or answer to man’s prayer, against providence or even miracle, that is unwarranted. The order of nature is God’s self-consistent way of action which reveals His trustworthiness. Back of that order and that way is His great purpose for men. It is ours with open mind and waiting heart to look for what God will do, not to determine what God will not or can not do. That is neither the spirit of faith nor the province of science.

The supreme presence of God is in the life of men. What that means we shall see more fully later. Here it is simply necessary to protest against that old dualism which set the human over against the divine as something foreign to it, which divided the sacred from the profane, and set off for God only one little part of His world as holy. To-day we see His presence in all the life of men and in all history. Not all lives, it is true, have opened to His Spirit, not all nations have yielded themselves to His guidance. But if Jesus could

¹² Gen. 8: 22.

say that not one sparrow fell without His Father, how much more is that true of men and nations? Even the Old Testament had caught that vision. "Thus saith Jehovah to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before Him."¹³ "Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance." "Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"¹⁴ So Amos speaks, and Isaiah, and the great unknown prophet. So we speak to-day: There is no life apart from God, no star whose orbit is beyond His ken, no nation that is without His presence.

What a new vision of God and the world this gives us! Evolution is no blind struggle, but the patience of God working through the ages and slowly filling the world with His larger life as He leads it up in its course. Nature has a deeper beauty because of the glory of the great Spirit who is behind it. History is not a tangle, but a great march. We catch the inner meaning of it all and say:

"Here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can."¹⁵

¹³ Isa. 45: 1

¹⁴ Amos 9: 7.

¹⁵ Browning, *Abt Vogler*.

For every man there are these two ways of looking at life, that of science and that of faith. The one looks at the outward form of life, the other seeks for its inner meaning. The one seeks to describe its order, the other its goal. The one seeks to link all happenings in cause and effect, the other to find the life that flows through it all. And it is the same world, without self-contradiction, that shows these two sides. He alone is wrong who says there is but one side. He is rich who finds this inner presence when other men can only say nature, man, evolution, law.

“A fire mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell;
A jellyfish and a saurian,
And caves where the cavemen dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

“A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high—
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the goldenrod—
Some of us call it Autumn,
And others call it God.

"Like the tides on a crescent sea beach,
 When the moon is new and thin,
 Into our hearts high yearnings
 Come welling and surging in—
 Come from the mystic ocean,
 Whose rim no foot has trod—
 Some of us call it Longing,
 And others call it God.

"A picket frozen on duty—
 A mother starved for her brood—
 Socrates drinking the hemlock,
 And Jesus on the rood;
 And millions who, humble and nameless,
 The straight, hard pathway trod—
 Some call it Consecration,
 And others call it God."¹⁶

GOD AS PURPOSE

In the second place, we need God in His world as a Purpose, as a power greater than the world that is here working out His ends. The thought of God's presence we call immanence, the thought that God is greater than the world we call His transcendence. Both of these we must have for our working faith. It is not enough to have the Presence in all things. What does that Presence mean? Has it a purpose for us? Is there power that will carry out that purpose? There is a lot of shallow

¹⁶ W. H. Carruth.

optimism in our thinking to-day. Some of it is connected with the word evolution. It is so easy to assume that evolution means progress, that there is a sort of natural drift to the higher and better. What the natural drift is we may know pretty well by studying ourselves. The higher with us comes only with clear purpose and resolute will. The natural drift is in the line of selfishness and laziness and too often evil passion. And as to nature, the men of science know better than that. They know that nature simply means the long struggle of the ages in which the weaker has gone down. True there is order in nature. So is there in the prize-ring. But the order of the prize-ring is simply meant to give the chance to the larger measure of cunning and brute strength. It is so in nature. Of love and mercy, of righteousness and goodness it says nothing and knows nothing. Nor is there much more than this when we come to history and look at the dreary succession of rise and fall, and try to find some thread of order in the awful tangle.

Our working faith declares that the Presence in this world means a purpose, and that back of that purpose is a power that is in the world, but greater

than the world. If this world has any meaning at all, it is because we can so believe. With that confidence we can look squarely at the story of the long ages and the hard struggle. We do not mind so much the long, hard road if we can be sure of the end. That is the meaning of this faith. I can not understand the way, but because God is there with His purpose for me and the world, I can be sure of the goal.

“I go to prove my soul!

I see my way as birds their trackless way.

I shall arrive! What time, what circuit first,

I ask not: but . . .

In some time, His good time, I shall arrive:

He guides me and the bird. In His good time!”¹⁷

And it is not a goal for the single soul alone, but for this world: the goal which the Christian Church expresses in the phrase, the Kingdom of God. The world is not a place where God puts men on trial, to receive at last to Himself those who remain true. It is the place where God is working now with men. That is the ground of our optimism. That is why we dare to talk of banishing disease and driving out poverty and overthrowing oppression. That is why we venture the last and most daring hope,

¹⁷ Browning, *Paracelsus*, I.

that some time bitterness and hatred and selfishness shall yield and a new spirit of peace and truth and good-will shall rule all the life of men. We dare believe it because God is no mere permissive presence in His world, but a great power that is slowly working out that purpose of mercy which He revealed in Jesus Christ.

It is our modern Christian thinking that has brought these last two ideas together, the thought of evolution and of Christ. We see to-day their fine congruity. Christ is for us the great revelation of God's purpose. He shows us what it is that God has in view for men. First of all, it is a purpose of mercy to lift men into fellowship with Himself. With that comes the other end, the social end if you will: God is establishing a fellowship, a brotherhood, a communion, in which men shall serve Him by their love and service for one another. At the same time Christ shows us by what forces this end is to be realized; not by might that works from without, but by His own transforming spirit of holiness and love working within. The thought of evolution has given us a double aid. It has given us the forward look, showing us that we could see the meaning of things only

as we looked ahead. And it has shown us God's way of working. For just as the idea of law has made us see that God's way of working is by uniform order, so the idea of evolution has shown us that God works His ends not by sudden catastrophe wrought from without, but by patient progress working from within. Evolution, which does not exclude great crises and epochs, tells us that God's way is that of patient development, whether He be making a world or growing a man or leading the race up to Himself.

GOD AS PERSON

Our final need is this: the Presence must be a Person. It is not enough to know that God is in His world. Can we speak to Him? Does He know? Does He care? It is not enough to say,

"Closer is He than breathing,
Nearer than hands or feet."

Tennyson's other word must be true,

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,
And Spirit with spirit can meet."¹⁸

A beneficent world-order is not enough. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall

¹⁸Tennyson, *The Higher Pantheism*

I come and appear before Him?"¹⁹ "If I have but Thee, I ask for nothing in heaven or on earth."²⁰ The final cry of man's heart is for God Himself. That personal fellowship is the heart of religion. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee."²¹ Such a fellowship man can have only if God be Person.

We need this conviction that God is Person for the sake of our social faith. We come here to the issue that is back of all our social turmoil to-day. Which is first, persons or things? What shall govern our laws and institutions, mere power or the interests of men? Our social program to-day is putting the personal first. We have put down human slavery and political autocracy; now we are putting down industrial autocracy, the right of money to rule because it stands for power as once kings and armies did. The personal is supreme to-day: men and women and children. How can we hold such a program for society if it does not rest upon a corresponding faith. And that faith is this: the ultimate reality of this world is personal. God is not mere power or wisdom or some indefinite spiritual being. God is Person, our Father; the

¹⁹ Psalm 42: 2. ²⁰ Psalm 73: 25, after Luther's Version. ²¹ John 17: 3.

world is made for persons, His children; and our social program will win because it has the God of the world on its side.

It was Jesus' great deed to make this faith in a personal and present God live again in the hearts of men. There is a certain cycle of development through which religion seems to pass among men. It begins as a vision and a fellowship in the heart of some saint or prophet. It becomes a doctrine, a ritual, an institution. And these, which ought to express the life, often serve but to crush it out. Jesus came with the passion for God in His heart. Prayer was the breath of His soul. It was His meat and drink to do His Father's will. He brushed aside the meaningless forms and the endless laws which summed up religion for the people. He showed men God, and then He taught them to say, "Our Father." That was the first Christian creed.

CHAPTER II
IS THE WORLD GOOD?

“LET him, therefore, who would arrive at knowledge, train his moral sense; let him act and conceive in accordance with the noble essence of his soul; and, as if of herself, nature will become open to him. Moral action is that great and only experiment in which all riddles of the most manifold appearances explain themselves.”

NOVALIS, *quoted by Henry Jones in Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, 210.

“As sinners stand up in meeting and confess to the goodness of God, so one who is called afflicted may rise up in gladness of conviction and testify to the goodness of life. The struggle which evil necessitates is one of the greatest blessings. It makes us strong, patient, helpful men and women. It lets us into the soul of things and teaches us that, although the world is full of suffering, it is full also of the overcoming of it.”

HELEN KELLER, *Optimism*, 13, 17.

“Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, ‘A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be
afraid!’”

ROBERT BROWNING, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

CHAPTER II

IS THE WORLD GOOD?

WE have left for a separate discussion that problem which a recent writer has called "The Great Objection." Materialism and naturalism and agnosticism do not so much trouble the common man. But here is an objection that comes home to all, the hardest problem for our thinking as it is for our life. It is as old as Job's cry. Its echo comes to us from Gethsemane. It meets us in every hour of sorrow and in the chamber of sickness and death. How can we believe in a good God with such a world as this? It is all very well for the children to sing,

"The world is so full of a number of things,
I am sure we should all be as happy as kings."¹

But the real world of our grown-up life is very different. How can we put goodness on the throne of the world and say that God is in all its life? What we see is pain inseparable from life, sorrow

¹ Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Child's Garden of Verse*.

and sin everywhere; and no power seems to smite the evil or comfort and shield the good. Where is there in this world the goodness in which we believe? Instead, as Professor James says: "Beauty and hideousness, love and cruelty, life and death keep house together in indissoluble partnership; and there gradually steals over us, instead of the old warm notion of a man-loving Deity, that of an awful power that neither loves nor hates, but rolls all things together meaningless to a common doom."²

Here are four facts about the world that seem to belie our faith. First, nature is cruel. Life everywhere means suffering. Look at this child in mother-arms, her daughter, it may be. What may the mother look forward to for her? Health and friends and a home of her own? Yes, but sorrow, too, and pangs of motherhood, and anxious care for children, and loved ones called by death, and sickness and weakness of age, and then the curtain over it all. That is just the common lot. Second, nature seems to us unmoral. She knows no guilt or innocence. Flood and fire and storm overwhelm all alike. With her inexorable laws she

² William James, *The Will to Believe*, 41.

seems like some great machine through which our helpless lives pass on their fixed course from birth to death. This is not cruelty, for that implies a purpose, and here the terrible fact seems to be just an unknowing, unfeeling indifference. In the third place, the world seems to us not simply unmoral, but immoral. Think of the injustice. The scourge smites good and ill alike. The children bear the sins of their fathers. Day by day we see the innocent and helpless sacrificed upon altars of lust and greed. And not only is there injustice, but apparently its forces actually make for evil. It does not meet the difficulty to philosophize about freedom of the will, or judgment according to light. Here is the question: What is the actual moral impact of this particular world in which a given child is born? Take the paganism of India, where religion and lust may be linked together, or the paganism of New York, where the child of the tenement may be cheated out of pure atmosphere for soul as well as body. What does such an environment mean? What of the heritage that comes from weak, debased parentage? It is hard enough for us to be good who have every favoring influence. What then of these, whom all

life seems to conspire to thrust on the downward way? And fourth, there is the fact of moral evil, the fact of sin. Where did it come from? How can it exist at all if God be holy and if God rules?

In some ways the question is harder for us than for our fathers. We have the social vision to-day. We can not write our theology any longer from a comfortable, optimistic, middle-class point of view. We see too clearly the world of paganism abroad, the millions of India that go hungry to bed each night, the world of the poor, the underfed, the diseased of body and soul in our own land. We know too well what heredity means, what the awful handicap is of the child of weakened body, neurotic, degenerate from its birth. And we can no longer simply say: All this was caused by sin. Pain was a part of the world in long ages before man came. And for us to-day it adds to the problem, rather than settling it, to declare that the children suffer for the sins of the fathers.

That is the problem. If we face the facts and search their meaning we may find not the loss of faith, but a vision into greater depths than we could otherwise reach. And whatever light we may gain in this dark place means far more than

solving a philosopher's riddle. It means hope and strength and cheer for the common tasks and the heavy burdens of life. For our faith needs not only a God in the heavens, but a God whose rule of goodness is in the world.

“This world's no blot for us, nor blank,
It means intensely and means good;
To find its meaning is our meat and drink.”³

There are three mistakes common in the discussion of this question that will need to be corrected, and these will give us the outline for our study. The first is the mistake of the low ideal. The second is the mistake of looking at the individual instead of the social whole. The third is that of looking at the moment instead of seeing life as a movement and regarding its final issue. Against these we set three principles: the moral principle, the social principle, and the principle of development. These three principles, to which we are giving more and more place in our thinking to-day, must help us here as in our other questions.

THE ETHICAL PRINCIPLE

Let us turn first to the ethical principle. Is the world good? What do you mean by “good?”

³ Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi*.

Right here is our first problem, and it is not that of a bad world, but of a bad ideal. The good that men think of in this question is too often a matter of pleasure and of freedom from struggle and pain. Our first need is not to minimize the struggle and the pain, but to hold up an ethical ideal of the good. Materialism as a philosophy is dead to-day; materialism as an ethic is very much alive. That does not imply anything gross. But there is a growing horror of pain, and worship of comfort, and praise of material well-being. We need a new message of idealism, strong, virile, ethical. The good is more than comfort. Life itself is the supreme good, life at its highest and richest.

“T is life whereof our nerves are scant,
Life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.”⁴

Now, the Christian ideal of life as the supreme good includes certain elements. Let me put it in three words: righteousness, love, faith. There must be righteousness, based on man's own choice, the fruit of struggle, wrought out in conduct and character. There must be love, binding man to his fellow, blessing him that gives even more than

⁴Tennyson, *Two Voices*.

him who receives. There must be faith, giving to life its final meaning, its final hope, and its highest fellowship, the fellowship with God. The world that does not make for love and faith and righteousness is not a good world.

Let us apply the test. No world can be good that does not make for righteousness. But is not this our first stumbling-block? The world is so full of unrighteousness, of injustice and wrong, of innocence reaping evil and guilt that goes unscathed. How can a God of righteousness be ruling here? Now, there are two kinds of righteousness between which we might choose in framing our world. The first would be an inflexible world-order imposed from without. Penalty and award might follow openly at the moment of doing, or sin itself might be wholly excluded. Whatever such a world might be, it would not be a human world. There would be no chance in such a world for making men. It might be perfect on a lower plane, but it would never reach the highest. For the highest righteousness for a world is the second kind, not something finished, but something that is being wrought out; not a perfect order handed down, but a life that men choose and love and live and die for.

“Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth’s smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge
the throe.”⁵

What a world it is for this, for a righteousness that is to be built up in the character of men and in the life and institutions of the nations! It brings to man obstacle and struggle, but how can there be moral fiber without this? Power is helpless without resistance, as the engine without the friction of the rail, or the aeroplane without the resistant atmosphere. It brings to man a challenge by its indifference or injustice. But that challenge is a moral opportunity, the call to love righteousness for its own sake. And its very faults and imperfections are but another opportunity. They do not show an evil world, but a world that is being made, in whose making God asks us to take part.

Here is faith. It does not seem a good world for faith. We can not see God, and the hard world does not make it easy to believe that goodness rules. But is there not a misconception here? Faith is not mere assent to the fact of God. It is not a

⁵ Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

sacrifice of the intellect. But neither is it a bare act of mind. It is the moral daring of the soul. It is the surrender of the soul to its ideal convictions. Faith is always the answer to a moral challenge. It is a choice between higher and lower. That is why faith counts for so much, because it has this moral quality. A different world from ours would make faith not easier, but impossible. A world where reward and punishment stood plain beside each deed, a world where God stood visible with penalty and gift, would be a world for belief but not for faith. There would be no Job to cry, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him;"⁶ no psalmist to rejoice in poverty so long as God were but his portion; no glory of Gethsemane, "If it be possible . . . nevertheless, Thy will be done."⁷ We might have a race of servants, but no heroes, no sons. Struggle, question, doubt, these are not the enemies of faith, only indifference and the contentment with what is low and base. Tennyson's word is true when he sings:

"One indeed I knew

.
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true.

⁶ Job 13: 13.

⁷ Matt. 26: 39.

“Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half our creeds.”⁸

And not merely the confidence of faith, but the insight of faith comes this way. What is the highest reach in our thought of God? It is not His wisdom or might, His transcendence or philosophical immanence. It is righteousness, not as an impersonal order, but as a flaming passion; love, not as general benevolence, but as redeeming self-sacrifice. How did man reach it? By revelation, you say. But every revelation is an experience. To whom has the experience come? Why, to the men who have loved and toiled and dared and suffered. An Amos flaming with passion at the oppression of the poor, a Jeremiah with heart doubly torn by love for his people and the certainty of righteous judgment, a Paul making himself the servant of all, a Dante in exile, and a Bunyan in his jail—these are the men whose heart of love and sorrow and whose way of pain have showed them the heart of God.

And it is a good world for love. It could not be a good world without this, for the final wealth

⁸ *In Memoriam*, XCVI.

of life lies here. I know the long tale of strife and hatred, of that law of struggle which begins with "nature red in tooth and claw"⁹ and ends with the war of nations and the fierce conflict of our competitive system. But has not all this speech hidden from us the deeper fact? Life is the great opportunity for love. Here is the relation of man and woman. What a fruitage of sentiment and ideal and affection have sprung from this soil! Look at those conditions of nature and life which have brought men together in widening circles of association: family, clan, tribe, city, nation, world. See how the circle has deepened in widening. At first a bond of necessity, men standing together because they had to fight that way or fall, it has become purer and nobler. The fine flower of kinship, friendship, loyalty, patriotism, and at last world-brotherhood has come slowly this way. It is a good world that makes for these.

But there is more here. The very struggle and pain and suffering are the fountain out of which the purest love and compassion have come forth. It is helpless childhood that has called out mother-love. Wrong and suffering, not comfort and

⁹ *In Memoriam*, LVI.

plenty, have made men lovers of their race. I can imagine a world with no pain to summon sympathy, with no sorrow to kindle compassion, with no helplessness to stir fine chivalry, no want to call forth service, no overwhelming danger to join a nation together or cement it in a baptism of blood, no great disaster to thrill a world with sympathy and show all men as kin, where each man stood self-sufficient and no want uttered its cry. There might be fewer clouds in such a world, but life would be unutterably poor. The great souls of our race, patriot and hero and lover and saint, would not be there. The purest strain in the lyric of our life would cease. The great scenes of sacrifice that filled our life with a purer purpose and a tide of compassion would be forever blotted out. I do not say that love will cease when pain is gone. Love will abide, but it was this hard road by which it came. And this makes the hard road richly worth the while.

“For life, with all its yield of joy and woe,
And hope and fear,
Is just our chance o’ the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

We need a new appraisal of pain and toil. Our danger lies not in atheism or any heresy; it is in the base materialism of life, shunning tasks, seeking ease. It is no mere chance that the high achievements of our race have none of them been wrought in tropical zone. Men have reached the heights when they have had to fight. And the highest of all has come where men have fought and borne pain, and so won victory for others. The world's greatest way of triumph was the road that led from a judgment hall with a crown of thorns to a hill that bore a cross.

"The cry of man's anguish went up unto God:

'Lord, take away pain—

The shadow that darkens the world Thou hast made,
The close-coiling chain

That strangles the heart, the burden that weighs
On the wings that would soar—

Lord, take away pain from the world Thou hast made,
That it love Thee the more!

"Then answered the Lord to the cry of His world:

'Shall I take away pain

And with it the power of the soul to endure,
Made strong by the strain?

Shall I take away pity, that knits heart to heart,
And sacrifice high?

Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire
White brows to the sky?

Shall I take away love, that redeems with a price
 And smiles at its loss?
Can ye spare from your lives, that would climb unto
 Mine,
 The Christ on His cross?"

THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLE

Consider, second, the social principle. We have not understood this world or seen its goodness because we have looked only at the individual, and not at the social whole. Our theology is gaining because it is growing more social. But so far our chief advance has been in seeing social duty more clearly. We still need social insight. Here is the great social fact first of all. *Nolens, volens*, we are all tied together. The world nowhere shows the bare individual of our traditional thought; always families, classes, races, nations. It is true that at last the soul must stand alone in the presence of God. It is true that the final relationship of life here is that of man and God. But there is so much more than that. The vision of God comes through the life with men. The life with God is only lived out in this way. Even the life from God is expressed by the great apostle in social terms: righteousness and love and peace. And the Bible never in Old Testament or New expresses the

final purpose of God in terms of the mere individual. Christianity knows only a social salvation. It is a kingdom, a brotherhood, a family, a new race.

I know that the first glimpse of the social fact seems to make our problem harder. It is the essence of love that it individualizes, but God seems to mass us all together. Justice means fair play for the individual, but God does not seem to care for the single life. This man is ignorant and careless; upon his neighbor falls the typhus scourge. This man is greedy, and in his darkened tenements the white plague slays the children of the poor. The city thinks only of fine boulevards and "big business," and from the unsanitary homes of its poor and the places of legalized vice the physical and moral plague spreads to high and low, to guilty and guiltless alike. This man sins, and the curse of his sin falls upon the pure woman to whom he is joined and the innocent children, blighted of body and soul, that come into a world that is not of their choosing. How can God be good when each reaps the harvest from the sin of all, when the single soul can never escape from the social web in which we are all caught?

I will not minimize the social evils. But are these not the mere background and incident of the social good? The first lesson that a thinker on life must learn is the lesson of alternatives. We are always wanting character without struggle, love without pain, righteousness with no possibility of sin, the vision at the summit without the long climb. The principle applies here. I know that the social tie means all these ills, but it means the good without which life is a blank. When I have said home and friend and country, I have spoken the words whose want would make our world a waste. The stars might shine and the harvests come, but the heart of the world would be cold and dead and the light of its sun gone out. The meanest soul that suffers and loves is richer than he who walks his way prosperous and painless, but alone. Bind us together if need be. Let the mother suffer with the pain of her child and the children from the sins of their fathers. Let the pestilence which comes from the ignorance of the few smite guilty and innocent together. If only there may be a world of love and friendship and home and kindred and country.

