

THE BIBLE
AS A
COMMUNITY
BOOK

ARTHUR E. HOLT

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THE BIBLE AS A COMMUNITY BOOK

BY
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Secretary for the Social Service Department
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TO MY FATHER
WHO HAS MADE HIS BIBLE
A COMMUNITY BUILDING BOOK

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A PARABLE OF NO-MAN'S LAND.....	7
II. A CLAN ESTABLISHED IN JUSTICE AND FAITH.....	11
III. FAITH DESTROYERS.....	28
IV. THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE AND SOCIAL FAITH.....	37
V. SACRIFICING A NATION IN THE NAME OF A COMMUNITY OF JUSTICE.....	48
VI. FIRST ATTEMPTS AT BUILDING THE COMMUNITY OF JUSTICE	55
VII. THE FOUNDER OF THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY.....	63
VIII. THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDED BY JESUS....	74
IX. THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY FOUNDED ON JUSTICE IN THE LIFE OF TO-DAY.....	83

THE BIBLE AS A COMMUNITY BOOK

CHAPTER I

A PARABLE OF NO-MAN'S LAND

Away out on the edge of civilization where Sage Brush Mesa joins on to Sucker Flats lies the frontier region of No-Man's Land. Its inhabitants first came in search of isolation and in the hope that they might escape the problems of living together which confronted them in the more thickly settled communities.

**Setting Up an
Authority in No-
Man's Land**

The first person to offer a solution of the problem was Dead-Eye Dick, the crack shot of all this district. He sought to build a community based on fear of himself. He acquired an authority which few dared to dispute. Armed to the teeth with the latest man-killing instruments, he ruled over the length and breadth of No-Man's Land.

But Dead-Eye Dick came to grief because while it is always possible for one man to be stronger than another man it is very hard for one man to be stronger than two men. One night in a saloon, led by a fellow called Combination Bill, a gang fell upon Dead-Eye Dick, and his authority was at an end. Because this gang had learned the secret of strength in combination, for a long time they held sway over the district between Sage Brush Mesa and Sucker Flats. But their secret was soon discovered and other gangs were formed who disputed their authority, and there was war incessant. Murder and bitterness absorbed the

thought and attention of the people. They neither tended the flocks and herds nor cultivated the soil. The heart of every man was full of suspicion and the hand of every man was against his neighbor.

The next person to try his hand at helping conditions was Peaceful Jud. Peaceful Jud saw that the whole country was being depopulated and that the people were facing starvation. He attributed this condition to two causes: first, that the people carried guns, and second, that there were no law courts. He succeeded in getting the people to throw away their guns and to establish law courts. But matters did not greatly improve. The law courts went unused because there was no one who really believed in them. The strong said that they did not need them and the weak were afraid that they were controlled by the strong. Although the people had no guns, they poisoned the springs and hung each other to trees with lariat ropes. Men became as excited when they saw an enemy near a spring or carrying a lariat rope as they formerly did when they saw an enemy with a gun. Even Peaceful Jud soon found it impossible to take himself seriously.

The last person to try his hand at community uplift was Parson John. They called him Parson because on occasions he called the people together and talked to them about what they ought and ought not to do. He did not begin by finding fault with all that had been done before. He was broad in his appreciation and even partially approved of what Dead-Eye Dick had tried to do. He saw that community life based on fear was often man's first attempt at community living and would probably always be tried where no better plan was offered. He did not begin by threatening the people with eternal punishment if they did not reform for he saw in this only another appeal to selfishness based on fear. He saw that a society based

on fear would always disintegrate. His only criticism of Peaceful Jud was that he began with results rather than causes. Parson John maintained that the only permanent community life must be based on faith and trust.

He knew that there had never been any power under Heaven devised for holding people together who feared and hated each other. Murder was always bred in hate. He knew that the only way you could get people to trust each other was to establish justice and do away with injustice. Since all of the people were full of suspicion, someone had to begin the process of giving justice if distrust was to be dispelled. Parson John decided to begin with himself. For the sake of bringing faith back into the community he was willing to give justice and to give it first and thus be worthy of trust. The result was that people rallied around him with a feeling different from that they had ever had for any other man. Men gave him what they had never given before. They gave him trust and loyalty. Because he had the loyalty of men he became powerful.

It was not long before he had the largest following of any man in the community. He had learned the secret of strength based on confidence. In order that there might be more people who loved to do justice he called the people together and they formed an association to study the meaning of justice, and dedicated themselves to the doing of it. As the number of people multiplied who were willing to give justice, community faith developed. In the interest of justice law courts were established which had as their purpose the promotion of public justice. Law and order was thus established. The community had solved the problem of living together through the efforts of one who was willing to give justice and give it first.