But the social suffering is more than the incidental cost which we must pay for the sake of the higher good. It is the source of that power which must lead us on. The mere appeal to selfish interest has never inspired any great forward movement. We shall never wipe out brothel and saloon and slum by simply pointing out that their evil influences will reach our comfortable lives. We live our selfish and evil life and are ready to bear the consequence. And then some day we see that the consequence is not individual. Our sin is dragging the world of our brothers down. It is because of our selfish indifference that they can not rise. And then we look with new eyes on all this social misery. Our life is part of it. The hands of none of us are clean. There is not one but must cry: *Peccavi! peccavi!* That is the tragic fact that God is using to prick the dull conscience of men. It is not useless, this suffering at which we stumble. Out of it is being born the new social conscience and social passion. These are what shall lead us to the new Kingdom. Aye, these are the very spirit of the new Kingdom. They breathe its sympathy, its brotherhood, its self-sacrificing love.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

Let us note, third, what the principle of development means as applied to our problem. Life is not a finished something. For the individual man and for the race it is in the making. No man can judge life rightly who simply studies a cross-section, no matter how minutely. Our question can not simply be, what is it?—but, what is it becoming? It is the issue that decides.

Take the case of the individual life. To the man who sees only one day of pain and sorrow, life is a riddle, a tragedy. But the test of life is the fruit of life. The test of the world is not the pleasure that it yields us, but the kind of man that it makes out of us. We are here to be made men, and the hard way of the world is just the means for this making. And this principle of development, this thought of perspective, will help us with a harder problem, that of apparent failure. Here is the man that never had a fair chance in life. The evil of the world was not a school to train him. It was a force that overwhelmed him. Or here is the child of whom we spoke above, coming into the world corrupted in its very blood and borne upon by all the tides of evil.

I do not know how we shall find room for these lives and the good God together if we see only this world. I can not at all agree with Principal Fairbairn when he says, "Time should have within itself its own apology, and not require an appeal from itself to eternity."¹¹ Only faith can ever settle this question, and faith is always saying, This is but part, "see all, nor be afraid."¹² There is no answer here apart from the vision of the eternal, and the eternal means the enduring as well as the invisible. The true man says with Browning's scholar:

"Leave now to dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."¹³

With this eternal perspective, suffering is dwarfed. "Our light affliction is but for a moment."¹⁴ With this perspective, opportunity finds larger place. And even the problem of apparent failure is not without its light. How can we measure the possibilities of God and life by the few years that we see, if the supreme meaning of life be the making of man? Do we not need a little more Christian agnosticism and a little more Christian hopefulness for the life that seems to have

¹¹ *Philosophy of Religion.*

¹² Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

¹³ *A Grammarian's Funeral.*

¹⁴ 2 Cor. 4: 17.

failed? Ours is not time, but eternity. The goal that we have set is what counts, not the length of the course that we have run.

“All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist,

Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty nor good nor power

Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist

When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.”¹⁵

But the largest meaning in this idea of development is seen when it is applied to the race. We stumble over the laws of nature. How cruel, how unfeeling these forces are in their working! They do not ask whether we intended wrong before they overwhelm us. They join in the ruin of flood and fire the innocent and guilty alike. But that stern tuition has made the race diligent and careful, sober and responsible, men and not babes. We ourselves have tried to be kinder and have been more foolish. We kindergartenize our education, even in the college. We sentimentalize in our charity as in our correction. We must have every path pleasant. What we really need is a new sense of inexorable and stern authority, and a new spirit

¹⁵ Browning, *Abt Vogler*.

of reverence and obedience. Here is the law of heredity. If the day counts alone, what a tragic fact it is! But we are making a race, and the end counts. Heredity is God's warning and God's help. What a Sisyphus task it would be without this, always the long climb for each new generation, as though others had never toiled before! Instead we stand to-day on the foundations of the past.

One other thought comes with this idea of development. The world is imperfect, but it is a growing world. Do we want to live in any other? Would any other be good? Here is a world in the making, and life itself as a share in the great task! Is there any higher conception of life, any higher good than that? We are sharing in God's continuous creation. Christianity says to every man: Come on, there is real fighting, real work in the world, and it is work that shall last. Our college professors need not worry about substitutes for war. War is the surest fact in our life. Wrong, injustice, oppression, poverty, sickness are far more than problems for our faith. They are the open doors of life. And we

“Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide

And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take,
I must believe."¹⁶

And finally this principle of development throws light on the darkest problem, that of moral evil. We can see that sorrow and suffering are relative evils. We can understand how they might need to be if something higher were to come. But sin is absolutely evil. How can there be any place for it in God's world at all? How can a good God ever have allowed it to enter His world or to live on? Here again it behooves us to be modest in saying what can and what can not be done. But so much is clear, the only moral character that we know or can conceive comes by growth, by development. That applies to moral insight as well as to moral deed and moral strength. It is what we see with every child. It is what took place with the race. So far as we can see, if there is to be moral life at all, if there are to be any beings of love and righteousness who can have fellowship with God, then that life must come this way. There will be ignorance and weakness and failure before strength

¹⁶Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

and purity and clear moral vision and proved moral character can be. And if there is to be real moral character, then there must be growth from within. That means the man's own soul, groping, choosing, striving, falling, rising. There can be no moral life without freedom. If God wants machines, He can make them. If God wants servants, He can compel them. If God wants sons whose love and loyalty shall be real, then their free surrender to Him involves the chance of their refusal as well.

Practically speaking, then, the idea of development makes it inevitable that there will be the sin of failure, and the idea of moral freedom that there will be the sin of positive transgression. But why should either of these involve any compromise with sin, or any contradiction in God's character? Looking at sin from either point of view, we are sure of one thing. Sin is here only to be overcome. All the forces of God are summoned for its extirpation. And the cross is the final measure of His opposition.

But always we must remember one thing. The opposition to sin is not the only element of God's loving holiness. Side by side is His regard for

righteousness and love. His holiness means the building up of righteousness, not simply the casting out of sin. And His end will not be reached till a communion of men joined in righteousness and love shall be established in the earth. That is why His method with sin is not prevention on the one hand or destruction on the other. The cross measures His opposition, but it marks His method as well. That is the method of a loving and patient tuition by which God is overcoming sin in the heart of humankind.

If we will leave the logic of the philosopher and turn to the experiences of common life, it will not be hard to understand. This father is righteous. Shall he refuse to bring sons into the world because at least some sin will be inevitable in their life? And if the sin appears, shall he overcome it by casting out his son, or by the patient upbuilding of a righteous life in him? And if the father loved God and his kind, which will show his greater devotion to righteousness, to refuse to bring forth the sons that might some time do evil, or to train young men to live righteously and to establish righteousness in the world?

THE ANSWER FOR FAITH

In its final solution the problem of evil is to be settled by faith. That is so with every question of religion. The final answer comes not to the logical mind, but to the obedient will. That answer comes to the man who trusts in God despite of ill, and it comes in three ways.

First, with the knowledge of God. This is not the knowledge of reason, but that personal knowledge which is religion. He who trusts thus in darkness and doubt and sorrow comes at last to know that Power

“Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone.”¹⁷

God is, and God is good: that conviction comes to be for him surer than life itself.

Second, he sees evil overcome in his own life. He has met with courage and trust every dark thing that has come to him. Now he learns at last that for the man who meets it aright, there is no pure and final evil. There is a transmuting power in the spirit of faith and obedience. The darkest hour hid some heart of light. The convic-

¹⁷Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, XCVI.

tion comes at last that, whatever may have caused the ill, God has made it serve for good.

Third, he sees evil as that which is being overcome in the world, as that which is doomed, which is here only to be destroyed. That does not answer all questions as to why evil is and whence it came. It does declare that in this world it is God that reigns, not evil. The men who are most confident in God and the winning of good are not the closet philosophers who theorize about evil. They are the men who are fighting with evil hand to hand, who know best its blackness and its power, but who see it being overcome and set at naught day by day by the power of purity and love and simple truth and goodness—by the power of God. That is the answer of Jesus. He did not say, Be of good cheer; there is no evil. He said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."¹⁸ And so here, as elsewhere, our working faith is not an easy theory, but a stirring challenge. And he that doeth the will shall know.¹⁹

¹⁸ John 16: 13.

¹⁹ John 7: 17.

CHAPTER III
THE BIBLE AND FAITH

“**W**HAT other book like this can awaken dumb or sleeping consciences, reveal the secret needs of the soul, sharpen the thorn of sin and press its cruel point upon us, tear away our delusions, humiliate our pride, and disturb our false serenity? What sudden lightnings it shoots into the abysses of our hearts! What searchings of conscience are like those which we make by this light? And when we have gained a right apprehension of our shortcomings and spiritual poverty, when the need of pardon, the hunger for righteousness, and the thirst for life torture the soul to desperation, what other voice than that of the Son of man has power to allay our pain, convince us of the love of the Father, the love that passeth knowledge, in which all shame and remorse are swallowed up, and the flame of a holy life is kindled in the soul? The word which pierced us like a sharp sword now sheds itself like balm over all our wounds, like consolation over all our sorrows. It becomes a source of inward joy, a strength for life, and a hope which shines beyond death itself. . . . The word which draws us so irresistibly to God and so invincibly attaches us to Him can come from none but Him. . . . It has no more need of official verification, of outward attestation, than the light which enlightens the eye, or the duty which commands the conscience, or the beauty which ravishes the imagination. The efficacy of the divine word is at once the inward sign, the measure, and the foundation of its authority.”

AUGUSTE SABATIER, *Religions of Authority*, 242, 243.

CHAPTER III

THE BIBLE AND FAITH

CHANGING VIEWS

WHAT is the place of the Bible in a working faith? A couple of generations ago that question would have been very simply answered: "The Bible is the Word of God. What is in these pages God has written. We are simply to take what is written here and believe it." The answer is not so simple to-day. Nowhere has the change in traditional thought been so great. To multitudes the modern study of the Bible is confusing and disquieting. The foundations of faith seem shaken. We turn to the Old Testament. The scientist tells us that this story of creation does not agree with the record he reads in the rocks. The historian tells us that this picture of a flat earth and a solid, rounding firmament in which the sun and stars are fixed for the convenience of men, is simply taken from ancient stories of the East. The critic tells

us that these first books are composed of different narratives which have been joined together, that some of these books were the growth of centuries. The student of religion points out how crude some of the religious thinking is here, and how rude and even savage some of the ethics of such a book as Judges. Our fathers put the books all upon one plane; did it not all come equally from God? We distinguish sharply Old Testament from New, and the ideas of Paul from the teachings of Jesus. For them everything came directly from God: we study sources and authors and editors. For them this history and these writings formed a world by themselves. We find the influence of other nations and know that this current flowed in the great stream of human history. In one word, for them the Bible was a book that came directly from the hand of God. For us it is a great literature that has grown out of a people's life, intensely human, bound up with the things of earth, its history linked with that of other nations. No wonder the questions come: Is the Bible still a Word of God to us? Has it still authority for us? What is the meaning of this change that has taken place?

To answer that we must first find out more defi-

nately what this change really is, and try to distinguish the old from the new.

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

The old conception of the Bible was perfectly simple. To have a true religion you must know about God. To know about God He must speak to us. The Bible is the book in which He thus speaks: thus God is its Author. Man could not have any real part in it, for then the human and imperfect would be there. Therefore it must be the literal and mechanical product of God. The men who wrote it were simply the "pens of the Holy Spirit;" it was not their thought or spirit or experience that entered in, it was His dictation. If God is directly the Author of all, then all is equally true. The Bible all stands upon the same level. The ethics of Judges are just as divine as the Sermon on the Mount, the psalms of imprecation are just as Christian as Paul's great chapter on love.

Now let us not be too scornful of all this. It is true that the Bible itself condemns it on nearly every page by what it actually shows. But no theory like this, which held the conviction of ear-

nest men for generations, can be without foundation. Back of it lay a great need and a great experience. The great need was man's need of God, his cry for some sure knowledge of God in the midst of all the uncertainty and change of human life. The great experience was that God had met men and spoken to them in these pages, that here they had found the living God and life for themselves. And all our new study of the Bible will be worth very little unless it does justice to that great fact which leaves the Bible still to-day the greatest study for the human mind.

It was not the experience, then, that was at fault, but the theory in which the experience was expressed. We can see now what was wrong in the theory and what influences came in from without to cause this. We may note first its intellectualism, the idea that religion means a sum of truths which men must know and believe. That meant that men must have a text-book of religion. With the Jews it was a code of laws, for to them religion was primarily something to be done. With the Christian Church it meant a book of teachings, for religion was primarily something to be believed. The great founders of the faith do not speak so,

the prophets and Jesus and Paul. With them religion is a life, and God comes to men in fellowship, not as a doctrine.

The second mistake was in the mechanical conception of inspiration. My typewriter is just a machine under my hands. I write with it what I will. I ask from it no insight, no love, no surrender of will or life. God does not play upon men that way. They are never mere pens for His hand. He gives His truth to the life of men, and out of that experience the man speaks of God to others.

The third mistake was in its dualism. That is the theory which divides the world sharply into two parts, the divine and the human, and sets the two over against each other. It seems easy to say: "Either this book is from man, and so is imperfect, or it is divine and perfect. If God is present, then we must rule out all the human; if man is here, then there is no God. This book is either human or divine." Like many other simple answers, this is not true. Life is far richer than such easy logic. What our working faith has emphasized has been not God separate from the world, but God living and working in the world and in man. So far from

one excluding the other, we must say, where God is most fully present there is most of man, man at his best and highest. Where man is at his highest, there God is most really present. The Church forgot the meaning of the incarnation when she came to the doctrine of the Scriptures. In her teaching as to Christ she had rejected these heresies of dualism. One party had said, "He is divine, and therefore His human nature is not real." And the other had said, "He is human, and so He can not be really divine." The Church said, "He is divine and human, and both in fullest truth and measure." It is so as to the Bible. It is not in some miracle of loaves and fishes that God is most truly present, nor in some book dropped from the blue sky; it is in a human life, simple, reverent, loving, obedient.

And finally the old view was wrong in its theory because it left no room for real growth. If the book is literally God's writing, then the first pages must be as absolutely true and divine as the last. Now, religion is life, and life means growth. When men ruled this growth and movement out of the Bible, they left it a lifeless book of the letter.

THE MODERN VIEW

The modern Bible study begins with the same faith as the old: that God is in the writings, that here is a message for men. But it leaves the old theories to one side, and instead says: Let us look at these writings as they are. It is one thing to say that God comes to men: it is another matter to ask how He comes. The old theory without much regard to the Bible itself determined just how the Bible must have been written. To-day we are asking, with the modern scientific and realistic spirit, What is really here? What we have found as we have looked at these writings in this way is that we have here a human book. Here is no book dropped down from heaven, but something that has come up out of the life of the people. Here are the tales of its ancient heroes. Here is the story of its wars and its oppressions. Here are the wise maxims of its sages, the stirring sermons of its preachers, the book of its songs and prayers, and its laws for every part of life. It is no book of the dead letter. It throbs with life. "Prick it anywhere, and it will bleed." Here are the prayers and tears and hopes and longings, the story of sin and failure, the story of high aspiration and splen-

did faith and deed. Because it is a human book there is real history here. This life is bound up with other life, and knows movement and progress. The movement is not always upward. The great prophets are like mountain peaks, and the land slopes away on this side as on that. But the forward look is always there, and the dawn yields at last to the full day, and we move up to the Christ. And how intensely human the men are whom we meet: Isaiah with his vision and his boldness, Hosea with his tragic life, Amos outspoken and fearless, Micah with his passion for men and righteousness, Jeremiah with his mingled tenderness and strength! And when we come to the highest of all, the human element is not least, but richest. In all this human book the most human part is the Gospels. Look at their pictures from the life of our Lord: helpless child and loving mother, growing boy and anxious parents, the friends and the craving for sympathy and companionship, hunger and weariness, the hours of prayer, the garden with its struggle and its crying, and the words upon the cross.

If all this be true, if it be this human book, how is it that God comes to us? What place has

it in our working faith? Once we had the word of God to men, fixed and definite. Now it seems as if we had nothing more than man's search for God and the picture that he has made of Him. We can no longer simply take word for word and say, Here is what God has written; believe this and do this.

Let us ask first of all, What is it about which our working faith is really concerned? It is certainly not a matter of dates and authorship. Nor is it an infallible book of doctrine that we must have. Our real concern is this: Is the living God here? Does He speak to us, and does He find us here? This is the real question. No theory can make this book divine for us. And no arguments are needed for it. This experience is the vital matter. The fact remains for our faith that he who comes with open mind and reverent heart, who wills to do His will, shall find God here with His gift of mercy and of a new life. That is what the fathers meant by their teaching about the witness of the Spirit.

But our question is not yet answered. How is God present in this book? Our answer must go farther back than that. We have misunderstood

the Bible because we have started with the Bible, we have made a book the beginning of the Christian religion. Now, Mohammedanism is a book religion. It bases everything upon these words given to Mohammed from heaven. Mormonism is a book religion. It, too, claims to have begun with words dropped out of the sky. Christianity is not a book religion. Its fundamental fact for faith is not a book dropped from heaven, but a living God in His world, molding that world which He made, moving in history, coming into fellowship with men. First the deed, and then the word; first the history, and then the writing; first the living experience, and then the message. When we start with a book as our foundation, then we must have something finished, external, static, lifeless. And so we have the whole mechanical, lifeless theory of the Bible. Here is something vital, dynamic, with movement and progress. It is God, not dropping a finished book into His world, but Himself present in that world, giving His life to men and speaking through them, with the Scriptures as a great monument and expression of this movement.

We have already gained these great facts for our working faith: A living God in His world, a per-

sonal God coming into fellowship with men, and religion not primarily as a belief or a deed, but a fellowship of man with God. Let us see the meaning of this for our present discussion. Here is room, first of all, for God among the nations. Such a God as we hold can not have done less than to seek, and that constantly, to draw all nations into fellowship with Himself. The great word of Revelation applies not to the few among the favored nations, but to all men and all peoples, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."¹ Not to Israel alone did God come, but to China and India and the isles of the sea. We do not need to decry paganism in order to exalt Christianity. We have been over-narrow in our zeal. Even the Old Testament shows the larger vision. Isaiah lets Jehovah speak of "Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance."² Amos shows us Jehovah judging the other nations just like Israel, assuming their knowledge of right and truth, and declaring in a wonderful passage that He has been in their fortunes as in those of Israel: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have

¹ Rev. 3: 20.

² Isa. 19: 25.

not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"³ Nor can we forget Paul's fine word of the nations whom God hath not left without a witness nor without a law in their hearts.⁴ We need not blind ourselves to the darkness of non-Christian lands. Their faiths could not lift men to confidence and peace. But it has not all been darkness. Everywhere we find some hunger for God, some searching after Him, some ideals of truth and right, some power for good. There is some wheat with the chaff of their sacred books, they had their prophets and heroes, their Gotama Buddha and Confucius and Socrates. We are studying these religions to-day as never before, and at every gleam of light and truth we rejoice and say, Here, too, God was present and speaking to men.

But the God who stands at the door of men and nations forces no entrance. Man's answer conditions His deed. Some doors are closed to Him, others He finds open. One nation above others opened its doors to God. There He found men, leaders, prophets, whose hearts were all attent upon

³ Amos 9: 7.

⁴ Acts 14: 17; Rom. 2: 15.

His voice, whose lives were open to His will. Through those men He spoke His clearest word. It was a little people, but He chose it for His great world-plans. This is not theory, but plain history. No nation has such a story as this little people; not China with her long centuries and her teeming millions, not Egypt of immemorial antiquity, nor the Greece of beauty and wisdom, nor the Rome of conquering power. Here was a little nation whose land at the time of its greatest power might be dropped down within the borders of any one of a score of our States. She came a nomad tribe from the desert. Her culture was borrowed. She never had any art of her own. She boasted no philosophers. Her triumphs in war were few. She lay upon the highway that linked three continents, and the world-powers of these great lands trampled her in turn under foot. She had a few brief years of outward glory at a time when her great neighbors were too busy to molest her. Aside from that brief period her history is the tale of the great nations to whom she was subject: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Syria, Macedonia, Rome. She had no Æschylus, no Plato, no Praxiteles, no Alexander, or Julius Cæsar. Two thousand years ago she was

scattered throughout the ancient world as she is among the nations to-day. Then as now her people had to face prejudice and contempt and persecution. And yet through all these years Israel has been the teacher of the nations. The nations that have despised her have placed her writings among their sacred books. And when they have turned from art and commerce and war to the higher matters of faith, it is her voice to which they have listened and her God whom they have worshiped.

If you ask what all this means, the answer is not far to seek. Other nations had their own ambition, Israel's passion was God. Other nations had their captains and poets and philosophers, Israel had her prophets. Whatever may be said of the people, you may search the story of all other lands in vain to find such a line of men as these. Here the waiting God found an open door. Here were men who waited until the vision filled their soul. They saw the Lord high and lifted up, and thenceforth feared no man.⁵ They read God's heart of righteousness and mercy, and so rose above ritual and sacrifice. They came from all ranks of life, with priestly lineage, from royal

⁵ Isa. 6: 1.

court, from peasant's home. And some of the greatest words come from men whose very name is lost. To-day there are a thousand men who read Isaiah to one who knows a line of Homer, and ten thousand who have hid some psalm within their hearts to one who has ever opened a Plato.

But we have not yet come to the Scriptures themselves. We have simply seen how God found one nation to whom He could give Himself, through whom He could further His plans for the whole world. What came first in His dealings with this nation? The answer is, first the deed and then the word, first the movement in history and then the writing that came forth from it. It is the deliverance from Egypt that writes the first great chapter in Israel's history. To that event prophet and psalmist turn back again and again, how Jehovah took a people that was not a people, and gave Himself to them as their God. God's grace and mighty help, the nation's love and trust and loyalty, these are the rich lessons that flow from this experience. They form Israel's first step beyond a natural religion to a real ethical faith that lifted it above the nations round about. Or take the other great series of events beginning with the

eighth century and ending with the exile. Here is the story of the danger from the north, of temporary deliverance for Jerusalem, of final captivity for Judah as well as Israel. What a list of names is linked with these two centuries: Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Jeremiah, and the great prophet of the exile. No other nation, not even the greatest, has given the world in all its history what Israel brought forth in this brief span of her time of peril and shame. But it was not a book that God gave here. It was life, history, and men to interpret the message in living words. Out of it all came forth the imperishable words that we possess, but the life came first.

If we turn to the New Testament it is the same. Here we meet the real foundation of Christianity, and we find not a book, but a life and a deed. For years the early Church grew and thrived and spread abroad, and yet had no collection of Christian writings. The Church was not founded upon the New Testament, but the New Testament grew out of the Church. First the life and the deed, then the writing. Out of the mission work of the Church came the Epistles, out of the preaching of the Church grew the Gospels. In the Old Testa-

ment "the word of Jehovah" refers to the living message of the prophet, not to any book or writing. So in the early Church the Gospel meant the good news that passed from lip to lip, with no fixed form of words, but always made fresh again by living experience. It is well past a century before we find the name applied to any of the written accounts which we call the Gospels. This, then, is our first position, God's revelation is through life and history. From this will follow certain conclusions which we may put in order and which the thoughtful reading of the Bible will make plain.

THE HISTORICAL REVELATION

First, this historical revelation of God will be gradual. A book can be written at once, and men may be left to understand it later. But God deals with life, and life means growth and slow development. God shows that to us every day anew. Every child gives the lesson. We do not set geometry before a child of six. We do not argue general moral principles before a child of three. We come with pictures, not abstract propositions; with do and don't, and not with elaborate ideals.

God is a good pedagog. The Old Testament shows His training of a race in its childhood. Here are pictures and symbols and myths. Here is much that is crude and imperfect. We have stumbled over this in the past. We have said that this is true or not true, either God is here or not here. Here is a people declaring that Jehovah has commanded them to sack a city and raze its walls and kill not only the fighting men, but women and little babes and cattle and sheep. Had our armies done the same with a single village in the Philip-pines, no matter what savage, debased cannibals were there, we should have been overwhelmed by the protest from the Christian conscience of the world. Were they right? No! Shall we throw these pages overboard then, and say there is no truth or God in them? No! This is truth and life in the making. This nation is moving toward the light, and the mistaken loyalty and zeal will reach higher ends at last. Let us say the same about the psalms which are full of the spirit of vengeance, and about many another place. They are stumbling-blocks only for a wrong theory of the Old Testament, which makes it all equally and absolutely the direct speech of God. Make it the

story of the long, slow work of God with a people, and it becomes a history full of movement and inspiration, in which these defects mark only the stages that have been left behind.

Second, this historical revelation is personal. The heart of it lies in those men who see the meaning of it all. These are the men whom God has lifted up into fellowship with Himself. Through them He interprets His deeds and His purpose. Through them He calls to the people and leads the people on. In other words, it is a religious revelation, one that comes in a living experience and speaks out of this.

Third, the revelation is more than God showing Himself, more than God giving the truth to men. We must use a bigger word than revelation, and that is redemption. It is God giving Himself. It is God carrying out great purposes. It is God working toward the Kingdom which is the end of history and the meaning of the world. That great redemptive movement, as it takes shape on earth, we call religion, Church, Christianity, life.

Fourth, the Scriptures are the great monument of that movement and that revelation, and they form, in turn, the great agent by which that reve-

lation is brought to others and the life passed on to men.

This, then, is our new conception of the Bible, human and divine at once. What we feel, first of all, is how human it has made the book. The old theory pushed it up into the clouds. Its men belonged to another world. Some of us can sympathize with the little girl who was astonished to find that Jerusalem was actually on the map in her geography. When Conybeare and Howson's "Life of St. Paul" came out, good people were shocked because it treated Paul like a real man, traveling from place to place amid actual scenes. The old view made the Bible a book of law and letter and doctrine. For us it is a book of life. We see not one book, but many, the literature of a nation. All the life of that nation unrolls before us. Above all, its great men live for us again. We have re-discovered the prophets. They are not lonely seers looking into the future and concerned only with what is far away. They are the great preachers of their day, watching the horizon of the nation, seeing the distant foe, knowing the political and social problems of their day, filled with the Spirit of God, consumed with a passion for righteousness, and

giving their fearless message of reproof and comfort to people and to king. So Paul lives for us again; not the traditional theologian, but the man whose thought grew out of his own deep experience; the missionary who laid broad foundations throughout the old world; the man of vision and courage, who saw the meaning of Christianity as a new world-religion and fought for the freedom of the faith. Courageous, independent, humble, devoted, man of passion and power, he stands out for us as one of the great figures of all time, not a theological figure, but a living, breathing man.

One other gain we have made in getting this human-historical Bible. We have found the variety and the difference. The old thought left no room for this. How could there be difference when all came equally and directly from God? What we see now is not so many words, but so much life which God has inspired. In the Old Testament there is nothing less than the whole literature of a nation in all its varied forms. It is this vital and individual character that lends so deep an interest. But the variety brings us more than this. It has helped us to distinguish the central from the peripheral, the vital from the incidental. The

Bible is not a level plain. It has valleys and foothills and mountain peaks as well. It is all needed, but not all of equal value. It is not faith to believe all this, nor religion to practice it all. The prophets of the Old Testament have a message that rises far above the prescriptions of ritual and sacrifice. The New Testament stands above the Old, and Jesus is supreme in it all. And that is our greatest gain. There has been a rediscovery of Jesus; His life, His teaching, His Spirit are clearer to us in their meaning and greater for us in their authority than ever before. And so the new study has helped us to understand better what religion is: not the acceptance of a theory, nor the submission to an outer authority, whether of book or creed or institution, but the humble, loving walk with that God who reveals Himself to the human soul.

THE MEANING OF THE BOOK

We have been busy trying so far to distinguish and to define, but the most important task for our faith is not definition, but appreciation. And that appreciation does not mean the general reverence that goes so often with specific ignorance. What

we need is patiently and earnestly to live with this book, to let its spirit speak to us, to let its life gain power over us, to find its great ideals that have set so many free, to meet the great spirits of the past that speak to us through it, to meet and know the greatest of them all, Jesus Christ, and let Him lead us out of sin and doubt and weakness into the life of peace and strength that is in the presence of God. What shall we find as we read this book with thoughtful mind and open heart? What have men found there for themselves in the past?

They have found here, first of all, the book of God. We speak of the Bible as literature, but that is not why we study it. It is historical, and yet we do not go to it as history. Why should we concern ourselves with this feeble folk that lived so long ago in their petty, far-off land? We study it because we find the answer here to the deepest quest of human life, the search for God. The Bible is the one great religious book of antiquity. We have spoken of its variety. It is a library, not a book. And yet the Church has been right in all these centuries in calling it the Bible, *the Book*. There is one passion that breathes through it all: the passion for God. Its opening words set the

key: "In the beginning God."⁶ Its histories are no ordinary narratives, for its tales of kings and wars are but texts from which to speak of God. Its poets cry, "My soul thirsteth for the living God."⁷ Its prophet-statesmen sound the same note, "I saw the Lord high and lifted up."⁸ Its last picture is a wonderful symbol of this same passion for God, the picture of the city that needs nothing else because God is there: "And they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light."⁹

But it is the book of God in a deeper sense. One of its writers says, We love God because He first loved us. All of them carry the deep conviction, not of their search for God, but of God's search for them; that God has plans for this people, that God is moving through their nation and speaking to them. And as we read there comes the same great truth to us: Surely God is in this place. And then we come at last to its great central figure, and see with Paul "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."¹⁰ And that is why the book lives. The theory is an incident. This fact means everything, that through

⁶ Gen. 1: 1. ⁷ Ps. 42: 2. ⁸ Isa. 6: 1. ⁹ Rev. 22: 5. ¹⁰ 2 Cor. 4: 6.

all these years men have found here the mercy of God reaching down to their needs, the will of God lifting up their lives, and the presence of God made real to their faith.

It is the book of man. It reveals man as truly as it does God. Albrecht Durer once drew a picture of the prodigal son, and when his friends looked at it the face of the prodigal was the face of Durer himself. That was Durer's way of confession. He had seen his own self in that story. We can all say, "In the roll of the book it is written of me."¹¹ Here we see our sin and know how deep it is. How many have found the Fifty-first Psalm as if written for themselves. The first great help of the Bible is to show men the great moral demand and their great need? But it shows us, too, the man that is to be. It takes the highest and noblest, nothing less than the Christ Himself, and says, This is your life; this you can be. And it is the book of man because it stands for human life and human right above all else.

And it is the universal book. It belongs to every age and every nation, and it speaks to every need. "Born in the East and clothed in Oriental form

¹¹ Psalm 40: 7.

and imagery, the Bible walks the ways of all the world with familiar feet and enters land after land to find its own everywhere. It has learned to speak in hundreds of languages to the heart of man. It comes into the palace to tell the monarch that he is a servant of the Most High, and into the cottage to assure the peasant that he is a son of God. Children listen to its stories with wonder and delight, and wise men ponder them as parables of life. It has a word of peace for the time of peril, a word of comfort for the day of calamity, a word of light for the hour of darkness. Its oracles are repeated in the assembly of the people, and its counsels whispered in the ear of the lonely. The wicked and the proud tremble at its warning, but to the wounded and the penitent it has a mother's voice. It has woven itself into our deepest affections, and colored our dearest dreams. Above the cradle and beside the grave its great words come to us uncalled. They fill our prayer with power larger than we know, and the beauty of them lingers on our ear long after the sermons which they adorned have been forgotten."¹²

¹² Henry Van Dyke, *The Century Magazine*, October, 1910

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

We have one question yet to ask. What is the authority of this book for our faith? The old idea was very simple. These are so many words of God, which we are simply to accept and believe. It is not simply our better understanding of the Bible which prevents this, but our better understanding of faith. No merely external thing can be authority for us. To bow to a Church or a creed or a book is not Christian faith. Christian faith is the surrender of our lives in obedience and trust to some person, to some other life; and the conviction of faith is the conviction which that person awakens in our heart. Only God Himself can be the final authority for our faith. But right here it is that the Scriptures gain their meaning for us, and in a real sense their authority. God comes to us through them. They are not only the great monument of His work in the world: they are the great avenue through which He still comes to men. Through them He commands our conscience, condemns our sin, stirs within us confidence, quickens within us the new life. The authority of the letter is gone. We do not bow before every word that is in the Bible. Only as God speaks to us through

them are these words authority for us. But these pages show us as no others the living God working out His great plans in the world. These pages bring to us the great souls that were open to God and through whom God wrought and spoke. Above all this book brings to us Him in whom the grace and truth of God were perfectly revealed. And so, not because of the theory and not on account of the letter, but because the living Spirit of God speaks to us and commands us here, the Bible is still authority for us.

CHAPTER IV
CHRIST AND FAITH

“EIGHTEEN centuries separate us from this history, but if we ask ourselves seriously, What gives us the courage to believe that God rules in history, not merely through teaching and knowledge, but as standing in its very midst, what gives us the courage to believe in an eternal life? we answer: We venture it because of Jesus Christ.”

ADOLF HARNACK, *Reden und Aufsätze*, II, 14.

“Christ is the culmination of this divine history, because in Him history finds its perfect work. . . . Every soul that attains to a high moral and religious life bears His mark. The moral world in which we live is His work.”

AUGUSTE SABATIER.

“Behold Him now when He comes!
Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,
But the Light of our hearts, of our homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;
The Brother of want and blame,
The Lover of women and men,
With a love that puts to shame
All the passions of mortal ken.

Ah, no, Thou life of the heart,
Never shalt Thou depart,
Not till the heaven of God
Shall lighten each human clod;
Not till the world shall climb
To Thy height serene, sublime,
Shall the Christ who enters our door
Pass to return no more.”

RICHARD WATSON GILDER, *The Passing of Christ*.

CHAPTER IV

CHRIST AND FAITH

WHAT is the place of Christ in our working faith? Nowhere in our discussion is it more necessary than here to call to mind clearly our subject. A working faith is not a sum of doctrines which men must accept. Rather it is a great spiritual conviction, giving our life guidance by its insight and strength by its confidence. It is not a burden to be assumed, but a strength and preparation for life's tasks.

It is one of the tragedies in Christian history that again and again Christ has been made more a subject of theology than an object of faith. And so it has come to pass strangely that in our day for many searching souls the doctrines about Christ have become a stumbling block where Christ should have been for them the way. It is a very different picture that we find in the Gospels. What we see is Jesus as the inspiration of faith. He comes to men not as a problem, but as an answer.

He comes to men who have lost the living God in the midst of dead laws, and teaches them to say "Our Father." He speaks to men who have grown faint with long waiting, and their hearts leap up at His word, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." And men of doubt and fear and sin go out of His presence into a new world that is lit up with the presence of a great and merciful God.

Here is our question, Not what can our faith do for Christ, but what can He do for our faith? Can He show us God? Can He make plain life's task and meaning? Can He help us live the life and work the task? In the end the question of doctrine must come. We, who have felt His power, will need to say as those of old, What manner of man is this? But the question does not come at the beginning. The great philosopher Kant once summed up the final needs of life in three questions: What can I know? What must I do? What may I hope for? These are the supreme questions for our working faith. What can I know? That is the question about God. What must I do? That is the question of duty. What may I hope for? That is the question of salvation, the help that my life needs here and the hope of the life

beyond. What answer has Jesus for these questions?

Here, as elsewhere, we do not start with any appeal to authority, either of the Scripture or the Church. Jesus Christ is more than a doctrine of the Church. He is more, too, than any record of the past. We shall assume that the picture that comes to us in the Gospels is essentially true. But it is not a picture from the past that we build upon. It is what He means to-day as a living reality, which men may test in their lives. It is Jesus Christ as a religious force and fact whom we shall consider, the greatest fact in human history, the greatest force in human lives.

JESUS AND THE QUESTION OF GOD

What answer, then, can He give us to our first question, the question of God? What can I know? Is the world more than color and sound and form of finite things; more than inscrutable power and ruthless laws? Is there God, and what manner of being is He? There is only one teacher in this field of faith to-day, and that is Christ. True, there is still doubt and unbelief. Not all the questions of men have been settled. But wherever men have

reached faith, there Jesus is Master. Philosophers may give us arguments for God, and theologians elaborate their doctrines. But where men pray to-day in lands of light and leading, the God to whom they lift their hearts is such a one as Jesus showed to men.

Men are wont to take this thought of God as a matter of course, without considering whence it came. We must go back if we are to understand what Jesus did for our thought of God. The religion of Judaism in His day was legalism. God was the Giver of laws and the Keeper of books. His precepts He had left with men. He Himself sat aloft. Religion was not a living fellowship, but an endless round of duties. True, Israel had her hope, but that meant simply that in some future time God would redeem men and dwell with them. It was not so now. There was nothing higher outside of Judaism, nor nearly so high. The pagan faiths were dead. Philosophy spoke to a few, but gave even these at most an idea, not the certainty of a living and loving God. The God of the Stoics was pure and lofty, but far removed from the life of men. And the mystery-religions, that were rapidly spreading through the

empire, were vainly trying to give men life and peace by ritual and sacrament, with no answer for the deeper question of sin and guilt.

Jesus came. He had no doctrines to teach men about God. He gave them no rites to perform by which to bring God near. He took the simplest word of human relationship and taught them to say, Our Father. Every lip that speaks that name to-day as it looks to heaven confesses its dependence upon Jesus. True, you will find the name applied to God before this. It is not, however, the vessel that counts, but the content. With other nations it meant only physical descent. In the Old Testament it is used here and there of Jehovah as father of the nation, or of the king as the nation's head. It is not the name for the single humble man to use. And so in the prayers of Israel a score of other names are used as the worshiper calls upon Jehovah, but nowhere does the psalmist say, Our Father. At most the name meant a certain kindly care which Jehovah had for His people; their king was fatherly. Jesus took the word and made it absolute. The King is Father.

But it is far more than a matter of name that we have to note. Jesus gave that name its mean-

ing. This He did, first of all, not by what He said of God, but by the life of Sonship that He lived with His Father. It was His reverence and fear, it was His love and trust, it was His joyous obedience, above all it was His life of fellowship in prayer that showed men not simply what it was to be a son, but what manner of Father in heaven men had.

But more directly Jesus revealed the Father to men by the Spirit of the Father that was in Him. He speaks to us the same message to-day. Here is compassion and holiness; here is hatred of sin and merciful deliverance for the sinner; here is the spirit before which we bow in reverence and to which we look up in aspiration; here is righteousness that condemns us, and mercy in which we trust. Here was a new spirit in the world: a power that served, and not merely ruled; a holiness that was free from sin, and yet drew near to sinners; a majesty of life joined to humility of spirit. Jewish Pharisee and Roman Stoic represented the highest thought of the world of Jesus' day. Both of them, in order to save the majesty and holiness of God, had to think of him as separate from men. Jesus gave a new conception of holiness in that love that

drew near to sinners, but only that it might overthrow sin. And men looked at all this holiness and mercy joined in one spirit in that simple life and said, This is the heart of God; here is "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."¹

"So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here;
Face, My hands fashioned, see it in Myself!
Thou hast no power, nor mayest conceive of Mine,
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me who have died for thee!'"²

But Jesus gives us far more than the idea of God. He kindles the fire of religion in the hearts of men. Religion is not a doctrine or a deed. It is a spirit and a life. And life comes only from life. The first great deed of Jesus was to live the eternal life before men here in the midst of time. He showed us its simplicity and its depth, its beauty and its richness, its unshaken peace and its power to meet all that life could bring of duty or doubt or danger. He dwelt with God. It was his heart's passion to do the will of God; it was His strength to trust in God; it was His joy and

¹ 2 Cor. 4: 6.

² Browning, *An Epistle of Karshish*.

peace to walk in fellowship with God. He opened the heavens to men's eyes and gave men a new earth filled with the presence of God. He saw that Presence in the color that touched the lily, in the lightning that flashed across the heavens, in the fallen sparrow by the roadside. Men saw His life thus filled by the Eternal and cried, "Show us the Father."³ They heard Him talk with God, and besought Him, "Lord, teach us to pray."⁴

It is the thought of God that determines our conception of religion. Because Jesus speaks for us the final word as to God, He has given the final form to religion. His religion is as remarkable for what it leaves out as for what it includes. It is the *universal* religion. Judaism was the loftiest faith of His day, but it was a religion for a nation. Others might worship Jehovah, but they must first become Jews. For Jesus there is one God and Father, who knows no privilege of rank or nation, who calls men as men to be His children. It is the *spiritual* religion. Jesus does not abolish forms, but they have no necessary place. They count only as men fill them with the spirit. The essence of religion is simply the pure heart and the humble

³John 14: 8.

⁴Luke 11: 1.

soul before God, and invincible good-will toward men. And yet this religion of the heart was no matter of sentiment and dreams. Mere ecstasy, mere emotion, nay, not even worship was enough. The real practice of this religion was to be in the man's life with men. Men were to leave the gift at the altar and be reconciled to the brother. There was no room for those who said, Lord, Lord, but did not visit the brothers of the Lord when they were sick or in prison. It is the *ethical* religion. Not legalism. That is our way. We pile up laws to make men good. Jesus asked only for the right spirit. But how searching that demand! It is not enough to give alms; do you really love your brother? It is not enough to refrain from adultery; are your inmost thought and desire pure? And His final test is no less than this: We must be children like our Father in heaven.⁵ It is a religion of divine *redemption*, redemption by God's act, not by man's effort. It is ethical, but it is more than that. It is God's demand, but it is also His gift. The spirit which He asks He Himself gives to men. Other religions show men searching for God. He brings God seeking men. That was the final mean-

⁵ Matt. 5: 45.

ing of His own life, as we shall see: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."⁶

We have not always held to this simple faith. It has been alike too simple and too lofty for men. We have burdened ourselves with long creeds and tried to make them the door to life; we have turned the New Testament into another law and worshiped the letter of a book; we have shut up the mercy of God to institution or sacrament. But the simple word of Jesus has broken through these barriers again and again. God's mercy is not bound to Church or form. It asks only the open door of a penitent heart. God's service is the love of men. And the children of God are those who are like Him in spirit.

JESUS AND THE IDEAL OF LIFE

Our second great question we have called the question of life: What must I do? What is right and just and good? What shall I make of myself? How shall I live with men?

First of all, we must say that Jesus is not a law-giver nor a maker of rules. He did not come to give men a new code. He came to give them life.

⁶ 2 Cor. 5: 19.

It is a gross, though common, misuse of the New Testament to make it a new book of the law. Again and again He refused to answer men's questions; He threw them back upon themselves.

But all this, regarded more closely, is just one reason why Jesus stands first as a teacher of life. The best of rules are but for a day. How wide a gulf separates the simple rural life of Jesus' land and age from the puzzling complex that makes our life to-day! Had He been a mere giver of precepts He would have lost His place long since. Three needs we have in this realm of conduct and life, and Jesus gives them all. First, we need not laws, but an ideal. Second, we want that ideal not in words, but realized in actual life. Third, we need not merely the ideal, but moral passion and power.

It is not necessary for us here to analyze or sum up Jesus' teaching about the ideal. That of itself would not show us His mastery in this realm. For many, if not most, of His sayings we can find parallels among the rabbis or other teachers. But two facts remain clear. First, Jesus joined all these teachings in the unity of a personal ideal, in which nothing trivial, nothing secondary has its

place; in which first things stand first. Second, and far more important, Jesus set that ideal before men in Himself and lit up every phrase with a life that words can not exhaust. It is that life, even more than His words, which makes Him master in the world of conscience. "John Stuart Mill once said that the human race could not often enough be reminded that there once lived a man by the name of Socrates. He was right, but it is more important to remind humanity again and again that there once stood in its midst a man by the name of Jesus Christ."⁷ So Harnack begins his discussion of "What is Christianity?" We can do nothing more helpful for our study than simply to look at that life.