Like a surge of the tide the convictions of men are set toward freedom and away from autocratic compulsion. It is not at all

impossible that community life in our day, intoxicated with a passion for freedom and impatient of all authority, may degenerate into social anarchy through the misguided efforts of those who seek freedom. Just at present the world is rent with class struggle. Mutual suspicion characterizes all social groups. Our papers are records of daily wars between contending factions. This struggle may develop into a social anarchy which will prove destructive of the good which society has already achieved. Our difficulty seems to lie in the fact that men and women do not realize the price which must be paid for freedom of association in community life. The most pressing moral problem which thinking people face is the counting of the cost of the free community life they profess to be seeking.

**The Advance
from Isolation
to a World
Order Built on
Justice**

CHAPTER II

A CLAN ESTABLISHED IN JUSTICE AND FAITH

The culmination of the social thought and experience of the Hebrews is found in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Hebrew Community as a Great Social Laboratory But the thought of Jesus was the ripe fruitage of twelve hundred and fifty years of social experience in the great laboratory of the Hebrew community. Hebrew social life had been lived under the guidance of an ideal. Successes and failures had both been of value. The experience had been interpreted by men of great insight who had meditated upon it and had helped to separate the chaff from the wheat.

The story of Hebrew life starts with the founding of a community by a great-souled man who makes the clan the object of his love and enthusiasm :

Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.¹

The holy fire for the building of Israel is handed down from generation to generation. These men are the keepers of the Covenant. The builders of the Hebrew community are set over against its destroyers. Experience reveals those who are build-

¹ Genesis 12:1-4.

ing and those who are destroying. Gradually it is seen that certain men have a mind for the welfare of Israel. These men possess certain virtues and programs of action which build the community. Others possess attitudes of mind which destroy the community. Both types of men are revealed in the testing fires of experience.

One of the most important facts to remember about this community is that it starts as a family and is not just a geographical group. It is a nomadic clan, bound together by the ties of blood, by a common memory, a common experience and a common purpose. It is a clan which holds its property as such. The people have not yet, as individuals, been taught to say "yours and mine" in the possession of private land, and consequently are not divided in their sense of solidarity. They have no settled abode and are consequently called by their family name and not by their geographical name, which always tends to obscure a sense of brotherliness. The primary question with the clan did not have to do with those things which pertain to the physical life of the community, but with the maintaining of its solidarity as a clan; for it had to be a success as a clan before it could be a success in making a living. The important question for the Hebrew was not the relating of men to the world of things but the relating of men to each other. In the building of the Hebrew community they never lose sight of this. For them the conquering of their desert world depended on the maintaining of the solidarity and efficiency of their clan strength. If they became weak and disintegrated, they could not maintain themselves in competition with unfriendly desert competitors. Better business for the Hebrews awaited the solution of a better relationship of men to each other. Any breaking up of a true clan relationship was ultimately poor business. Hebrew community thought specialized on human relationships. Other ages

have been able to contribute more to the problem of how a community makes its living, how it goes to market, how it should maintain its health, but the contribution of the Hebrew was the moral contribution of how men can live together in permanent human relationships. Experience of the present seems to indicate that an age which knows more about production, more about distribution, and more about sanitation than any previous age, needs to go back and learn what are the conditions of brotherhood.

The Hebrew community starts with three hundred years of simple tribal life. During that period, from being slaves under Pharaoh in Egypt, the Hebrews rose under great leadership to the place where they were the dominating force in Western Asia. It was a simple rural civilization, without luxury, with a great deal of hardship, and with a rugged courage and high idealism. Three great personalities stand out as leaders who lay the foundation of Hebrew freedom in justice, faith and loyalty.

If any large group of people were asked what is the most wonderful thing about Egypt, that group would be almost unanimous in naming the pyramids. The pyramids, however, stand in many ways as monuments of national disgrace. They were made possible by a system of human slavery whereby it was easy for one man to command the services of thousands of human beings, who were living a life without rights and without privileges. Man-power was cheap in Egypt. A vainglorious ruler could command the cheap labor to erect monuments which gratified his own vanity. The Book of Genesis, in chapters 41 to 47, tells us of the way in which a gigantic national monopoly was established by the then ruling Pharaoh. It is a country where years of plenty are succeeded by years of drought and poverty. At the suggestion of one