And, first of all, we note its purity. The taint of sin is upon all other lives. We turn to them, the greatest and the best, who

"Climbed the steep ascent to heaven
Through peril, toil, and pain."⁸

They are the victors who o'ercame, whose names we cheer. But the marks of the conflict are upon them all. The stain of dust is on their garments, and they have all known defeat. His life, too, had

⁷ *Wesen des Christentums.*

⁸ Reginald Heber.

its struggle, but He bears no stains and shows no scars of past sin or defeat. Our saints of earth are the last to speak of freedom from sin. The higher men rise spiritually, the more sensitive the conscience, the deeper the feeling of guilt. No men have uttered so deep a note of humble contrition as a Paul or an Augustine or a Luther. No man had so clear a vision of sin as Jesus. No man has ever made it so clear to men as the dark and damnable thing that it is. And yet He never once betrays even a passing sense of penitence or suggests a single time the consciousness of a need of forgiveness. He speaks the word of tender mercy to repentant sin, but it springs from no inner experience of its meaning, only from the unsounded deeps of divine compassion.

And yet there is nothing negative in this life. He is no recluse who has fled life's task in order to escape the world's temptation. The Church has spoken of His sinlessness, but the word seems negative and colorless. He is not the traditional saint, pale, austere, other-worldly. Rather it is the positive note and the note of richness that mark His life. The more we regard them, the more these two notes strike us with wonder: the completeness

of the life that touches every side of our desire and endeavor, and the positiveness of the life that glows with passion and thrills us with its power.

He lived in a day remote from us, in a humble hamlet of a remote province of that old Roman world, and He belonged to a people who alone in that great empire had fenced themselves off successfully in race peculiarity and religion. The Jew alone refused to be cosmopolitan. The Gospels which present Him to us come from Jews, for Luke relied upon Jewish sources. And yet we turn to that figure and know no separation from Him. We read those pages, and nineteen centuries drop off like a garment. Only the eternal and timeless spirit speaks to us, and we hear it as the language of our day. We do not think of Him as Jew or as first-century dweller. He comes to us as man. And so He has come to men of all lands and all ages, not as another, but as their own.

The same fullness and completeness mark His life. Cæsar is a great general, Augustine is a great theologian, Demosthenes an orator, Dante a poet. We have no class for Jesus. Never man spake as He, yet we do not class Him with the orators. He had the vision for beauty, and even

through tradition and translation the beauty of His words shines out. Yet we never think of Him as artist or poet. He searched the deep things of life and has given us our final word for man and God, yet we do not call Him philosopher or theologian.

Yet what means most to us here is His completeness of character. All the qualities of a perfect life are present in Him. Elsewhere we find one or the other. In Him we find them joined. Nowhere is such humility, such utter dependence upon God; nowhere such courage and independence over against men. In Him we see the tenderness of a woman; but joined to it is a virility, a masterfulness which too often has been overlooked by theology and art alike. The Gospel pages show His love for children, His patience with all the weak; they show as well the flaming passion of a great and militant soul. He abounded with love and pity; and yet how stern He was with Himself. In simple, wholesome spirit He enters into all the joys of men; yet side by side in perfect unity we see the nights of prayer and the life of perfect fellowship with God. He craves the fellowship of men and the special sympathy and friendship of

His chosen circle; and yet in the great moments He stands alone, alone in the wilderness, in the garden, at the cross.

What wonder that He speaks to every land and age, to every type of this race of ours. All have found their inspiration and ideal in Him. In Him is the spirit of all kind and tender mothers, of all loyal friends and lovers of men. He has been the inspiration of purity and truth, of all high and noble manhood that has quickened our lesser lives. His is the spirit of faith that has made men quiet and strong when all the world opposed them; the spirit of courage and chivalry, of all defense of weakness and all high hatred of wrong and oppression; the spirit of love and courage that calls for men to-day to fight against ancient wrong and new abuse, against oppression and cruel lust and hardened greed, and all things that make earth foul and curse the children of men; the spirit of glad and confident service that loves men and fights evil, and knows that the kingdoms of sin must perish and the rule of God must come.

For nineteen centuries Jesus has led men along this path. All that has been high in spirit and endeavor they have caught from Him. It is but

sober history to declare that He has become the conscience of our race. We have only one alternative to-day. It is the spirit of paganism or the spirit of Christ. The spirit of paganism is not yet gone. We see its selfishness, its worship of success and power, its scorn of all else. Now and then it ventures speech in some teacher like Nietzsche. But more and more it dwells in silence or hides its shame behind some show of deceiving phrases. All that the spirit of Christ means we do not yet know. But we do know that there is nothing beyond Him, as there is nothing higher than He to-day.

“O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
We test our lives by Thine.”⁹

We have seen that the first need in this moral realm is not laws, but an ideal. The second need is to have that ideal realized in some life, so that it may have the meaning and power which life alone can give. We now note the third need, that of moral passion and power. In its deeper aspects we shall find the answer to this in the last part

⁹ John Greenleaf Whittier, *Our Master*.

of our discussion. Here let us note but two facts, albeit facts of deep meaning. First, Jesus changed morality from a cold duty into a burning passion. There is no such thing as "mere morality" with Jesus. It is either more or nothing. Righteousness was no bare deed with Him. It was a spirit of self-surrender, of loyalty, of faith. It was a life to be lived, a new order to be established, a triumph in which men were to believe. It demanded the whole heart. That passion Jesus kindles in His followers. Others have set before men their ideals and have left them abashed, perhaps, but cold. Jesus sets men aflame with His own devotion. Only in such a passion is there moral safety and moral power for man; we are safe from the evil only when there is a good to which we surrender heart and soul. In His ethics of passion Jesus gives us the ethics of power.

Second, Jesus showed in His own life the power of this moral passion not only as victorious in His life, but as the power that rules the world. In the darkest hour of His life we hear Him say to His fearful followers, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."¹⁰ And He had! Not by

¹⁰ John 16: 13.

force of arms, for such victories are but for a day. First of all, He ruled the kingdom of His own soul. And then He met the age-long forces of evil in the kingdoms of the world. There was brute force, set forth in Roman soldiery. There was the ancient selfishness of our race, with its malice and cunning and hate set forth in His enemies. And there was weakness and fear in His followers. And there was death itself that looked at Him from the cross. He faced them all, and conquered in the hour of the garden. He conquered not by an argument, nor an ecstasy, but by a great obedience and a great trust. The nineteen centuries that have followed are but a commentary on His words. Not hate and fear and force have won, but the Spirit of Him who met all this with love. And in the dark days that followed that death it was not simply an empty tomb that convinced the disciples, nor the vision of the risen Lord. It was the conviction that such a life could not die, that such a death was victory. A thousand other men might die and come to life again, and our old world would move on just the same. It was the death of such a life, and it was life from such a death, that has transformed the world. And when our theories

and theodicies fail, when other powers come to threaten or seduce, when other skies are dark above our heads, we look at that life and say, Love is stronger than hate, good is mightier than evil,

“God’s in His heaven—
All’s right with the world.”¹¹

JESUS AND THE QUESTION OF HOPE

Our third question remains: What may I hope for? That is far more than the question of the life beyond. It is the question of life here and now. We have seen how Jesus meets two great needs of our faith. He gives us the vision of God and the ideal of life. But there is a third and far deeper need. It is the need of power, the gift of life itself. We catch the vision of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in all His holiness and mercy, and we see the life that Jesus lived with the Father. But who are we, with our sin and guilt, that we should dare to walk with this God? We see the ideal of life that Jesus shows us; but how are we to achieve that in our own life? Religion means God and righteousness. Does it also mean help, help that we may walk with this God,

¹¹ Browning, *Pippa Passes*.

help that we may achieve this righteousness? If Jesus stands first in the realm of ethics and in the realm of revelation, has He any place in this realm of power?

Let it be said at once that we come here to the real place of Jesus' Kingship. That is the meaning of those names in which the early Church spoke her faith when she called Him Lord and Master and Savior. Again, it is not a doctrine with which we are dealing, but a tremendous fact. In the realm of spiritual power Jesus stands first, and there is no second. The story is as easy to trace as is the marvelous development of applied power in industry in the last century. We know the story of iron and steam and electricity, of human power multiplied a hundred-fold by man's inventive skill. Here is another tale just as definite in its facts, and a thousand-fold more important because it concerns the higher reaches of life.

The world before Jesus gave no promise of anything unusual in a spiritual way. Judaism was losing its life in a hard system of legalism, whose dreary routine was growing more dreary and hopeless as it left the prophetic spirit farther behind. The old faiths of the Roman world had lost their

hold upon the minds of men. New faiths were springing up on every hand, but their very number spoke of men's longings rather than their faith, nor did one of them face the real problem, the making over of men in a new moral spirit and life. They were giving themselves to mysteries and sacraments by which they hoped to achieve immortality. The problems of sin and guilt and righteousness were not in their ken. Meanwhile vice was undermining the nations. It was this world that Jesus touched. From it He called forth the men who have been, through His Spirit, our leaders in faith and conduct to this day. Out of the Pharisees He led forth a Paul, from the publicans He called a Matthew, from ignorant peasants He made world-leaders, and beside them, equal in beauty of spirit and purity of life, the unnamed hosts who formed the communities of love and faith that soon spread throughout that Roman world. And that was only the beginning of the long line of great heroes and humble saints whose lives have blessed our kind. If we ask these men about their doctrines, they will differ. If we ask them about the power that has made over their lives, they will all make one reply. That common answer we find

in the New Testament. Pervading all its pages there is this wonderful dependence upon Jesus Christ. All of them own themselves as His men, as those who have no faith, no hope, no strength except that which comes through Him.

What, then, is it, let us ask, which makes Christ master in this realm of character and life? How is He maker and saver of men? How does He bring help into the life of men?

First of all, He brings to men a sense of need and desire. Where Jesus begins with men is made plain enough by the Gospels. It is summed up in the word *metanoia*. The word repentance, of our English Bible, hardly translates it. It means a changed attitude of a life. The will is in it, but there is more than the will. The man's whole heart turns with a passion of sorrow and hatred from his sin, and with a deep desire toward God. An open heart is man's first need. How constantly He emphasized this! It fills the beatitudes, where He praises meekness, and purity, or singleness of heart, and the hunger and thirst after righteousness. That is why He places the child in the midst, the child that is open-hearted and humble and trustful. That was the stumbling-block with the Phari-

sees, who had lost the single eye and turned the light that was in them into darkness. And how His heart leaped with joy when Jesus found this sorrow and longing, which was most often, as we know, with humble folks and with publicans and sinners!

And if we ask how He wrought this we must say: by the ideal of life that He set before men and by the presence of God that He brought them, and these two in one. He had not so much to say about sin, except to Pharisees and some rich folks and mighty who were dead in their self-content. But to all men He brought the vision of the new life. He set it before them both in word and deed. He rebuked their sin and kindled their desire by the same message. It was the vision of holiness and the vision of God, that which made Isaiah cry out, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;"¹² which made Peter exclaim, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"¹³

All this, though it means so much, was but opening the doors of men's hearts. Jesus did more; He brought God in. He smote men with this sense

¹² Isa. 6: 5.

¹³ Luke 5: 8.

of sin only that He might heal them again. He made them feel their separation from God only that He might draw them near. He held up before men such an ideal as had never been brought to them before. No outward deed, no observance of form would suffice. Men were to be children of the Father, like Him by an inner spirit of purity and mercy. And then He showed them this same Father giving to men what they could not themselves achieve. If men could not keep the outward law, how could they achieve the inner spirit? That question Jesus answered by His gospel of mercy. God is willing to take men into the fellowship, not because they are the sons of His Spirit, but that He may make them such. Frame the theology as you wish, this is the fact: Jesus made men believe in the mercy of God and brought them into His fellowship. When He wrought a deed of healing, men saw the finger of God. When He spoke the word of forgiveness, men heard the voice of God. He gave men courage to cast themselves upon the mercy of God. The age-long purpose of God has been simply this: to form a community of men who shall live in the fellowship of God. In that great purpose Jesus is the consummate agent of

God. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself,"¹⁴ so Paul interpreted Jesus' life.

The supreme deed of that life the Church has always found in His death. Often it has interpreted that death crudely, mechanically. It is never to be separated from the life in our thinking. We must think of it not as a death having value in itself, but always as the death of this Christ of the holy and merciful life. However we conceive it, the fact remains: Here men have seen, as nowhere else, God's hatred of sin, and the depth of their guilt, and the mercy of God drawing men into fellowship with Himself. The cross is not a tragic accident; it is not a passing incident; it is God's supreme revelation of His purpose in the world, and His supreme deed in seeking men for Himself.

And so He who has given to men their highest ideal of life and their deepest conscience of sin and guilt, has given them also the sure confidence in God. Men have looked at Him and dared to believe in the mercy of God at the very moment that He revealed their sin. And so He has been the open door for the Spirit of God to enter men's lives. And however we explain it, the patent fact

¹⁴ 2 Cor. 5: 19.

remains: Jesus Christ has been the creative moral force of history. Only life can mold life. Spirit alone can transform spirit. The only real agency that can make over men is a higher fellowship. And Christ means for men this fellowship and this life. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation."¹⁵

And so the Church has always called Him Lord and Master and Savior. Long before they discussed a doctrine of His person they made this confession which sprang from their lives. The generations since have shown one long line of witnesses to the same fact and faith. To the most sinful and degraded He has been the man of saving power, to the offscouring of our cities' slums, to the offspring of ages of savagery in Fiji or Africa. He has been equal to the deepest need. And He has been master of the purest souls. The noblest voices of our race have brought Him the deepest, humblest praise. Count them one and all, the strongest and most saintly, the men whose deed and spirit lead us still: Paul and John, Augustine and Francis of Assisi, Luther and Wesley, and saints of our age like William Booth and Phillips

¹⁵ 2 Cor. 5: 17.

Brooks. They will be the first to say, All we have is from Him.

In Trinity churchyard at Boston you may see the monument erected to Phillips Brooks. There is the face of the preacher from whose lips so many thousands took their inspiration for life. Back of the figure, with His hand upon the preacher, you see the Christ. You may challenge the art of the monument, as some have done, but you may not deny its symbolism. The height which the noblest of our race have reached seems only to have given them a vantage from which they might better discern the depth of their need and the greatness of their Master. Not one of them would dream of setting his own name beside Him. In every other realm there are many masters. There is no one name that stands alone in philosophy or art or letters or science or invention. But when we come to the highest realm, where men ask for light for faith and help for life, we name One Name, and place no other beside it.

And He is the Master of nations as well as of men. Slowly but surely His spirit has been setting the ideals for nations, and its power has been directing their history and shaping their institu-

tions. How many ancient wrongs that Spirit has overthrown! How many more stand condemned by it to-day! Never has that spirit wrought more mightily than in our own time. Before our eyes we see it laying hold of our modern industrial life, condemning its strife and selfishness and wrong, beginning here, too, its work of regeneration. Our very dissatisfaction, the sense of our social sin, is the fruit of His spirit working that repentance which must precede the new life. Men are ceasing to ask simply, Will it pay? They are saying, Is it right? is it loving? is it just between man and man? What the social order of to-morrow will be we can not tell. Of one thing we may be sure: it will be nearer the mind of Christ than the order of to-day.

On the border-line between Argentine and Chile these two nations have placed a monument sealing their treaty of peace. High on the range of the Andes it stands, three miles above the Pacific. There where arms have often clashed in war is a statue of Christ, twenty-six feet in height and resting upon a great hemisphere, and beneath is this inscription: "These mountains will crumble to dust ere Argentines and Chileans break the peace which

at the feet of Christ the Redeemer they have sworn to keep." To-day we bring to Christ the questions and the needs of our single hearts. Some time the nations will sit at His feet, and His spirit shall settle all their questions.

So deeply has the spirit of Christ already entered into the life of Christian nations, despite all our evils, that we can hardly realize how much we owe to Him. Only a study of a land without Christ can show how much not only the single soul, but the life of the nation needs Him. Turn to such a land, its ignorance, its superstition, its degraded womanhood, its childhood without privilege, its lust unchallenged, its wrongs unrebuked. Our Western science will not renew the mind of such a land, our Western culture of mind will not give it moral power, our Western industry may but add to its burdens as with the child-labor in the factories of the new Japan. Who shall give it a conscience and the vision of a new life? Who shall train leaders in the spirit of unselfish service? Who shall make human life sacred and transform human hearts? I can but answer by applying words that have been quoted by another with this meaning:

“I know of a land that is sunk in shame,
Of hearts that faint and tire;
And I know of a Name, a Name, a Name,
Can set this land on fire.
Its sound is a brand, its letters flame;
I know of a Name, a Name, a Name,
Will set this land on fire.”¹⁶

His hatred of wrong, His love of men, His passion of service, His faith in God, His vision of a Kingdom on earth, are the hope of India and China to-day. Neither is there any other name wherein they must be saved.

Long years ago Jesus put His question to a little group of men: Who say ye that I am? He puts that question to us to-day. At the end of our answer, as it was with those disciples of old, there lies not the word of a moment, but the issue of eternal life. There are some questions that we do not need to decide. We do not need to choose sides as between Darwin and Lamarck. We do not need to determine what we should do as mayor of New York, nor how we should spend a million a year. But the matter of a working faith is not one of the optional questions of life. It is often said, “A man must live.” Men have made the phrase

¹⁶ Quoted by Robert Speer, Report of Student Volunteer Convention at Toronto, 220.

a cheap excuse for selfishness and disloyalty. The words have a deeper meaning. In their true sense, that is indeed our first obligation. A man must live. That does not mean that he must shun pain, or win success, or even preserve his physical being. That is not life. Life is to find the meaning of our being, the ideal for our endeavor, a God to trust, and help that will keep us true. For such living a working faith is no luxury and no option. It is the solemn necessity of the higher nature which is our destiny and which we can not escape.

No man may ask these questions to-day with honest and open spirit and pass by Jesus Christ. His question, too, is not optional for us. We look for the highest ideal, and His life stands before us. We ask for a Highest that we may trust and worship. He shows us holiness informed by love and power ruled by both, and teaches us to say, Our Father. We cry for help that we may reach our goal. He challenges us by His word: "Come, and I will give you rest; follow Me, and I will make you—men; be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."¹⁷ "Who say ye that I am?"¹⁸ He does not ask it to enforce homage, but to show

¹⁷ Matt. 11: 28; 4: 19; John 16: 33

¹⁸ Mark 8: 29.

us the way of life. And so, like those of old, we call Him Lord and Master and Savior, and we too say: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life?"¹⁹

MIRACLE AND DOCTRINE

There are other questions that arise for us, which have been hotly discussed in our day. What of the miraculous in Jesus' life as reported by the Gospels, the stories of His birth and the miracles of His ministry? And what of the doctrine of the Church concerning His divinity, His dual nature as human and divine, His place in the Trinity?

And first as to the miracles. As we have already concluded, we are bound by no reverence for the letter of a record to take every miracle as literal fact. We are bound rather to consider and to discriminate. Granted, then, that some stories of miracles may have arisen from misunderstanding or legend, what of the rest? Two things may be said in brief. If the supreme power of the world be personal, not material or natural, and if Jesus be the supreme manifestation of that Person in His purpose for the world, it is not only possible for

¹⁹ John 6: 68.

thought, but reasonable as well that such a manifestation should be accompanied by the miraculous. Jesus' deeds of healing, for example, can only by unpardonable historical violence be taken out of the Gospels. Second, for our working faith this question of the miraculous is not the question of first importance. The miracles are no support or basis for our faith, either in the actual experience of the modern man or in logical reason. What is essential to our faith is this, that the supreme reality in the world is person, that the world is neither above God nor opposed to God, but exists by His power and is here as the instrument of Him that worketh His purpose in all things. It is not the miraculous that we need to concern ourselves about, but the supernatural; that is, this divine personal as the real and supreme power of the world. "God was in Christ," that is our great truth. However it may have been in the past, such a living faith is not built upon a demonstration of the miracles. Rather it is because of such a living faith that such a belief in the miracles has its place with us. It is Christ who makes credible the miracles, not the miracles which bring us to the faith in Christ.

And what as to the Church's doctrine as to the person of Christ? Let us note again what we have considered at the beginning. Christ is not a problem for our faith: He is its solution; He is not a burden: He is the help by which we rise. He makes us see the meaning of life. He brings us the sense of guilt and the high desire at the same time. He brings us the living God and leads us out of our sin into fellowship with Him. True, He comes with a challenge and a demand. But He does not ask us to believe doctrines about Him. He asks us to trust Him and obey Him. No man, indeed, ever asked so much of men as He. "Leave your nets," He says to one. "Sell all that you have," He says to another. "Forsake your home and kindred," He calls to a third. To them and to us all He says, "Arise and follow Me." The demand is one of obedience, and He speaks it only because He knows that He voices the will of God and that He brings life to men by the power of God. Such obedience is the simplest and the hardest demand that Jesus can make upon men. Until men answer this demand, it makes little difference what theories they hold about Him. The days that accepted the doctrine without question have often been times

of deepest disloyalty to the Spirit of Christ, when men put His cross on their banners and carried pride and ambition and hatred and murder in their hearts. The supreme question for my working faith is, Can I trust Jesus Christ in the life that He demands, in the God of mercy whom He brings?

But the first does not rule out a second. This is the beginning; it is not the end. If Jesus Christ means all that has been set forth in these pages, then there is much more that must be said of Him. The very first Christians began saying this. In these discussions we have not gone beyond them. But we have taken their high words of confession to express our faith in Him. Simply to tell our experience of what Christ is to men, we have had to say Lord and Master and Savior. There is more that lies beyond. But what further must be considered lies mainly with theology, and need not be taken up in the outline of a working faith. The men of the New Testament said in the forms of their day the highest that they could of Him. The Greek theologians who framed the Church's doctrines said the highest that they could in the forms of their thought. Back of both was the faith and the life. The forms may change. We

will hold to the faith and the life. The test at last will be here:

“Not he that repeateth the name,
But he that doeth the will.”²⁰

And that is why Christ Himself shall abide. The language of one age grows often strange to the next. But the life that God made remains in its needs the same, and the God who can meet those needs abides unchanging.

“Subtlest thought shall fail and learning falter,
Churches change, forms perish, systems go,
But our human needs, they will not alter,
Christ no after age shall e'er outgrow.”²¹

²⁰ Longfellow, *Christus*, Cambridge Ed., 522.

²¹ John Campbell Shairp.

CHAPTER V
A SOCIAL FAITH

“**W**HEN ye pray, say, Father, Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come.” JESUS, Luke 11: 2.

“With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His waist, and faithfulness the girdle of His loins.” ISAIAH 11: 4.

“He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?”
MICAH 6: 8.

“When Christ came and changed the face of the world, He did not speak of rights to the rich, who had no need to win them; nor to the poor, who would perhaps have abused them in imitation of the rich. He did not speak of utility or of self-interest to a people whom utility and self-interest had corrupted. He spoke of Duty, He spoke of Love, He spoke of Sacrifice, of Faith; He said that they only should be first among men who had done good to all by their work. And these thoughts breathed into the ear of a society which had no longer any spark of life, reanimated it, conquered the millions, conquered the world.”

JOSEPH MAZZINI, *The Duties of Man*, I.

CHAPTER V

A SOCIAL FAITH

A SOCIAL AGE

THE social interest is the deepest concern of our day. There may still be those to whom it seems a mere passing craze. Most of us realize that it has come to stay. It is one of those great steps forward which mankind can never retrace.

There are three aspects of this social interest to-day. There is, first, the social passion. It is man's love for men—not the love for some men, for those of our family, of our class or color or speech, but for men as men. Nor is our concern for just a part of the man. Men used to talk about loving souls. Now we speak of loving men. The toil of little children who should be at play, the starved lives of the poor, the oppression of an unjust wage, the broken life of the prisoner, the hunger of India's millions on the other side of the globe, the cry of all these rings in our ears and will not let us rest.

There is, secondly, a new social insight. We are beginning to see how many of our questions are social. In some matters we must take men one by one. One by one we must turn men from sin. One by one men must find their fellowship with God. But there are other questions that must be settled together. The world is more than a sum of single men. One and one make more than two. They make home and Church and State. There are great questions of wages and health and morals that must be settled for the social whole, and not for the single man. We must make new men for the sake of the world. We must make a new world for the sake of men. We have always had social service, but not always this social insight. We have reformed drunkards and left the saloon alone. We have cured a few folks in sanitariums, but have not wiped out the slums that breed tuberculosis. We have cared for maimed victims, but have not stopped industrial accidents. We have levied fines and built prisons, but have not earnestly set ourselves to change conditions that bring forth vice and crime. The fine and the jail, indeed, have often furthered what they sought to check.

And then there is a new social hope to-day. A

few years ago the great National Conference of Charities and Corrections spent most of its time discussing the alleviation of need. Now its great question is, How shall we stop up the sources? Men are stirring with a new vision. Poverty is not necessary. Disease may be banished. There is a whole world of suffering and wrong that is most tragic because it is so needless. And deeper even than this is the conviction that the earth is rich enough to give a due share of life to all the children of men. Men are filled with the hope of a new world, and the new world is not to be beyond the skies, but here and now.

Nowhere has this new spirit become more apparent than in the Church. Twenty-five years ago these questions were almost wholly absent from the great Church gatherings. Now they are the center of interest and awake the quickest response. There are not wanting those who look askance at all this. What has religion to do with these matters? Is not faith a simple question of the soul and God? God and soul and heaven, are not these the three points that fix the curve of religion? And is not this whole movement sweeping the Church away from her real task?

To all this we say, No! The social stirrings of the day are the product of the Christian religion. We are in the midst of the revival for which the Church has been praying. But it has not come after the manner of our planning, and we have not recognized it. It may be a one-sided revival. That is what we have often had. We have seen men cry out because of their individual sins and seek escape from hell. To-day men are being convicted as to their social sins and are asking how they may bring heaven upon earth. Not all social unrest has this conscious spiritual meaning, but it was never so richly present. This deeper note of sympathy, this widening sense of brotherhood, this passion for righteousness, this faith in a new day and a better world, this is of the very spirit of Christ.

Is this the field of religion? Yes! The God of our working faith, we have already seen, is the God of all time and of all the earth. If Christianity had no ideals for these new hopes, if it had no guidance for our social task, then it would remain the religion of a corner until a new faith should come which was as large as the life of man and as deep as his needs. Have we only an answer

to the single soul and not an answer for the world? The world never had so deep need of the answer of the gospel. The social passion is here. Democracy is releasing forces that no man can measure. For France, in her day of revolution, they meant destruction. Have we a power that can direct them? Can we set for men to-day a true social goal? Can we bring men to repentance of their social sins and unsocial spirit? Can we give the power, moral and spiritual, that is needed for the social task? These are the final questions of the social movement. To-day we are hotly discussing methods of reform, new laws and charters and constitutions. They are important, but they are not first. And these questions that stand first only religion can answer. That is the real issue involved as we ask the social meaning of our working faith. In our answer we will consider first the social ideas, then the social spirit, and last the social power of Christianity.

THE SOCIAL IDEAS OF CHRISTIANITY

The thought of the Kingdom is the first great social idea of our faith. There is a very simple conception of religion summed up in three ideas:

a distant God in heaven, man upon probation here on earth, and a heaven or hell to which this man shall go. That circle shuts in a good deal of truth, but it shuts out a good deal as well. Human history means more than a few men picked out of a wreck. We must go back to our first discussion. God is in His world shaping through the long ages a great purpose. Some time all the forces of nature and all the institutions of men shall obey that will. That glowing hope Jesus held before men. He did not say, Repent, that you may go to heaven. He said, Repent, for the Kingdom is at hand, the Kingdom of God here on this earth. We have tried to get a little corner of the earth, a section of men's lives, and hold it for God. Jesus had the spirit of the Old Testament: The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Some time the whole world shall be new. Sin and want and shame and wrong and every unrighteousness shall be done away. And not in the quiet place of prayer alone shall God's will be done, but where courts sit in judgment, where men gather for trade, where the wheels of industry turn, and wherever the work of men is done on earth.

The second great social idea of our faith is the

thought of God. Only a contrast will bring out that meaning. The gods of the old pagan faiths were only magnified men. They had all the jealousies and hatreds, the passions and the weakness of men. The Stoics lifted their God above all this. It was the noblest thought of God which that old world had conceived. But in raising him above human weakness they raised him above human pity, too. There was no frailty, but there was no love. He dwelt for them far apart from what might defile or might disturb, where

“No sound of human sorrow mounts
To mar his sacred everlasting calm.”

Here was a great example for the Stoic philosopher, but no help for the Roman world. Here was no faith to stir to social deed or to give a social hope.

The prophets and Jesus give us another picture. Here is the same noble elevation: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways.”¹ But there is no separation. The elevation is but the measure of a greater love. “As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His loving-kindness toward them that fear Him.”²

¹ Isa. 55: 9.

² Psalm 103: 11.

Here is no being remote, indifferent. It is a God of passion moving in the life of this earth. Here is the passion of pity: "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them. In His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and bare them and carried them all the days of old."³ There is love here, but without weakness. It is no sentimental emotion. It flames out against iniquity like the Christ with the scourge in the temple. Against all that harms and oppresses it is a militant power. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."⁴ He is a God of holiness, but there is no separation here, Stoic or Pharisaic. It is a holiness which drives Him into the world to overcome all that is unrighteous and unjust. It is like the holiness of Jesus which made Him the companion of sinners. He is righteous. But the righteousness is not that of the judge, who stands apart and watches the conflict of our life and then passes upon the issue. He is in the fight. "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth."⁴ It is the picture of a God

³ Isa. 63: 9.

⁴ Isa. 11: 4.

who is here in His world setting up righteousness. We end our search for God where Lowell found the Christ:

"I knelt and wept: my Christ no more I seek,
His throne is with the outcast and the weak."⁵

Here is the heart of our social creed. All else is but explanation and application. And here is the ground of social faith. Our hope does not rest upon the last election returns, nor the number of those whom we count upon our side. The world is organized upon the side of righteousness. The stars are fighting in their courses against Sisera.

"Right is right, since God is God
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."⁶

And we need not only the enthusiasm, but the patience and poise and quiet strength which come with this conviction.

The third great idea is the conception of man. How simple it seems! Jesus took a common man by the hand and led him out under the stars and said: The God of heaven and earth knows you. You are under His care. The hairs of your head

⁵ Lowell, *The Search*.

⁶ Frederick W. Faber.

are numbered. When you pray, speak to this Lord of all and say, "Our Father," for you are His child. He took the least of human beings, a little child. It had no rights before the law. It was nothing. But He said, "Whoever shall cause one of these little ones to stumble, it were better for him if he were cast into the sea."⁷ He spoke to men, not great men or noble, but just common men, and declared that the life of one of these common men outweighed the whole world: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his own life?"⁸

Only a contrast with the world of Jesus' day will show what these words meant. Human life was the cheapest thing in the world. Privilege was sacred, rank was sacred, property was sacred. To raise hands against these meant death. But man was not sacred. The child had no rights. The woman was commonly a chattel. The world knew no real democracy. Greece? Its democracy was the leisure of the few resting on the slave-labor of the masses.

The full radicalism of this teaching we are just beginning to see in our own day. Our law has been founded upon that of Rome, the chief interest

⁷ Mk. 9: 42.

⁸ Mk. 8: 36.

of which was the protection of property. To-day we see that the chief concern of society should be man. Here is the deep undercurrent of unity that flows through all our turmoil of conflicting movements and programs to-day. No right of birth; no ancient privilege; no institution, however hoary with age; no right of property or of cunning and power shall stand before the right of man. By this principle we are testing our institutions to-day. Here is the State. Once its glory lay in triumph of arms. But war itself stands condemned by our test. Lloyd George spoke our new social mind when he declared in a speech, not long since: "It is as deep a stain upon the National flag that its folds should wave over slum-bred and half-starved children, over ill-paid, ill-fed, ill-housed workingmen and women, as if it were to wave over defeat in a stricken field." The measure of the State is in the men and women it brings forth.

We are testing modern industry in the same way. So far the test of industry has been production and profit. No wonder we have boasted of its progress. What marvels of invention we have brought forth! How we have made the forces of nature work for us! And how wonderfully we have or-

ganized both industry and commerce! But what about men? Machinery has multiplied productive power a hundred-fold; but where has its product gone? What of the constant throngs of the unemployed, and the greater number of those who, in the midst of this wealth, do not even receive a living wage? What does all this progress mean in terms of manhood? For scores of thousands of laborers our great steel industry has meant twelve hours of toil, seven days in the week, year in and year out. For scores of thousands of little children the prosperous cotton industry has simply meant a dreary stretch of toil where sunshine and play and study should have been. We boast of the product of factory and quarry and mine. What of the human by-product of injury and occupational disease and death? Can we forget that year by year we maim and slay more men and women in the quiet pursuits of industry than fell year by year during the terrible quadrennium of our Civil War? Years ago, when the new cotton industry was heaping up wealth for England, Robert Owen, himself a manufacturer, saw this human aspect. He saw laborers herded in hovels, little children of eight and nine dragged from their

beds at three or four in the morning to work till late at night, and from the poor-houses other children as young as six and seven driven to the same task. Our new conscience applauds Owen's words: "Perish the cotton trade, perish even the political superiority of our country if it depends on the cotton trade, rather than that they shall be upheld by the sacrifice of everything valuable in life."⁹ Lowell's parable still has its message for us:

"Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.
These set He in the midst of them,
And as they drew back their garment-hem
For fear of defilement, 'Lo, here,' said He,
'The images ye have made of Me!'"¹⁰

The next great idea of our social faith is that of righteousness. The Church of the past laid its stress upon charity in the relation of man with man. But the deeper note of Christianity is righteousness. Here is the foundation of the Kingdom. We must go back to the prophets of Israel to get the real meaning of the word. Righteousness with them was no bald justice distributing to each what

⁹ Quoted by Spargo, *Socialism*, 39.

¹⁰ Lowell, *A Parable*.

he had earned. It was no cold insistence upon some outward standard. It was a vision, and a passion which flamed alike with loyalty to God and love for men. It was a protest in the name of all that suffered against all that was wrong. It was a conviction that some time all oppression and injustice would be overthrown. For them this was God's great concern. For that reason it became man's great task. And so ritual and sacrifice and form retreated to the background. They heard only the God of the poor calling out to men, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."¹¹ The sins that they scourged were the sins of injustice. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field till there be no room. Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house."¹²

It is this issue of righteousness that is the fundamental question of our day. It is not a new

¹¹ Isa. 1: 16, 17.

¹² Micah 2: 1, 2.

political fad: it is a new conscience; and the creators of that conscience are the prophets and Christ. We look out upon the world which God has made, smiling fields and great forests and rich mines. All this, we say, He made for man. For the rich man? For the clever and the crafty? For the man whose father was strong enough to get it and who himself is strong enough to hold it though the hungry poor are at his gate? No; God meant it for all men. He is no lover of the few. Turn now to the cities of men. Here the few live in wealth, often that which their hands never earned. Here are countless numbers, even in our own land, who may not be paupers, but who have not enough to live a normal human life. Children must toil. Little ones have no real home because of mothers that must go out to work. Fathers know that death or an accident will plunge their families into want. Great numbers of them are even denied the chance to work at any wage. Bodies are undernourished, and the dark and narrow rooms of the city toiler show that even from sunlight and air these souls have been shut by the greed of men. Once men accepted this as the fixed order, that the few should have and the many

want. Now we know that it is not just, it is not right, it is not the purpose of God.

Over fifty years ago Lincoln asserted the principle in his great debate: "That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—right and wrong—throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, 'You toil and work and earn bread, and I'll eat it.' No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle."¹³

It is this new sense of justice that is back of a hundred plans that as many enthusiasts are setting

¹³ From last joint debate with Douglas, October 15, 1858.

before us to-day. It is the new democracy, the democracy of life. It is not a bald communism that would divide up the goods of earth. It is society organized for the sake of men, and men having a fair chance at the goods of life. It means a child's chance to be healthily born and fairly trained, to grow in mind and body, and be made ready for life's work. It is the mother's chance to make a home instead of being driven forth to work. It is the home's chance for privacy and decency and food and air and light. It is the man's chance for work, with safe conditions and reasonable hours and a living wage.

A fair chance at the goods of life! Hitherto we have said that we must keep men from starving. Of late we have talked of a minimum wage, which means to most men that lowest recompense for toil that will keep soul and body together. Justice in our new democracy means more than that. Not bread alone, but books. Not scanty garb and a bare roof, but some share of light and life and beauty and love. We are not merely to keep alive the machine that works. We are dealing with men. Bodies may exist where souls starve. Men want not only bread, but roses. That is the

meaning of Oppenheim's song of the marching women:

"As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,

A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill-lofts gray
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun
discloses,

For the people hear us singing, Bread and Roses, Bread
and Roses.

As we come marching, marching, we battle, too, for
men—

For they are women's children, and we mother them
again.

Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life
closes—

Hearts starve as well as bodies: Give us Bread, but
give us Roses.

As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women
dead

Go crying through our singing their ancient song of
Bread;

Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits
knew—

Yes, it is Bread we fight for—but we fight for Roses, too.

As we come marching, marching, we bring the Greater
Days—

The rising of the women means the rising of the race—
No more the drudge and idler—ten that toil where one
reposes—

But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and Roses, Bread
and Roses."¹⁴

¹⁴ James Oppenheim, *Bread and Roses*, American Magazine, Dec., 1911.

How this shall come it is not a part of our working faith to say. That belongs to politics and economics. But the power of this movement to-day lies in its great underlying moral ideals, and these are a part of our working faith. The earth is the Lord's; that stands first. We think Socialism is radical, but Christianity goes farther. Socialism says the instruments of production shall not be private property. Christianity says there is no private property at all. No man holds in fee simple, but only in trust for God; and that trust is for the benefit of men. We are familiar in our day with the man or corporation which says: "This is my business. I own it, and no one else. I can do with it what I will, close my factories or run them, set long hours or few. The State has nothing to say, and the working man only this one thing, whether he will take my proffer of employment or not." This is disloyalty to God. Some time we shall see that it is a crime against society and the State.

THE SOCIAL SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY

These, then, are the great social ideas of our working faith: the thought of the Kingdom, of

God, of man, and of righteousness. What a mighty dynamic these ideas have been! And yet there is something deeper in Christianity than social ideas. It is a social spirit. If we look at early Christianity we see very little of theory and even less of formal organization. What we find is a spirit and a life. It was a new kind of religion. It did not rely upon temple or priest or creed. It had not even a Bible of its own, for its gospel was at first only a living word upon men's lips. It is significant that in the New Testament we have the word religion but five times, while righteousness is used 100 times, truth 120 times, life 185 times, and love 210 times. We have here a religion of life and of the spirit.

But has that spirit a social meaning? At first sight it does not so appear. No one ever set forth so spiritual a conception of religion as Jesus. All that is external disappears. He drives man in upon his own heart and God. Race and language, rank and wisdom, priest and ritual are all left to one side. We see only the reverent soul bowed before God, and then walking the earth with this new spirit of sonship in its heart. But just here is the other side. The man not only bows

before the Father; he rises to live the life of son. That was the deed of Jesus. He made religion the pure life of the spirit, and then he flung it out into all the highways of life, to walk all the ways of men and transform that life in all its relations. The spirit of religion with Jesus is fundamentally social.

There are three social aspects of this new spirit which we may note. It is, first of all, the spirit of purity. Christianity stood in absolute opposition to moral evil, to sin. That sounds like a theological doctrine; it is a mighty social fact. Against all that was lustful, impure, obscene, brutal, bestial, Christianity waged from the beginning a war to the death. The pages of Paul are full of the echoes. The pagan world to which Paul came was not irreligious. There never were more religions, more temples, more religious circles and societies, a more earnest quest for God. But it was a religion with little thought of morality. It lacked moral ideals and moral power. Meanwhile the immorality of that day was undermining the life of whole nations. Paul gives us some glimpses into its dark depths. We know what its social consequences were: cruelty, oppression, poverty, dis-

ease, degradation. There were not wanting voices raised in protest, and the lash of the satirist was felt. The new religion came, not with occasional warning and protest, but with an eternal warfare alike in the soul of the single believer as well as in the world at large.

Christianity is engaged in the same struggle to-day. This immorality has three notable forms in our modern life: drunkenness, gambling, and sexual vice. It ought not to be necessary to point out the social character and consequences of these evils, whose crushing burden falls upon none so hard as upon the lower ranks of toil. And yet few men know, after all these years of temperance agitation, what is involved in the liquor business. Each year we pay a quarter of a billion more for liquor than we do for meat. We spend four dollars for drink for every dollar that goes for flour. All our schools and colleges cost us a bare one-sixth of what we pay for beer and whisky. We might multiply by ten all that we pay for Sunday schools and churches and home and foreign missions, and yet not pay for the same drink bill. And yet all this refers only to the cost of the liquor itself. I believe that this is the lesser half of the bill, for we have not yet

counted in sickness, accidents, disease, shortened lives, police and courts and prisons, political corruption, hospitals and asylums and poor relief, wasted grain and wasted labor, and the cost in happiness and peace and moral character which no money can measure. The Christianity which has made half of the territory of these United States dry in these last decades is rendering a social and economic service that no man can compute.

The social evil does not represent so much in money, but its unsocial consequences are even more terrible. It is no mere euphemism to call it *the* social evil. No force strikes so directly at the very foundations of society. Physically it spreads a plague that counts more sufferers than tuberculosis or any other contagious disease, smiting not alone the guilty man, but the pure wife and the innocent offspring as well. It strikes at the home, which is at the heart of all social life and progress. We associate it with luxury and dissipation. But here again it is the working class that feels this curse soonest. Their children are exposed to the contaminating sights and influences. The recruits for this trade of hell are taken mainly from their daughters. One of the most dire consequences of

this evil, as of gambling and the liquor trade, is its influence upon our political life. The immense, almost unbelievable, profits that come from these sources to-day have been a chief fount of corruption in our city government. And again it is the common man that suffers most from inefficient government, for it touches him at every point: rents, light, air, cleanliness, recreation, schools, and all the conditions that shall make for or against the moral and physical health of his children. The plunder of property is the least evil in civic corruption. The toll we pay in health of body and soul is its most terrific charge.

There are few who realize how deeply entrenched or how well organized these evils are. It is not a matter of controlling the passions of men. We have here a great business appealing to the greed of men by its enormous profits, giving them almost limitless funds for the corruption of legislation and of law-enforcement, with human inertia and human weakness and passion to assist it. We shall have no full measure of welfare for our people, in industry and health and morals, until this fearful drain upon our life be stopped. And no force can stop it

except the moral passions let loose by religion. Every other voice is crying, "These are necessary evils; they are as old as human nature, and they will last as long as man." Christianity comes in with her cry of faith and her message of hope: "No evil is necessary or final, and no power is greater than right and God." The new attitude toward the social evil in these last years has been nothing less than a religious revival. And beneath the public conflict the Church is carrying on steadily the work of moral education by which alone the problem will be finally solved.

It has been a great gain for us to realize that our social progress must have an economic basis. A fair wage, an adequate family income, is the beginning of all other things. Health, education, the training of childhood, and decent housing all cost money. But, after all, these necessary conditions simply give a fair chance for manhood. They do not make it. The palace may house vice, as well as the hovel. And you can have no health of the social body when its members are diseased. The spirit that wars against immorality in society and builds up moral power in the individual is a vital social force.

In its second social aspect this new spirit is the spirit of love. We might well call it the social spirit as such. It is the spirit which binds together family and community, city and State. We are near the heart of our social problems here. A sum of selfish interests, even if they coincide, will not make society. Nor will any set of principles, however lofty, accomplish the same. The French Revolution had fine phrases, but it had no more; and all its speech of liberty, equality, and fraternity could not avert the doom which was brought on by the unsocial passions which that movement loosed. There must be some spirit which will join men together in a purpose that is higher than any single life, that will call forth a love and a loyalty such as no selfish interest will awaken. The unpardonable social sin is selfishness and scorn. Reverence for man and the spirit of love, these form the social ideal.