**Moses, Who
Lays the Founda-
tion of
Hebrew Free-
dom and Law**

Joseph, Pharaoh was encouraged to store up in national granaries the surplus products of the years of plenty. When famine again swept the land, the national government was in shape to supply the needs of the people and, incidentally, gain control over them. The story relates how the famine was very sore in the land of Egypt and the people gave first their money in exchange for grain, and then their cattle, and then their horses, and then their flocks, then sold their land, and thus at the end of the seventh year the land belonged to the ruler, and all the people were working the land on shares. The monopoly was established as a piece of national benevolence:

Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint overseers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of these good years that come, and lay up grain under the hand of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it. And the food shall be for a store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.¹

And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. And when the money was all spent in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for our money faileth. And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph; and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, and for the flocks, and for the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread in exchange for all their cattle for that year. And when that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide from my lord, now that our money is all spent; and the herds of cattle are my lord's; there is nought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: wherefore should we die before thine eye, both we and our land? buy us and our

¹ Genesis 41 :33-36.

land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, and that the land may be not desolate.

So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine was sore upon them: and the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of the border of Egypt even to the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests bought he not: for the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their land. Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass at the ingatherings, that ye shall give a fifth unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. And Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests alone became not Pharaoh's.¹

The general poverty which extended also over the land of Canaan brought the Hebrew tribes down into Egypt and they found themselves a part of this gigantic system of oppression.

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.²

And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.³

¹ Genesis 47:13-26.

³ Exodus 1:22.

² Exodus 1:8-14.

It is at this point in the story that we are introduced to one whose part it was to help loosen the grip of this gigantic monopoly and to instill in the Hebrew brotherhood a consciousness of freedom and also a regard for self-control based on law.

The second chapter of Exodus tells of the birth of a Hebrew boy whose mother, in an endeavor to save him, hid him by the River Nile. Pharaoh's daughter, finding him there, caused him to be adopted into the royal household. The best training which was then possible for a growing youth was at his disposal. Tradition tells us that he was given a training in the University of Egypt and also that he received a military education. We are told that very early in life he led a military expedition in southern Egypt and came back crowned with military honors. The best that the nation had to give could have been his. Honor and the life of ease were his for the asking. He was a member of the dominant class, a class which had power and wealth. Had he identified himself with this class he could have forced thousands of men to live for him and to do his bidding.

But all men are not so constructed that such a life appeals to them. Moses could not forget that his welfare lay with the people of his own race:

And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And he went out the second day, and, behold, two men of the Hebrews were striving together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killest the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely the thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.¹

¹ Exodus 2:11-15.

It was a spontaneous outburst of a true feeling of indignation. We need to estimate it at its rightful value. Subsequent events proved that he was not right in taking the law into his own hands. Private vengeance defeats itself as an instrument of justice. Moses fled to the wilderness because he had substituted violence for the processes of established law.

Moses' flight led to the land of Midian, and there he took up the life of a sheep herder in the family of Jethro. His life as a plainsman gave him time for meditation and left his heart open to the revelations of God. One day the voice of God laid upon him the task of leading his brethren out of Egypt in a great freedom movement, to a land flowing with milk and honey where they could work out their own tribal life and have opportunity to worship Jehovah.

And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.¹

Moses returned to Egypt and with the help of Aaron, his brother, he set to work at his task. His problem is fourfold. He must first arouse the desire for freedom in a people whose will had long been weakened by slavery. He must with the help of God break the will of Pharaoh to dominate and to enslave. He must then organize the will of the people to be free in unified action looking toward freedom. The exodus out of Egypt must be planned and executed. His fourth task is to substitute for control by Pharaoh national self-control based on law and through the machinery of lawfulness. Let us follow him as he works at his task. We find him first seeking to arouse in the people the will to be free.

¹Exodus 3: 7-8.

Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: and Aaron spake all the words which Jehovah had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed.¹

Slavery had almost destroyed the instinct for freedom in this Hebrew clan. They were developing the enslaved mind along with their enslaved bodies. Action looking toward freedom awaited the kindling of the desire for freedom. Moses and Aaron gathered together all the children of Israel and told them that Jehovah had seen their afflictions and that they were to go out into the wilderness and to a land flowing with milk and honey. The people listened and seemed to believe it, but they were yet to learn the difference between saying it and achieving it.

When Pharaoh saw what Moses was doing, he increased the burdens of the children of Israel, and their will for freedom was tested as to whether or not they were willing to pay the price of freedom. Many of them who had thought that freedom was to be had by the saying now turned against Moses as their chief enemy.

The king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, loose the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the number of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish aught thereof: for they are idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labor therein; and let them not regard lying words.