What this spirit means we shall see by again turning to the primitive Church. The world of that day was full of divisions. The outward unity of the empire embraced an inner discord that was as wide as its bounds. There was scorn enough of man for man: of Jew for Gentile, of Greek for

barbarian, of freeman for slave. Into this world the new Christian spirit came. Two things seem to fill the heart of Paul with ever renewed wonder. One is the mercy of God toward men in their sin. The other is the outworking of that same mercy, when it becomes the spirit of man, in breaking down the high barriers which ages of prejudice and passion and selfishness have reared. In that world of division he saw a new fellowship slowly spreading. It was the new brotherhood, "where there can not be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all and in all."¹⁵ Here is no fervid rhetoric, but only the sober tale of what he saw in these communities that were spreading throughout the empire. How strong the inner bond was even the critics of the early faith will tell us. When one stood in need, the resources of the whole were at his disposal. There was no central authority and but little ecclesiastical control, but the Christians of the empire knew their oneness and could act as one. Within this fellowship every dividing power disappeared. It happened again and again that the highest places in the community were filled

¹⁵ Col. 3: 11.

by men of lowest rank and even slaves. Reverence for man and the spirit of love were closely joined here. In consequence the limits of the community did not bound this spirit. All men were to be revered because all were children of God, and all men were to be loved because that was the way of God's loving, who made "His sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sent His rain upon the just and the unjust."¹⁶

✓ The twofold danger of our social movement to-day is materialism and individualism. The former has already been referred to. It sees only one part of the social question: the economic. Individualism is the error of thinking that our social goal is reached when all men have their rights. But how shall we reach a social whole by an addition of individual selfishness? A vast amount of our social agitation to-day is simply individualistic. Its appeal is to selfishness, its cry is not righteousness, but rights. We are socializing our institutions to-day. We are demanding a new world for men. But we are forgetting that we must have new men for the new world. Society is not a creation apart from men. We can not have a socialized State and

¹⁶ Matt. 5: 45.

individual selfishness. We are the living stones that must make the temple. The socialized State demands socialized men. That means far more than that each shall concede to the other his rights. There is a big difference between the cry for rights and the passion for righteousness. We need not debate whether the new age will make noble living easier or not. One thing is sure, it will demand nobler living of men. Here is our movement to political democracy. We are giving to the common man his rights, but we are at the same time adding immense responsibility. Initiative, referendum, recall, shorter ballot, these all mean less of government by delegation, more by direct action. Will it prove for the good? That depends upon another question: After we have democratized politics, can we socialize the voter? It is the same in industry. Whether we have Socialism or no, we shall have increasing social control of industry. That of itself will not be a solution—it will be a challenge, a challenge to the common man. Will he show the spirit of self-control, of justice and vision and patience, of loyalty to the whole? That is the final question here as everywhere, the spirit of a man. This is a day of confidence in laws and

institutions—an over-confidence. In its last analysis every social problem is ethical. It is a matter of personal relations. We must socialize the institution, but it is even more necessary to socialize the man.

The third aspect of this new spirit is that of service. Here especially Jesus wrought that “reversal of values” which stirred the wrath of Nietzsche. The highest ideal of Jesus’ day was the Stoic ideal, that of the wise man, strong, calm, poised, sufficient to himself in face of good or ill. Jesus knew no such self-satisfied calm. He drove men out of themselves: in aspiration toward God, in sympathy and service to their fellow-men. Life was for Him not the calm of a philosopher’s repose. It was a great venture, a venture of faith in which men daringly rested in the mercy of God, a venture of love in which men lost themselves in service in the life of their fellow-men. Christianity is no religion of weaklings. Its ethic is not the *Sklavemoral* of Nietzsche’s jeer. Its ideal is one of strength. But its strong man is neither the wise man of the Stoics, dwelling aloft and alone; nor the superman, holding others down while he climbs his pedestal. He is the man who is strong enough

not only to mount, but to lift up others with him.

It is needless to point out how from Jesus' own life the deepening current of unselfish service has flowed on in the life of our race. It is a long story of charities and philanthropies and reforms. It is a still longer tale of the quiet ministry of humble and forgotten folks in all the common relations which make up our real life. We have another question to face. When the new day of justice and right comes, will not the need of such service be a thing of the past? Will not science and social justice banish poverty and sickness and all the other ills? Yes, that is what we are working for. The best philanthropy is that which makes itself ever less needed. All that does not mean that we shall not need kindness and sympathy and friendliness in that day. And all that is of the future. Two facts stand out plainly for us now. The first is the need of leadership before the new day can come. Our democratic age needs more of service, not less. Its most encouraging sign is not the discontent of the poor, of those that have not, but the discontent of those that have. Day by day the number is growing of the men of wealth

and power and position who can not rest because of their brothers' need. Laws and institutions are not self-working. Loyalty, unselfishness, a high consecration of life will be called for more in the State of to-morrow than even to-day.

THE SOCIAL POWER OF CHRISTIANITY

We have considered the social ideas and the social spirit of our working faith. Has it any social power, this Christian faith of ours? No paragraph can answer that question, but Christian history makes no uncertain reply. We have studied the great ideas, but they have never been merely ideas. From the beginning these thoughts of God and man and righteousness and the Kingdom have been incarnate in those that believed. The social spirit of which we have been speaking has never been simply an ideal. It has been the creative deed of Christianity. Its source was not a dream, but a life, where

"The Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."¹⁷

And this spirit of Christ has perpetuated itself not simply as ideal, but as the life of His disciples.

¹⁷ Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, XXXVI.

That is the final article of our social faith: We believe in the God who makes new men. We believe in Him who can change the selfishness and indifference and cruelty and scorn and blindness of men into that spirit of Christ which shall make the heart of the new age.

A few years ago Mr. Wells wrote his story "In the Days of the Comet." It is a story of the Great Change. He draws three pictures. First comes the world of poverty and sorrow and strife that we know so well. Then one day the great comet draws near the earth. The world is enveloped in its gases, and for a few hours all living creatures lie unconscious. Then out of its sleep and out of the old life the earth swings again. But it is a new earth. The Great Change has come. The misery, the bitterness, the passion, and hatred are all gone. A new world of light and love and brotherhood is here, where the joy of each is in the welfare of the whole. Some time the great change shall come and our hearts are stirred at the vision. But it shall come not through some outer visitant, nor by laws and institutions alone. It must come by the way of the inner spirit and through the hearts of new men. We have many

things for which to work and pray: enforcement of law, purity in politics, democracy in our institutions, justice in industry. But our deepest prayer may well be: Oh, God, give us new hearts. Make us over in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Help us to hate wrong. Help us to love men. Help us to serve. And give us trust in God and faith in men and the confidence of the new day that is to be.

A SOCIAL CREED

This, then, is our social faith:

I believe in the God of righteousness and mercy who is working in His world for the good of man.

I believe in the Kingdom of God on earth as the goal of life, where all sin and wrong shall be overcome, where the will of God, which is the life of men, shall be done in all the earth, in court and mart, in factory and mine, in Church and home, and in the soul of man.

I believe in men: in men whom God trusts—all men, and not the few; to whom belongs government; for whom God made this earth; whose welfare is the test of business and State and Church.

I believe in justice as the great social principle

for man, as the great purpose of God. "Righteousness and justice are the foundations of His throne."

I believe in the spirit of Christ as the life of men: the spirit of purity that has sworn enmity to all that defiles and destroys; the spirit of love which reverences all men as children of God, which craves all men for fellowship, which alone can bind men together; the spirit of service in which each gives himself to his brother and spends his life for the whole. And I believe in Him who makes men new, who transforms the life of men by giving them the spirit of love and purity and service, which is Christ.

This is not a philosophy of society. It is not a program of reform. Here, as elsewhere, our interest is in a working faith. And here, as elsewhere, only he that willeth to do shall know. Here, too, in the end the deep things of God and the rich treasures of life shall be given not so much to him who reasons wisely as to him who loves and gives and lives.

CHAPTER VI
THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH

“THE true Church is still a sort of ideal challenge to the faithful, rather than an already finished institution.”

“Every man who learns what the true goal of life is must live this twofold existence—as separate individual—yet also as member of a spiritual community which, if loyal, he loves, and in which, in so far as he is loyal, he knows that his only true life is hidden and is lived.”

JOSIAH ROYCE, *The Problem of Christianity*, I, 54, 203.

A scientist's conception of the Church: “A place in which, week by week, services should be devoted, not to the iteration of abstract propositions in theology, but to the setting before men's minds of an ideal of pure, just, and true living; a place in which those who are weary of the burden of daily cares should find a moment's rest in the contemplation of the higher life which is possible for all, though attained by so few; a place in which the man of strife and business shall have time to think how small, after all, are the rewards he covets, compared with peace and charity.”

THOMAS H. HUXLEY, *Life and Letters*.

“Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an indistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.”

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, *Divina Commedia*.

CHAPTER VI

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH

ONE of the strange facts in our life to-day is that we are facing an indifference to the Church at the same time with a deepening interest in religion. We are in the midst of a great revival. There are many in the Church who do not realize it, for it has not come in the old forms. We may see it in the deepening interest in all questions that concern faith. We may see it in literature, in the novels which deal with the questions of religion. It is present in the drama, for it is the religious appeal that has given the strength to such a production as "The Servant in the House." Most of all, the religious revival is to be seen in the quickened social conscience of the men of this day. Back of our great social and industrial movements, back of all our questions of political reform, back of the proposals of eight-hour day and minimum wage and industrial insurance, lies the growing passion for justice and for brotherhood. The

maker of that conscience is none other than Christ, and the stirring of the new passion is a revival of His religion that is deeper even than the spirit of philanthropy which has marked the past age.

Is it not strange, then, that in the midst of this all there should be marked on every side a strong indifference to the Church? The young men who would have turned to the ministry a generation ago are now looking to social service or a career in political reform. Laymen who might have given their strength fifty years ago to the work in the Church are seeking to serve men in movements outside the Church, while the masses of people seem to be increasingly unconcerned. It is not that they oppose the Church, they simply pass it by. Once the Church faced conflict and fought against bitter foes for her very life; in that conflict she grew. To-day it would almost seem that the Church which waxed strong against her enemies, might perish from mere indifference. What is perhaps most significant in all this is the fact that the men of large vision, the men of earnest, moral spirit, are turning aside from the Church because of their very earnestness. They see the Church as an institution concerned for its own life, debating

petty matters of ritual and robes, of differing doctrines and forms, and wasting its resources by its divisions. Outside are men oppressed, and ill-fed children born in the physical and moral filth of the slum, and women exploited by greed and lust. Here, they say, is our work. We want to serve men; we want to be where life is real and life is full. We do not oppose the Church: we wish it well; but men's work and a man's life lie outside.

There is much in that spirit with which we may agree. We stand for men, and religion is here to serve men and to save men. Our supreme concern is not an institution, but the triumph of the Kingdom of God. But the trouble lies not here. The failure is a wrong conception of the Church, and there is no deeper need for faith to-day than a right conception of that fellowship of faith and service which is bodied forth in the Church of Jesus Christ. We want no return to institutionalism, but the new day of faith must sound as one of its strongest notes the appeal to men on behalf of the Church.

It is not high-churchism for which we are standing here. Indeed, the first thing that we need to do is to overcome some of the old conceptions of

the Church which have ruled the past and against which men are reacting to-day. Here is the institutional conception of the Church, the old thought that, somehow or other, a certain divine pattern of organization has been handed down, and that this organization and its forms are sacred in themselves. A very little study of the New Testament will show there is no ground for such a conception at all. Not one passage in the New Testament tells us how the Church is to be organized. We catch the names of certain officers and certain leaders, but even if we degrade the New Testament to a book of laws, there is no law here by which to organize the Church. The Church has been made, in the second place, a conservator of doctrines, the authority for handing down certain dogmas. Against that, too, we must protest in the name of religion, which comes with a message, but which does not ask men to accept a theology. Then there is the sacramental conception of the Church, the theory that God has decided to give to men His salvation, His life, and His help only through the channel of certain forms and ceremonies and by certain men, and that this is committed to the Church. With this, too, men have

grown impatient. Christianity is a spiritual and a personal faith, and it is broader than any institution. All life belongs to God, and He may use any channel by which to come to men. No Church and no sum of Churches have ever shut up within themselves the life from God.

But when we have put these conceptions of the Church aside, we have not yet settled our question. Here is the fact that confronts us: From the very beginning the growth of the Christian faith and the life of Christian men have been inseparable from the Christian Church. In her bosom the saints of all the ages have been nurtured. The noblest lives of our race, far-famed or humble, have gained their faith through her message and their strength in her fellowship. She has given birth to schools and hospitals and every manner of philanthropy. She has inspired the vast majority of those who have wrought in great reform or gracious ministry. The greatest treasure of our race, the story of Christ and of His first followers, was brought forth by her devotion and handed down by her care. Wherever Christian faith and life have gone, it has been by her missionary zeal. And nowhere do we find the Christian religion surviving without the Christian

Church. Is it not of deepest significance that, while the New Testament gives no command anywhere to establish the Christian Church and no body of direction as to how this shall be done, yet, despite that fact, the Christian Church is there from the beginning? Does it not mean that the Church is more than a matter of rule or commandment, that it is essential to the very life of Christianity and the inevitable outworking of its very spirit?

If now we ask about the place of the Church in our working faith, we shall proceed just as we have done before. We shall not appeal to tradition or authority. We shall ask simply, what is the witness of history and of the vital religious experience of man.

If we look at this essential spirit of Christianity as we have already considered it, we shall find four elements involved. This faith is a truth that is believed, and thus a message to be given to men. Second, the Christian life is a fellowship and involves a community. Third, this religion is a worship, and a common worship to which it calls men. Fourth, it unites men for common service. The Church lives on, not because of tradition or

dogma or command, but because it embodies these great elements of Christian faith and life. How essential they are for that life and what they mean for men we shall see as we study them in order.

THE CHURCH AND ITS MESSAGE

The first meaning of the Church lies in its Message. The Church opens its doors because it has something to say to men. Jesus came as a teacher. The word that He read from the prophet in the little home-town synagogue was the confession of His life-purpose. He came "to preach good tidings to the poor," "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Jesus looked upon Himself as a preacher. When He sent His disciples forth He gave them nothing to bear but a message.

Now, our age is rather skeptical here. We are forever crying for "deeds, not words." We want actions, not ideas; life, and not doctrines. And as for creeds, the silence of our scorn is enough. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by the word." We reverse Him and say, Man shall not live by words, but by crop reports and balance of trade. The contrast is not between words and deeds, between doctrine and life; it is

between the life that is unthinking, unaspiring—that has no high meaning and no power—and the life that has found its purpose and inspiration and has joined itself to the eternal.

The final forces of history are not armies, but ideas. Marion Crawford tells this story of Carlyle: "It was at a dinner party, and Carlyle sat listening to the talk of lesser men, the snow on his hair and the fire in his amber eyes. 'The British people,' said one of the company, 'can afford to laugh at theories.' 'Sir,' said Carlyle, speaking for the first time during the dinner, 'the French nobility of a hundred years ago said they could afford to laugh at theories. Then came a man and wrote a book called the "Social Contract." The man was called Jean Jacques Rosseau, and his book was a theory, and nothing but a theory. The nobles could laugh at his theory; but their skins went to bind the second edition of his book.'"¹ Paul went forth with a few ideas. No hands had been laid upon him. No great institution stood behind him. He came from a despised race with the tidings of a leader that had been defeated and slain. With that message he faced the world of

¹F. Marion Crawford in *Doctor Claudius*.

Roman power and Greek culture. But when, years later, the walls of that great empire crumbled and its armies melted away before the onset of the tribes of the north, the foundations laid by this poor traveling preacher withstood the shock and bore the new civilization that now reared its head. Every pulpit is a depot of dynamite. The Bible might well be marked, "Highly explosive; handle with care." The Church of the Prince of Peace is dealing with the mightiest forces known to man.

That force is needed to-day. The man who needs most to take the lesson to heart is the impatient reformer who leaves the Church to one side, that he may get at the real business of helping men. We are hunting short cuts to a new social age. We are slow to learn our lesson. The life of the world is not static, but dynamic. The progress of the world is not by laws and institutions. These are only the marks and monuments of the real forces, and without those forces they are of no avail. We are putting our hope to-day in laws and charters; but equal laws are of little value except as they register the spirit of the people. We must socialize the people as well as socialize our institutions. The new social day awaits the

work of the Church, the clear, strong note that shall arise above the clamor of party or the interest of section, that will speak of justice and brotherhood, and that will teach men the reverence for right that is learned at the throne of God.

What is true of society is true of the individual, and even more so. He, too, can not live by bread alone. I can understand how the man grows impatient when he sees little children in the mills, and homes that are shut out from light and air and food and beauty and pleasure which God meant for all His children to have. "The children want bread," he says, "and you are giving them a stone. Let us talk less about the heaven beyond and make a little more of heaven here on earth." There is truth in his words. Our first duty is to give people a fair chance at life. A fair wage is a necessary foundation for all social upbuilding. But why stop there? That is only the foundation, and a foundation is here to be built upon. "Man shall not live by bread alone." It was not an ascetic that spoke that. It was one who had pity when men were hungry, and healed them when they were sick. But Jesus knew that there was hunger deeper than that for bread, and questions that reached

beyond those of work and wage. Here are a hundred families of millionaires. The material question is all solved for them, but are there no longings, no needs? Is there peace? Is there righteousness?

The glory of the Church is that she brings a message for these needs. Her voice has not always been clear; her vision has sometimes paled. The Church is human as well as divine. But the great words of God and right, of justice and love, of sin and pardon, of man's need and God's help, these men could always hear. And above all else she has brought to men the Christ. Nowhere else have men found the answer to these great questions. Elsewhere you may find now conscious ignorance, now hopeless pessimism, at most a great longing. Socrates says: "The oracle calls me the wisest of men, but not because I know. I differ from others only in this, that while none of us know, I alone know that I do not know." Omar Khayyám speaks for multitudes:

"'Tis all a chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:

Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays."²

² Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyám*, XLIX.

And outside of such pessimism we have at most the religion of a longing as Tennyson has appealingly put it:

“I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.”³

Over against all this the Church stands. It brings a great historic revelation. It comes not with man's longing, but with God's deed; not our cry to Heaven, but Heaven's word to us. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. It takes the common man and leads him into the presence of God. You are more than a cog in a great machine, it says. God is, and the world means good. Here is strength for your weakness; here is forgiveness for your sins; here is a life worth living in fellowship with God and in service of man, and here is hope for the life that lies beyond these days.

But, you say, are there not other voices that speak this message, and may we not read it in the Scriptures for ourselves? Yes, there are other voices. But if you will look closely you will see

³*In Memoriam*, LV.

that they have drawn from the message which the Church has handed down. As for the Bible, that too is from the Church. There is not a single writing in the New Testament that did not come to life within the Church. Its Gospels were written directly for work of preaching and instruction within the Church, as Luke and John point out. The great Epistles were letters to Churches or to men within the Church. These writings were passed from hand to hand in the Church, and from one congregation to another. In the Church they were treasured and preserved. Here the first small collections were formed. Here the wheat was gathered slowly from the mass of grain and chaff that made up early Christian literature. Nor should we forget the patient copyists of the monasteries, the toilsome work which preserved for us every letter of this priceless heritage when so much else was whelmed in an age of semi-darkness. It was the Church that from the very first put these words into the speech of the common people. To-day she is doing this systematically for the nations of the earth in hundreds of languages and dialects. When a nation emerges from darkness, she is there to spread these writings and lay the foundations of

the new life in these great principles. Last year she distributed over eleven millions of copies of the Bible, in whole or part, in the new Chinese Republic alone. No working faith is large enough for us that will let us take the truth with selfish hands into our little corner with no interest in the institution from which it came and through which it must reach the multitudes of our fellow-men.

THE CHURCH AS FELLOWSHIP

The Church means a Fellowship, and claims its place as such in our working faith. I believe in the communion of the saints. Men sometimes feel that they have reached a higher stage when they can say: "I prefer to worship by myself and to think for myself. The formalism of the cathedral and the crudities of the meeting-house are no help to me." But that is an imperfect type of religion. The story of life as you go from lower to highest is the story of constantly closer relations, of deepening interdependence. The beast may walk alone, but no man liveth unto himself. The very man who withdraws into himself takes with him only what he has gotten from a great historic past, which he selfishly refuses to pass on. The finest

souls have felt the inspiration that comes from fellowship as a real need of their life. They craved for it, alike that they might share and might receive. Christianity is essentially social. John the Baptist was a voice in the wilderness; Jesus gathered a company. There are pathetic suggestions of His longing for their fellowship. He takes them with Him when He goes to pray. "Ye are they," He says toward the end, "that have continued with Me in My temptations."⁴ At that closing supper He says, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you."⁵ And in His last terrible struggle we hear Him again, "Could ye not watch one little hour with Me?"⁶

No wonder that these same disciples gathered together again after His death. No wonder that others were joined to them. The first picture that we have of them tells us nothing about creed or form of organization. What we see is a faith and a fellowship. We feel the pull of that picture across the years. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. And they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart,

⁴ Luke 22: 28.

⁵ Luke 22: 15.

⁶ Matt. 26: 40.

praising God.”⁷ The fellowship was inseparable from the faith. These men must speak forth their faith, must pour out their love, and must win other men for that life. The heart of the Christian spirit is love, and love means fellowship, and that fellowship can no more be absent from our worship than from any other part. You might disband every Church to-morrow and tear down every place of worship, before a week was over the little companies and great would have begun to gather again.

What the fellowship means for the individual life needs hardly to be pointed out. There may be strong souls that can live alone. There are not many of them, and even these miss the highest through their solitude. Who can tell how large a part of life is atmosphere? The scientist, the artist, the reformer, the philosopher, these men are always seeking their own, establishing companies and conferences and associations. The Church affords such fellowship for men’s highest life. Strong men find in such association their inspiration. The vision comes to Isaiah in the temple. The common man finds there example, sympathy,

⁷ Acts 2: 42.

reproof, suggestion, that steady pull of social sentiment which is the most powerful influence that we know. The worst element in war is the moral deterioration that comes to the soldier, and the cause of that deterioration lies mainly here, that men have been torn away from those social groups of home and Church and community that made for them their moral and spiritual ideals. If the Church constantly holds up the highest with solemn and effective sanction, it saves men also from the lower. Every life has its times of moral sag. The fixed habit of Church attendance, like other good habits, to use a figure of Professor James, is a great flywheel that counteracts any unevenness of power, that carries us past the moments of weakness and the times of special moral strain. There is a deep suggestiveness in that simple note in the Gospels which speaks of Jesus: "And He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day."⁸

Look at the meaning of this fellowship for our democracy. Democracy is not merely a matter of constitutional enactment; it is a spirit, and without that spirit our laws are of no avail. President

⁸ Luke 4: 16.

Roosevelt pointed that out in one of his messages to Congress: "In the past the most direful among the influences which have brought about the downfall of republics has ever been the growth of the class spirit. If such a spirit grows up in this Republic, it will ultimately prove fatal to us as it has proven fatal to every community in which it has become dominant."⁹ No one will deny that this tendency is present to-day. In the fear of God and the love of men the Church must counteract it. And that the Church is doing. Over against all spirit of class it sets forth the true democracy. It asks no questions as to wealth or standing of the men who come to its doors. Whatever may be true in single instances, taking the Church as a whole, there is no democracy like this in all the world. Without its doors distinctions reign. Within, men are led into the presence of that God before whom nothing counts but a pure and penitent heart, and who lifts up poor and rich alike to the privilege of sons of God. And then it adds to that great truth the passion of brotherly love and the deep conviction of the sacredness of all human life.

This fellowship means the perpetuation of the

⁹ Message to Congress, Jan., 1906.

Christian faith. Christianity is a historical religion. That refers not simply to its origin, but to its embodiment. It has lived on not simply as ideal and enthusiasm, but in definite forms and institutions. And the comprehensive institution has been the Church. However imperfectly it has been done, here the great message has been preserved, here the life has been lived and passed on, and by it the word has been carried from land to land. The superior man who does not need the Church and passes it by is at heart the selfish man, or at least the shortsighted. What has he that has not been given to him? And what other source of his treasure can compare with the Christian Church? She has furnished the ideals and the moral power upon which that society rests which gives him his life. She has passed on the faith and the life which he has appropriated for himself. Now she calls upon him with right to share the task and serve his age and the ages yet to be, to help her do this work better than it has ever been done before.

One final aspect of this fellowship must be noted, and that is its comprehensiveness. There is an unmeasured inspiration in that thought. The fel-

lowship to which the Christian Church presents a man is not alone the little company in village or city which worships together. It shows him the whole round world belted with prayer and praise, and tells him that he is a part of all of this. Here are the thronging worshipers of Korea lately emerged from paganism; here is the swift-growing host scattered all through the great Chinese Republic; here are the thatched chapels of the Philippines, the huts of Africa, and the great cathedrals of the ancient world. Nor is this all. The Church points him back through the ages, and bids him sing:

“For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!”¹⁰

And all the great heroes of the faith and all the unnamed multitudes of humble, loyal lives belong to that same fellowship, and all belong to Him.

“One family we dwell in Him,
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

¹⁰ W. W. How.

One army of the living God,
To His command we bow;
Part of His host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now."¹¹

THE CHURCH AND WORSHIP

The Church means worship. Here, too, the Church meets little response from the spirit of our age. The Church says, Come apart and worship and meditate. The age replies, We are too busy to be idle, we must work and serve. Men may be earnest who speak this way, but they are shortsighted. Some of them are rather scornful because we call such worship a service. "To feed the hungry, that is service," they say; "to compass a reform or pass a just law; but to sit and sing and pray, where is the service in that?" Now, that is not the sound conviction of common folks. The real marvel is not that so many stay away from church, but that week after week and year after year, in city and hamlet, in all lands and from all classes, in bare chapel and splendid cathedral, the worshipers gather together. The popular play boasts of its run of a hundred nights. The best seller holds its readers for a brief year. There

¹¹ Charles Wesley.

must be some vital need that is met by an institution that can hold all kinds of men through all ages in this constant allegiance.

The first reason is found in the very nature of religion as social. Religion is not a matter of opinion to be gathered from books. It is a matter of life, and it spreads not from mind to mind, but from heart to heart. It is a kindling fire, not a cold logic. It needs fellowship in worship. Moreover, faith once gained is not a gift to be held by idle hands. It is the assertion of the invisible and the ideal and the heroic. The common experience of life is against it; the world of sight and sense that buffets us, the world of hard and selfish strife, in which we earn our bread, is not usually a

"friend to grace,
To help us on to God."

Nor do the tides of our inner world set that way; selfishness and spiritual inertia are native to us. A virile, vital faith is an achievement that costs, and we need every influence that can help us to attain it. It is not enough for us once to have set up certain ideals. The heart must turn to them again and again. There is an element of

time and meditation which the ideal demands. Only so does it become effective in our lives. The Church is a summons to such meditation.

And it brings us not only moral ideals, but the presence of God. Is He not everywhere? you say. Yes, He is bound to no sacred place, but the limitations may be with us. Jesus knew men when He said, "Where two or three are gathered together."¹² He was thinking not of a condition set by God, but of the nature of man. We have all had the same experience. We have gone to church at the end of a hard week's work, tired, depressed, inert, conscious of failure, with no spiritual aliveness, no spiritual desire. And then came the organ-strains, the reverent and expectant company, the opening words of invocation, the hymn of praise in which a thousand hearts voiced their desire and thanksgiving, and ere we knew it our own spirit had begun to kindle, and as we left we said, Surely God was in this place. Such worship is not a spiritual luxury. This spirit of reverence is the heart of all that is highest in us. It is not only the heart of religion, but the foundation of all order. When men cease to worship, then the reverence for all

¹² Matt. 18: 20.

authority and all order in home and State begins to pass.

Let us still claim the name service for the public worship of the Church, and let us realize that it is not only service of God, but the highest service of man. Certainly it is service to feed men and clothe them, but the highest service, after all, is to lead them into the presence of God, to show them the meaning of life, to quicken ideals and kindle aspiration, to let them bow in humble confession, and then to let God Himself send them forth to a new life. Jesus was not mistaken in His order when He said first to the man who came for healing, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."¹³ Nor was the early Church mistaken. We know with what pain they met for worship. Many were slaves. Their hard day's work left them no time except late at night or before the dawn. The days of persecution came, and such gatherings meant peril of life, so they hid away in catacombs or met outside the city walls. But they knew that the very life of the Church hinged upon such chance for worship. That early Church, that showed such marvelous spiritual power, that changed the ideals

¹³ Mark 2: 5.

and life of an empire, shows us the worshiping congregation as its central fact from the very beginning.

THE CHURCH AT WORK

We do not know the real Church until we study the Church at Work. We might well stop here for a summary of our findings thus far. The fundamental fact for our working faith is the conviction of a living God who is in His world. His great deed and His great coming to men is in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures and the Church are monuments of His movement in the world. The Kingdom of God is His great end. But the Church is not only a monument, it is a means. It is not only a part of the Kingdom, it is a great instrument for the bringing in of that Kingdom. It is here that the Church has often erred. Men have identified the Kingdom with the Church, and men have made the Church an end instead of a means. Now, the Kingdom is greater than the Church, and the work of the Kingdom is far wider than the Church. Wherever the will of God is being done, there is the Kingdom. Wherever there is truth and love and righteousness, wherever men are seeking the

higher life that is more than meat and drink, there is the Spirit of God and there is His Kingdom. Wherever business is being carried on justly and laws are being made in righteousness and men are being loved and served, there the Kingdom is being advanced in whatever name the work may be done.

The Kingdom is not the Church, but the glory of the Church is that it is the great instrument for advancing the Kingdom. That does not mean that all service is not sacred. It simply means that the Church serves at the point where service is highest and counts the most. Much of that service has already been suggested. The Church brings to men the vision of God and forgiveness of sin and fellowship with God. It gives them the ideal of life, and then supplies the power to achieve that ideal. And last of all it inspires them with the vision of the Kingdom and sends them out with the passion for service.

The Church of no other age has seen the task so clearly or been filled with such a spirit of service as to-day. It is learning that what Jesus said of the individual life is true of corporate Christianity, of the Church itself: "Whosoever would save his

life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall find it."¹⁴ It is facing the task of missions as never before, pouring the treasures of its wealth and the greater treasure of its choicest youth into the lands beyond. It has widened its bounds. It is turning its ministry toward all life. It claims to-day no power for itself over State and industry, but it is facing its obligation of service here and claiming these and all else for God and man. It is holding up its standards of justice and brotherhood and reverence for humanity, and trying to win for the weakest and the neediest the share of the heritage of earth.

How large that service is we can not realize in our land. So much of it in hospital and school and legislative hall is being done outside the visible Church. We do not realize how truly the Church has inspired this. Walk the streets of Pompeii and try to picture that ancient life. Here are market-place and temple, theater and public bath. But you will find trace of no hospital or asylum or school, no place whose doors were open to poor and helpless and suffering. The Church of the mission field faces exactly the same conditions to-

¹⁴ Matt. 16: 25.

day. And there, until the State becomes Christian in part at least, the Church must teach and heal and help as she did in these Western lands long ago. But here, as there, the work is as truly hers as if she controlled once more the agencies which she has inspired. Here is a harbor at low ebb, stretches of salt marsh, unsightly mud flats, scattered refuse. We watch the tide come in. It comes not only to the pier, where the proud vessels lie at anchor. It fills every cove, every little inlet. It lifts the great ocean liner, but it bears up tug and sail-boat and row-boat as well. The whole life of the harbor is lifted by the same great flood and at the same time. So the spirit of Christianity flowing through the Church lifts slowly but surely all the life of humankind.

THE COMING CHURCH

In all our working faith we are dealing with the dynamic, not the static; not with the finished and fixed, but with things that are in the making. It is so with the Church. We have seen what the meaning of the Church is. There is no question as to its permanent place. But how it shall fill that place is another matter. The Church that

is to be is a matter of supreme concern for us. Many to-day are looking to the past for their ideal of the Church. They find there two marks which they crave for the Church of to-day: authority and unity. Once the Church held sway over all the life of men. With her rites and ministrations she compassed life from cradle to grave. Her voice was listened to in all affairs, and princes and kings heard from her the final word of authority. To-day men pass her by, not merely in matters of business and State, but large numbers of them in affairs of faith and moral guidance as well. Once, they say, the Church was united. There was one body of Christ. To-day her place is taken by a multitude of separate companies, divided by forms and creeds and jealousies of the past, oftentimes warring together. And many are bewildered, while others are simply indifferent.

There is much truth in this, and yet a singular failure to discern the meaning of Christianity or read the lessons of history. The authority of the Church of the past, like its unity, was mainly external. The Church claimed the right to speak, and men had to bow in submission. That was not only in faith and conduct, but in matters of science

and State as well. The arm of earthly power was used to enforce this authority when necessary. Faith was not a conviction of the soul, but a submission of the will. Its test was not surrender to God, but obedience to an institution. The Church alone was held sacred, life outside of it was profane. In the Church God moved and spoke, outside of it He was silent, absent.

Now, history does not move backwards. If that is what authority means, the Church has lost it forever. Faith means freedom for us, not servitude. Man has free access to God. And God has free access to man, too. He is bound to no channel of sacraments, to no lips of priest. We can not hedge off one part of the world and call it sacred. Religion is personal and ethical. Sacrament and institution do not make it. Where there are reverence and trust, where love and service are, there is religion. And all this tells us where the authority of the Church of to-morrow will be. Authority in religion can only be there where religion is itself. It is the life which gives the authority. The Church of to-morrow will have power with men just so far as it shall have the spirit of Jesus Christ. If it shall be loyal to the truth, filled with the spirit

of reverence and love, ruled by a passion for justice and right and the service of men, then it shall be the Church of power, with such an authority as it has never had before.

And this will make the united Church of tomorrow for which we are all praying. For the unity, like the authority, must come from the nature of Christianity itself. No authority of pope or council can give it, no agreement as to organization or creed can bring it about. It must be the unity of an inner spirit, a common loyalty to Jesus Christ, a deeper devotion to the great task of serving men and bringing about His Kingdom.

CHAPTER VII
A MAN'S LIFE

"This main miracle that Thou art Thou,
With power on Thine own act and on the world."

TENNYSON, *De Profundis*.

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest, manhood, Thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

TENNYSON, *In Memoriam, Prologue*.

"Eternal life is not a theory; it is an art."

FATHER TYRRELL, *Bread and Wine*.

"But speaking truth in love, may grow up in all
things into Him, who is the head, even Christ."

"For we are members one of another."

"We are God's fellow-workers."

PAUL, Eph. 4: 15; 4: 25; 1 Cor. 3: 9.

CHAPTER VII

A MAN'S LIFE

AT every stage of our discussion thus far we have noted the practical bearings of our faith. It is a working faith that we have been considering, one whose every article has been a window looking out upon life. Now we must turn to the life itself and sum up the meaning of our creed. In the light of our working faith, what is a man's life? The answer, of course, can only be given in outline. It may be summed up in four words: fellowship, saintship, society, stewardship.

FELLOWSHIP—THE LIFE WITH GOD

There are other words than fellowship to express our life with God: love, reverence, obedience, service. There is none that is so rich and true as this. The real wealth of any life consists in its personal relations. It is not possession or knowledge or power that makes us rich; it is our relations with personal beings. There is the love

within the home, the fellowship with friends, the relations of community and nation, and the ideal relation with saint and seer and poet who come to us in the record of their words or the story of their lives. All else in life is its housing; this is its heart. And the relation which completes all the rest is the fellowship with God.

The thought of that fellowship comes to us in the Old Testament in some of the most beautiful passages of all literature. It is a fellowship of mercy and condescension on God's side. "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."¹ "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit."² The prophets saw in such fellowship an essential part of religion. Micah's great definition of religion is characteristic: "To do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God."³ They insisted upon righteousness, but they intended no bald religion of deeds as some

¹ Isa. 63: 9.² Isa. 57: 15.³ Micah 6: 8.

interpret them to-day. Back of this righteousness was a great fellowship of fear and love and trust in God. The Twenty-third Psalm is the most beautiful expression of that fellowship in the Old Testament, and its simple words have voiced the faith of men in all the days since then.

It was this great truth that Jesus brought out with unerring touch. Religion in His day, as so often since, was hidden beneath all manner of débris, elaborate rituals and formularies, and endless rules of conduct. All these He brushed aside. The eternal God is your Father, He taught. Even the hairs of your head are known to Him. He loves you, least and greatest. When you pray, say, "Our Father." There are other things that religion needs in order to assert itself in the world. It must live on in a community; it must express itself in form of organization and worship; it must shape its faith in word of doctrine. But the real fount of religion is in none of these. It is in the soul bowed before God in humility, looking up to Him in simple confidence, and saying, "Abba, Father."⁴ This is the final meaning for our own life of the study of God in His world with which we

⁴Mk. 14: 36.

began. The great Power is a Presence, and the Presence is a Person, and the Person is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here the simplest faith and need of man join themselves to the highest insight into the meaning of this world and the power by which it is ruled.

But before we go farther with this thought of fellowship we must meet a problem that arises. Fellowship with God, Jesus taught, means likeness to Him in spirit. To be children of our Father, Jesus said, meant far more than to take from a good-natured God the gifts of health and bread and happiness. It meant to be merciful as our Father is merciful. Fellowship means righteousness. That is the gulf that opens before us. How can we ever meet such a demand as that? The gulf had been great enough before Jesus' time. The prophets had burned their message into the heart of all earnest men, such as the Pharisee Saul: Men must be righteous to have fellowship with God. Jesus deepened that thought. He made the demand more severe. Righteousness is the inner spirit; no outer deed can satisfy. Righteousness means the whole life; no part or section will do, no mere tithe of income, no one holy day in seven.

This is the great gulf, and yet this is the gulf that Jesus bridged. This is the paradox of faith, but it is its very heart as well. Jesus solved it, not by logic, but by a message of life. He abated not one jot from His great demand of righteousness, and yet He was always bringing not saints but sinners into the fellowship of God. His answer was simply this: God demands the highest, and gives what He demands. He asks that we shall be children like Him in inner spirit, and then He takes us into fellowship with Himself, that He may give that spirit to us. Long ago one of the Church fathers said, "Command what Thou wilt, and give what Thou commandest." That is the truth. We can understand it better if we take Jesus' analogy of father and son. What does the father crave for his son? Not to feed him and clothe him. That much he will do for a servant. He wants a boy who will grow up into his spirit, his ideals, and life. Only so will he be the son. But the father does not say, First become like me, and then I will take you into fellowship with me. He takes the boy into fellowship in order that the boy may become a true son. Only one condition is necessary, and that lies in the very nature of

the case. The son must desire the fellowship, and desire it so that he shall turn day by day from the things that stand in the way and give himself to the life with his father.

That is the great Christian doctrine of repentance and forgiveness. Fellowship is mutual. It is true we can not give to God as He to us. But He can not give to us except as we give the open heart to Him. That is why Jesus says so much of the spirit of the child. That is why He is more hopeful of the penitent publican than of the satisfied churchman praying in the temple. God gives His fellowship to those who with earnest desire and surrender of life turn to Him. And He receives us, not to make light of our sin or to lessen His demand, but in order that He may overcome that sin by forgiving it and that we may realize that demand through our life with Him. It was asked of Seneca once why he dined with his slaves. "I dine with some of them," he responded, "because they are worthy of it, with others that I may make them worthy." Of that last gift of life, the fellowship with God, we are none of us worthy. It is the most holy who see this most clearly, for their higher life gives them a clearer vision of that glory

of God of which we men come short. But that was Jesus' great deed, at once to deepen in men the sense of their sin and to give them the courage to trust in the mercy of God and to seek His fellowship.

This conviction is expressed in Christian thought by the conception of the Holy Spirit. We mean by that doctrine more than the idea of the immanence of God, His presence sustaining all things. We mean that He dwells as a personal and loving fellowship in the hearts of men, informing their spirits by His Spirit, transforming their life by His friendship.

To discuss what this fellowship means on the human side, would lead us far beyond our limits. And yet its nature is simple enough if we will follow the suggestion of Jesus. For Him the fellowship meant to lead the life of a son with His Father. That life which He realized for Himself He set forth for His followers alike in His example and His teaching. The world had never known what such Sonship meant until it looked upon His life. It means first of all, as we have seen, the humble spirit and the open, eager heart. That belongs not only at the beginning, but at every

stage of the Christian life. Luther meant this when he called repentance a life-task. He did not mean a mere bewailing of past sin, but an ever-renewed turning of the eager soul to God. The spirit of trust comes next. Anxiety in the judgment of Jesus is not a weakness, but a sin. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." And third, with the trust must go reverence and fear. Our trust means little if we have not a God of power. And what does our aspiration mean except there be a God of holiness to whom it turns? It is the fear of God that sets men free from other fears, and without the reverence that bows us down there is no lifting up of life. Such sonship means, in the fourth place, obedience, an absolute surrender. No one ever made this demand so sweeping as Jesus. Hate father and mother, He said. Pluck out the right eye, cut off the right hand. How could He ask this? Jesus demanded the great surrender because He saw the great gift. This life with God was the great treasure, the priceless pearl for which men might well give all. And He showed another reason. God was giving men not simply bread, but Himself, His own love. The answer to such

a gift could be nothing less than a man's own life, his inmost affection and his very will. Such obedience is not mere submission, but the glad passion of a life that has found its real end. It is not as a subject that obeys, but as the son who shares his father's great purposes and takes them as the goal of his life.

Prayer is the expression of this fellowship with God. Have we the right to pray? What may we expect from prayer? If we are right so far, if man may have real fellowship with God, then prayer itself is as inevitable as speech is between friends. As to what we may expect from prayer, we need only recall the foundations upon which we have been building. God is not apart from the world, but in the world and in all its life. Nature and natural laws are but the thoughts of God, the machinery by which He is working out His purposes. Natural order is God's instrument, not something by which He has tied His hands. It is the personal, not the mechanical, that is the supreme fact of the world and its final power. How God answers man's prayer is not our concern. It is not done by reaching into the world from without. He is in the world, and the world has no life

or being apart from Him. Can He not work through that which is His own? If we earthly fathers, in this world of law and order, can hear our children's plea and give them good gifts, how much more shall He not be able to give good gifts to those that ask Him? There is only one way in which men may show that such praying is "scientifically" impossible, and that is by proving that there is nothing real except the world of matter and motion, that there is no personal or spiritual in our world, and that there can be none above our world. But this is impossible from the nature of the case, and, on the other hand, we have seen the compelling reasons for holding not only that the spiritual is real, but that it is supreme.

More important is it that we shall understand the nature of prayer. The danger in such discussion as the above is that men will think of prayer simply as asking and getting. The real meaning of prayer is seen as the expression of that fellowship which we have just considered. As such it is not an incident in religion, but its very heart. It is not something which God merely tolerates, as the king does his subjects who come with their petitions. The prayer of men is His great desire.

For such fellowship He made the worlds. But this ideal of fellowship determines what our praying should be. Shall we ask God for what we need? Yes. May we ask Him for material gifts? Yes. To the true father everything is of interest that concerns his child. But if our asking is to be real praying, real fellowship, then two elements must be present: first, the spirit of utter trust, so that our deepest joy will be not in the gift that may come, but in the confidence with which we leave all our life with Him; second, the spirit of entire surrender, not grudging, but glad, that makes His will our final desire beyond all other wishes. There is a great deal of misleading talk about faith in prayer. It is not faith in prayer that we need, but faith in God. Faith in prayer is pagan. Its question is: What will my prayer get for me? It is like the Thibetan's trust in his prayer-wheel, like the pagan confidence in magic rite or sacrifice to persuade an unwilling god. Too much of our talk about prayer is like calculating what some friendship might yield us. For real faith in God prayer comes as simply and inevitably as the very life of love and trust out of which it springs. Such prayer is as wide as life itself, for

all Christian life must find expression in it. Here is reverent awe that bows in worship, and joyous praise that remembers all its blessings, humble contrition that brings its confession, the cry that calls for help, the Christlike plea for other men, the prayer for the coming of the Kingdom which is not so much petition as it is a devotion of ourselves to God's purpose, and that simple desire for God which is like the heart of a child that loves his father's presence beyond his father's gifts.