And the taskmasters of the people went out. and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. Go yourselves, get you straw where ye can find it; for naught of

¹ Exodus 4:29-31.

your work shall be diminished. So the people were scattered abroad throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. And the taskmasters were urgent, saying, Fulfill your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw. And the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task both yesterday and to-day, in making brick as heretofore?

Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to Jehovah. Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the number of bricks. And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, when it was said, Ye shall not diminish aught from your bricks, your daily tasks. And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: and they said unto them, Jehovah look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou dealt ill with this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath dealt ill with this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.¹

Again and again through the long years that were ahead this experience was repeated. The children of Israel lost their will for freedom and turned on the man who was trying to lead them out of bondage. Only as he fed his own spirit from the inexhaustible sources of power which he found in communion with his God, did Moses maintain his own spirit and thus retain his active power and ability to kindle esprit de corps in the lives of the people.

His second task was to break Pharaoh's will to enslave them. The Egyptian machinery of slavery was the expression of something more fundamental; namely, the will of Pharaoh to enslave.

¹ Exodus 5:4-23.

In the breaking of this will, Moses had the help of God. Great calamities which bring disease, poverty, and death to the Egyptian households and even to the court of the king so weakened the morale of the Egyptian people and of Pharaoh that Moses was finally able to repeat to a sympathetic ear his message:

Let my people go.¹

The will to be free was met by the desire that they should be free. The children of Israel led by the high hand of Almighty God and by Moses march out from the bondage of ancient Egypt. It was always a day of great significance in the history of the Hebrew people, a day remembered in worship and festival and song, a day at which the Hebrew spirit always kindled as it was brought back to memory.

But escape from Egypt is not the whole problem of freedom. The children of Israel had been controlled by Pharaoh. No nation can live without some kind of control. Moses did not allow them to drift into anarchy when they had escaped autocracy. Law courts and law became a necessity.

The path out of Egypt leads straight to Sinai. There Moses lays the foundation for their brotherhood life in certain great principles of human morality. They are enjoined ever to keep alive in their hearts a reverent worship for the one true God, to keep the Sabbath day, to honor father and mother, to respect human life, the rights of property, human chastity, not to bear false witness, and not to be covetous of each other's earthly goods. Along with these general principles, Moses draws some very definite conclusions to govern their simple life as herdsmen and neighbors, and establishes law courts as a part of the machinery of justice. Thus the foundation for their life in freedom is laid in great ethical principles. Moses has built

¹ Exodus 9:1.

the tribe by establishing it from within, and the people have learned independence through self-control.

When the Hebrews settled in the hill-country beyond Jordan, they were faced by new problems in community living.

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.¹

It is an excellent statement of a community organized on the "every man for himself" basis. Kings stand for organization.

The reason for kings lies not in the kings themselves but in the necessity which the community has for unified organized effort. At certain stages of the growth of a community, the kings could get along without the community better than the community could get along without the kings. There are better ways of organizing people than under the kings. But it is better to be organized under kings than not to be organized at all. A people among whom every man does that which is right in his own eyes has little chance in competition with the community where every man does that which is right from the standpoint of the good of all. This the Hebrew people were finding out through painful experience. After entering the promised land, they settled in scattered groups among the uplands of Palestine.

And Jehovah was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the hill-country; for he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron. And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses had spoken: and he drove out thence the three sons of Anak. And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.²

Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its

¹ Judges 21 :25.

² Judges 1 :19-21.

towns, nor of Taanach and its towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and its towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. And it came to pass, when Israel was waxed strong, that they put the Canaanites to task work and did not utterly drive them out. . . .

Naphtali drove not out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became subject to taskwork.

And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the hill-country; for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley; but the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalvim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became subject to taskwork. And the border of the Amorites was from the ascent of Akrabbim, from the rock and upward.¹

Isolation caused the disintegration of tribal spirit. Not only did every man do that which was right in his own eyes, but every man had a tendency to give his attention only to that which was in front of his own eyes. There was no cooperation on the country-sides of this rural civilization. The Canaanites held the cities. They were the traders and the traffickers and the commercially minded men of the time. The Philistines occupied the coastlands. They too were organized under a king. A people, then, where every man did that which was right in his own eyes found itself face to face with nations which found it easy to put forth unified effort either because they lived in cities or were organized under kings. The result was that often when the Hebrews planted crops, others harvested them. The Hebrews had been compelled to disarm. We are told,

There was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock; yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes,

¹ Judges 1: 27-36.

and to set the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.¹

Consequently many of the people hid themselves among the rocks to escape the tyranny of the nation's enemies.