Such prayer will not be the same for all. Because it is life, it can not be learned by rule. No one has the right to lay down the method by which another should pray. And yet just as life is an art, so there is an art of prayer. It is right to ask, as they of old did, "Teach us to pray." We may learn to pray. The psalms will help us. The lives of men who prayed will help us, such a chapter as that which shows us Livingstone, the un-resting man of action, ending his life on his knees in that mid-African hut. And widely different from either, we can get help from such a little book as that of Brother Lawrence, "The Practice of the Presence of God." But most of all it needs what friendship always demands, time and thought and desire.

SAINTSHIP—THE MAKING OF A MAN

Sainthood expresses the second aspect of life which we take from our working faith. It is an old-fashioned phrase, and it might be better to take some word like character, that were less liable to misunderstanding. Rightly understood, however, it has a richness and an inwardness which other words do not possess. We do not, of course, have in mind the traditional saint, with cell and halo and dreams of another world. What we mean is this: the first great end of our life is the making of a man, and our fellowship with God is the great means to that end. Life is not simply a probation to be passed or a work to be done. It means growing a soul. Sainthood in the New Testament means two things. It includes, first, a belonging to God. The saint is the devoted man, the loyal man, the man who has found the high meaning of life and has given himself to it. It means, second, not simply the surrender to an ideal, but its achievement. It means not simply the man who belongs to God in this fellowship, but the man who is living after the spirit of that fellowship and is being made over by it. The word has suffered in common use. The mediæval Church limited it to

the few and gave it an other-worldly flavor. The New Testament uses it for every man who belongs to Jesus Christ. It is worth our while to restore the word to its larger use. And it expresses for us the two elements of our moral problem that we wish to consider: a man's right attitude and his moral transformation.

Let us turn to the second element first. Our real problem is not that of the ideal, but of the power of achievement. So fine and masterful a spirit as Huxley could declare, that if any beneficent being should promise him that he should never go wrong on condition that he would submit to being wound up like a clock, he would close with the offer at once. What earnest man has not felt the problem? The ideal lays hold of us. We would be such a man as that. But there is a deep gulf between that ideal and the real man that we are. "The good which I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice."⁵

The answer to this we have already touched upon. It is given to us in the fellowship which God offers to us. What we need to see clearly here is this: the fellowship of God is not only a gracious

⁵ Rom. 7: 19.

gift, it is the supreme power for making men. Life alone can mold life. We know what intimate human fellowship means, the influence of father, mother, brother, wife, friend, hero. Such a relation will set ideals and mold ambitions, will enter a man's life and unseal the fountains of its deep, will strengthen men by the trust it imposes, or by some noble passion kindled in them will stir them to a whole life of achievement. When such a fellowship touches the moral ideals and passions, it becomes the greatest transforming power known. But here is the highest life, the life of God, brought to bear upon our own. Here is an intimacy of fellowship that no other relation can reach. Here is a friend that lays claim to the very citadel of our soul. Life in that fellowship means a daily aspiration and a daily surrender to the highest that man can conceive. The strongest motives of gratitude and affection are joined to a trust that grows stronger with the experiences that justify it. Morality, weak when it is a mere effort, gains here the strength of a passion. We sum it up and complete it by saying in simple religious speech: God gives His Spirit to us as our life, and thus makes us His children.

It is easy to cry out at all this as mystical and impossible and inconceivable. It is inconceivable if by that you mean that we can not picture it. But it is just as hard to understand how friend and friend on earth may have commerce together and mold each other. It is easy to object; but what has been the actual result of this fellowship? Speaking soberly, thinking of men and of nations, we can say nothing less than this: Here is the supreme moral force of history; this is the power that has transformed the world. The story is a long one. It might begin with the little company of Galilean peasants who became the teachers of the world. It might end with the tale of the last besotted wretch made over into manhood, of the fruitage of ten thousand years of paganism in some Fiji isle lifted to Christian level in a generation, or better still, the picture of just one out of myriads of Christian homes with its reverence and peace and its fellowship of joyous love informed by the spirit of Jesus Christ.

This is one side of the making of the man, the side of grace, of mercy, of God's forgiveness, of His down-reaching. God receives men into the fellowship of sons in order that He may make them

over into true sons of His spirit. The moral demand of this fellowship makes the other side. That moral demand unfortunately has often been slighted, and the fellowship itself has been by so much cheapened. We have seen that the fellowship is God's gracious gift through the forgiveness of men. But too often the tremendous moral meaning of forgiveness has been overlooked. God's forgiveness is the freest of gifts and the costliest, and it costs man as well as God. At the very gate of forgiveness by which we enter into fellowship there stands the moral demand. God gives Himself; He asks for the man in return. Affection, obedience, confidence, the last thought and motive and desire—all these He requires. How searchingly, even sternly, Jesus put the demand. The real fellowship with God is something inner and intimate and personal. It can come only as the life is open to Him. And the demand comes daily, not simply at the beginning. The very gift itself is a demand. The life He gives us is one that we possess only in the living. The same life is both gift and task: "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk."⁶

⁶ Gal. 5: 25.

SOCIETY—THE LIFE WITH MAN

Society is the third word that we use to suggest the meaning of life. The social point of view has appeared in every chapter of our discussion, and so, despite its importance, may be treated the more briefly here. We may consider it under four words. Man is social in his nature, in his training, in his task, and in his end.

Man's nature is social. Our life comes from God, but it is given to us in the great stream of human existence. The story of the whole race is in the heredity of each single life. The history of ages of prayer and thought and toil is in the environment that insensibly but surely molds each one of us. Man's training is social. The qualities that Jesus emphasized are social qualities, truth, patience, kindness, good-will, love. These are not the virtues of the cloister, and we gain them only in the fellowship with men. Man's task is social. Jesus, like the prophets, found man's service of God not in ceremonial performance, but in the service of men. The great task is to build up all the relations of men in love and justice, and to set up a Kingdom of righteousness in all the earth. Man's end is social. God's purpose for the race is not

to gather out a company of single souls from the wreck of the years, but to establish a new society, a fellowship of mutual love, a Kingdom of righteousness.

STEWARDSHIP—LIFE AS TRUST AND TASK

The word stewardship suggests the final meaning of life in the light of our working faith. All the elements in this conception of our life, as we have seen, flow from the thought of God and His world. Because God is person, and loving person, the Christian life is fellowship with Him. Because this God is holy, His fellowship demands holiness from men and works holiness in men; that is the question of character, of saintship. Because human life is one and the single soul lives only as part of the great human current, therefore our life is social in nature and demand and duty.

In the same way our thought of life as a stewardship rests upon our conception of the way in which God is carrying out His plan with the world. It is true that there has not always been agreement on this in Christian thought. In other days men laid the stress upon the single soul and the preparation for the next world. Life then became simply

a probation, this world and its affairs of little consequence; man's chief business was to keep away from evil, and his chief concern to make sure of heaven. If our conception of life is very different from this, it is in part because we have a very different idea as to God's plan and method in His world. We do not look upon the world as a work of God once finished, then marred by sin, out of which now a remnant is to be saved. First of all, it is a world in the making. Second, as we have seen, in this world-making God is working from within; not as an external force, but as an indwelling and moving spirit is He shaping His world. Third, this indwelling spirit is not a mere atmosphere, nor a stream of tendency, nor a vague force. The spirit is Person, a person calling other persons into fellowship with Himself, shaping their lives and using them in His great ends. And finally, the end of the work is a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, the Kingdom of God.

If this be a true vision of God and His world, then life gains a new meaning and a new perspective. We are not spectators in the world, nor mere servants, nor simple beneficiaries. We are friends who know what our Lord is doing. We

have been honored with vision and with a task. Life is a trust, a partnership, or, in Jesus' phrase, a stewardship. Man becomes a co-worker with God, a co-regent in the world. And the world itself and our every life become charged with eternal meaning.

It will be seen at once that this conception determines the judgment that our working faith is to pass upon the world. According to Jesus there are three attitudes that a man may take in relation to the world. He may fear it or love it or use it. The fear of the world is one of the great sins against which Jesus solemnly warns. Its root is the spirit of paganism. There is no place for fear in faith, for we are in the Father's house. The world is not the dominion of the devil, which men are to flee or of which they are to be afraid. Its beauty is from His hand; He gave color to the lily. Its harvests are His gift; He makes the rain to fall. Like the fear of the world, so the love of the world was a sin with Jesus, and nowhere are His warnings so stern as here. It is the sin of men who seize the gift and forget the Giver, to whom the good becomes evil because it keeps them from the highest good. Above all, such men fail to

see the spiritual meaning of material things, that beauty and health and wealth and life are only the tools for higher ends. That is the higher meaning which our faith gives to the world: it is the place ordered of God for the molding of men and for the establishing of a fellowship of righteousness and love.

Of the many practical questions that press upon us here and that concern deeply our daily life, only a few can be touched. Here is the question of pleasure and comfort, the whole aspect of physical life and enjoyment. We see at once the two extremes that we must shun. This world is not something that is to be feared and fled. We will rather take the beauty and the joy of life as good gifts of God. Asceticism is not our rule of life. Neither is self-indulgence, however, and that is our greater peril to-day. Shall we steer, then, a middle course, taking just so much of pleasure as to avoid excess and yet yield us the greatest good? This maxim, too, fails of the Christian standpoint. The world of health and wealth and beauty are here for the giving of life and the making of men: that is our principle. There is nothing narrow, however, in such a principle, as we can readily see by a few

applications. Consider the question of recreation. Too often serious men have frowned upon pleasure, looking upon it at most as a concession to human weakness, especially in youth. Wise men know today that play is a vital part of the education of childhood, an instinct that God has implanted. The child that is cheated of its birthright of play is father to the ambitionless, spiritless, inefficient man. The mingling of youth of opposite sexes is a part of this same plan of education. The big city of to-day sins against God and its youth by turning over this God-given instinct of social recreation to be exploited by greed in the commercialized places of pleasure.

It is the same way with the world of work and business and wealth. They are all schools for the development of life, or may be made such. Sobriety, industry, self-restraint, loyalty, the spirit of co-operation, these and other fine qualities come to the man who does well his work in the world of labor and business. Or take a man's physical life. The body is not the prison house of the soul, nor the dangerous seductress leading us astray by her pleasures and passions. Life is one, and the finest health of soul comes usually with the health of

body, while the body itself becomes not master of pleasure but minister in service.

While all this is true, there is another aspect which needs to be enforced. It is indeed our fundamental principle. We have taken pleasure and friendship and the body with its joy of health and its passions and business and possessions, and have declared that all of these are good. Now let us add, they are good only as they minister to life, and to life at its highest. We know how easily every one of these may be perverted. Pleasure may become a minister of sensuality and cruelty. Business may become a monster of oppression. And the danger does not lie in what is openly evil. The business may be honest, only its crowding cares may leave no room for beauty and truth and friends and God. The pleasure may be pure, but it may become the single passion which leaves life shallow and selfish and unsatisfied. What does our principle of stewardship mean here? It means that all these goods are a trust, are so much of the capital of our life. We are to use and to rule so that life shall come out of it. Out of the friends and the play and the toil and the wealth should come in the end the stronger hand, the kindlier

heart, the richer mind, the pure thought, the efficient life, the soul that is full of good-will and peace, for which the vision of high things is clearer and the purpose to attain more strong. All this is just one step in which we work with God in His great plan of spiritualizing this world and of making men.

So far we have discussed this principle of stewardship only as applied to our own individual life. It is the social application that gives its largest meaning. We are workers together in the world's life, not only in our own. All that we have: health, skill of hand, gift of voice, wealth, social position, is ours not in fee simple, but in trust. There is only one absolute owner; that is God. We are administering a portion of His world. The final test of life is loyalty in that ministry: Are we working out His ends? It is not a question of tithing an income, or keeping a day holy. That is legalism, the ethics of the servant. The servant does his task and is done. The son belongs to his father all the time and in all his life.

It is easy to take the principle when put in general terms. It will cut quick enough and deep enough if we once seriously apply it. Look at it

in relation to our industrial life of to-day. No age has ever seen more generous men of wealth than this day. We are living in the age of philanthropy. But philanthropy is not stewardship. Philanthropy has to do with the spending of money. Stewardship includes the method of its making as well. It is not enough to look at donations to universities and libraries. Where did the money come from? Were competitors crushed by unfair means? Did the millions from steel mean twelve hours a day and seven days in the week from thousands of laborers? Then that is not a good stewardship in sight of God and man, however many libraries and peace palaces may arise. If God were really the chief partner in the business, I think He would care more for men.

Or suppose we apply the principle to our industrial disputes. What shall we say to the manufacturer or mine owner who declares that his business is his own, that he will brook no interference, that his workmen have no right to say anything as to how the business shall be conducted, that they have the right to work or to quit, but not to organize and demand that he shall treat with them as a whole? To such a man, from the point of

our faith, we shall simply say: No title to property is absolute. What you have belongs to God. He is giving it to you to hold and use for men. The question is not of your right, but your duty. Does your direction of this business make for justice and peace and general welfare?

The principle must be applied to the spending of money. No man has a right to spend his income on himself and his family as a mere matter of course. That income, like the business that made it, belongs to God. Our sole question is, How shall I spend it so as to further what is good, to advance that for which God cares? We need, first of all in this day, a new appraisal of the meaning of money. It is a root of all evil only when planted the wrong way, and that wrong way is either the selfish hoarding or the selfish spending. Money itself is not evil. It is only so much power; its moral quality waits to be determined. It is so much stored up personality, so much of brawn and brain and tears and sweat, so much even of human blood. The supreme question is, On which side of the eternal conflict shall the power be ranged, and how wisely shall it be employed? Our own day is giving us clear examples of what

this power may do. There are individual men whose fortune is large enough to stamp out the scourge of tuberculosis in New York. That money would mean information, education, better laws through public enlightenment, disease-breeding houses torn down, better homes erected, hospitals and sanatoria, and the service of hundreds of scientists and physicians and visiting nurses set free by such support for the great task. Education, health, the work of the Church on the foreign field, the work of the Church at home, all give illustrations of what wisely-placed wealth can do. There are many things that wealth can not buy, we say, and that is true. But in our world of to-day there are thousands of splendid, capable lives waiting to enlist in any service if men of wealth will meet their charges and set them free for the task.

We call this the day of philanthropy, and yet men have only just begun to see the stewardship of wealth. There are rich men with large gifts. So far, however, we have been looking at the size of their gifts. The fairer test would be to ask how much they have retained for themselves. And what fair test of stewardship will excuse the man who leaves his thousands or his millions to children,

beyond all real need of theirs, and forgets the needs of the Kingdom and the claims of countless fellow-men who are his brothers. Some time we shall see that such a deed is as plain a denial of God as any atheist creed.

More important still is it that the rank and file of men of modest means shall apply this principle in their lives. It should be done in practical fashion, for this is business which demands not less good sense and order because it is the world's greatest business. To set aside some fair portion of a man's income, to study where it may best be invested in the Kingdom of God, to let prayer and knowledge and gift go together, this is the stewardship of giving. And the stewardship of business is just as needful for the common man, for it is not some few men of power upon whom justice and peace and good-will wait in the world, but in the main just upon you and me and our neighbor. And you and he and I need for our lesser task in life the ennoblement and inspiration that come when we realize that the least of honest work may mean a real partnership in the eternal plans of God.

There is one other sphere of stewardship to which we must apply our principle, and that is the

personal life. The investment of our own life is what finally determines the character of our stewardship. That is the supreme treasure that God has put into our hands to use. No other gift will compensate if we hold this back. Nor is there any other need in God's Kingdom so urgent as this need of the investment of life. It is the same need that fronts us wherever we turn. Our public life suffers to-day not from the strength of the gang, but from the indifference of the respectable citizen. A city official recently upon the same day took an independent stand relative to two public questions. One concerned telephone rates, and the next morning's mail brought him twenty letters of approval. The other was in opposition to the liquor interests, but it brought forth not one letter from the forces of righteousness. Our public life needs more than a few leaders plus an occasional spasm of reform on the part of the masses. It demands some investment of our life, of thought and time and interest. It is so in matters of moral reform. Evil is cowardly. The courage of a few men will often put a host of evil forces to flight. But the men are wanting, and the evil stands.

The question of vocation comes in here for the

young man and woman. Where shall I invest my life? Only the great principles can be touched upon here. First, it is the spirit that counts, and all true service is sacred. There is no one calling that is holy.

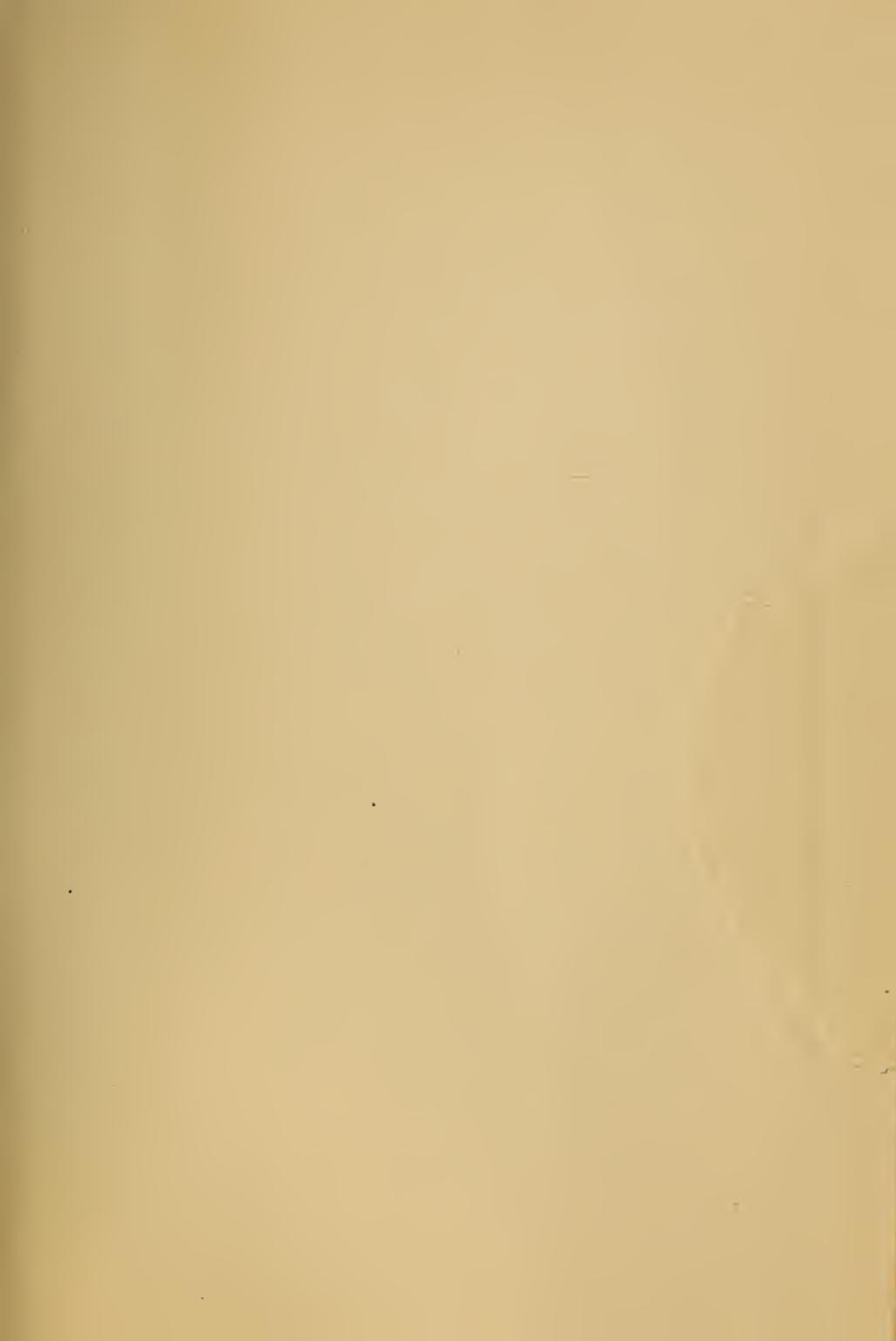
“Who sweeps a room as by Thy laws
Makes that and the action fine.”

Second, the common callings are holy only when followed in the uncommon way. The talk of the sacredness of all life too often means that we drag everything down to the level of the common instead of lifting up the rest to the plane of the highest. Business and law may be made a holy calling, but it takes more spiritual power than most men seem to possess. Third, there is a growing field of callings in which men are set free for more direct service. It is not that the spirit is different here from what it should be in other callings, but it is possible in these to bring one's life to bear more directly upon the needs of men than is usually the case in other vocations. Various forms of social service have notably enlarged this field of late years. In this field the ministry of the gospel still leads. Not that it is unique as a “holy”

calling, but it gives opportunities of leadership as no other one field; it moves upon men with the most powerful appeal; it is the supreme teacher of ideals for men and communities through the gospel which it brings; and it bears to men the highest good in answer to the deepest need. The larger and more vital conception of religion which we have been considering will make the ministry more important to-morrow than in any day of the past. Finally, there is the question of location as inseparable from that of vocation. It is not only the deed that counts, but the time and the place. Livingstone in England might have been simply a good physician like ten thousand others. Livingstone in Africa wrote a chapter of history for God's Kingdom. That is the great appeal of the foreign mission field, especially in this day when great peoples like the Japanese and Chinese, the Koreans and the Indians, are emerging from age-long stagnation. To-day their plastic life is waiting new ideals and forces to mold it. To-morrow it will have taken its bent for long years of development.

What is true in the history of these nations is largely true of the world of our day as a whole. Men smile at the common-place remark that we are

living in a crucial age. It seems like a bit of delusion that comes to each generation. The delusion, in fact, lies on the other side: this age does not realize what history it is making. In creed, in Church, in State, in industry, in the whole social organization we are moving from an old epoch into a new. The progress is unequal. We do not know how long its day will be. We can not tell how wise will be the change, for movement does not always mean advance. But so much we may see, that it is a day in which men may thank God for the chance to live and work. From the remote home of her hard Siberian exile, old but dauntless, Madame Breshkovsky wrote not long ago to an American friend: "Life is growing more and more interesting. I wish to witness it." To witness it and to play bravely and truly our part in this great day of God, that ambition should belong to our working faith.



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