When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were distressed), then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in coverts, and in pits. Now some of the Hebrews had gone over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead; but as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.²

Individualism and pacifism did not seem to be a success in the experiences of this ancient rural people. A great nationalization program was the demand of the hour.

Among the Hebrews was a circuit judge who held court every year in the circuit which included Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. He had a reputation for prayerfulness, piety, and public spirit, a reputation which extended from Dan to Beersheba. He possessed along with rare qualities of leadership a deep insight into the social problems of his time. He saw the dangers of a military life for his people. He saw the danger of organizing them under a kingship. It invited all the evil which cursed the lives of the nations round about them. In most cases the kingship had become an elaborate system which had enslaved the people. Not once did Samuel lose sight of the tragedy which he might be inviting if he organized the people under a king. Nevertheless he saw the absolute necessity that the people should organize in some kind of an effective manner to meet organized

¹ I Samuel 13:19-22.

² I Samuel 13:6-8. Judges 5:1-31.

exploitations which were being inflicted upon them from nations and tribes without. He finally decided that the people had to have a king.

Among the young men of Israel who came to ask the advice of Judge Samuel was one by the name of Saul. Saul's father was a prosperous farmer and his son was following in his father's footsteps. The young man was of great physical strength. He was of commanding appearance, standing head and shoulders above the other men of his time, just the kind of a man who would appeal to the popular imagination of the people.

Samuel with deep seriousness laid upon him his commission. He showed him the scattered country folk, preyed upon and exploited by the Canaanitish dwellers in the city and the surrounding nations. Saul was timid and shrank from the publicity of the public coronation. The people were all assembled, ready for the public ceremony, and Saul was missing. They searched for him and found him hiding among the baggage. But timid as he was in matters of ceremony, he was not timid in times of danger.

A few days later, Nahash, the Ammonite, made a raid on the children of Israel and offered them peace on the condition that all of them should have their right eyes put out. This threatened atrocity struck terror to the hearts of the unarmed herdsmen. Saul, who was plowing in the field, heard the weeping of the people. When he was told the cause, he acted with lightning-like rapidity. Slaying his team of oxen, he cut them up and sent a bleeding piece of flesh by the hands of messengers through the clans of the hill-country with the message:

Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen.¹

¹I Samuel 11:7.

This was the message by which he summoned the clansmen. The call for mobilization was effective. Three hundred thousand men rallied to his support. Dividing his army into two companies, he swept down upon the camp of the Ammonites in the morning watch and smote them until the heat of the day. And they were scattered so that no two of them were left together.

Saul as a king always remained a man of the people. His farm was his castle and his armies went back to their farms as soon as the immediate occasion which brought them together had passed. No elaborate court was established and the people were loyal. Saul himself, however, never measured up in character and spirit to the promise of his great physical stature. He had given to the people military mobilization but this is based on fear and breaks up as easily as it comes. Jealousy and prejudice, which are often the curse of widely separated rural communities, gradually took possession of Saul and his life finally became the moral and social tragedy of a sulk.¹ Instead of giving himself to the building up of his people, he became insanely jealous of a promising young warrior, named David, who had shown great ability and had a popular following throughout the country. The closing years of Saul's life were marred by this turning aside from his great task of national leadership to the petty task of persecuting a rival.

Samuel had still a mind for the unification of the people even though he had been disappointed in one king. He decided to choose another, and this time the experience of the past led him to put less emphasis on physique and more on the spiritual qualities which are known as qualities of the heart. Israel must be integrated from within.

This time Samuel went to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, and summoned the sons of Jesse to pass before him for inspection. One

¹ Samuel 22: 6-10.

by one they were rejected because this time Samuel had decided to look not on the outward appearance. His attention was finally arrested by the youngest of the sons, who was ruddy and of a beautiful countenance but above all else a lad of intrepid spirit, blessed with those social qualities which invariably knit men to one another in unbreakable loyalty.

In David, Samuel found ideal material for the kingship. He was a man of the people. God found him a keeper of sheep and made him a shepherd of his people, Israel. He had the dashing courage which captured the popular imagination. He was loyal and aroused in the people the spirit of loyalty.

David did for Israel what Samuel had hoped to see accomplished. He unified the scattered clansmen and organized them into efficient military units. In his controversy with Goliath, David proved that spiritual courage is greater than physical strength. He refused to succeed to the kingship through the murder of Saul, and thus showed his reverence for a great national institution. He showed the capacity for friendship in his love for Jonathan of which Saul had never been capable. He placed religion as a central unifying factor in the nation's life by locating the ark at Jerusalem, which he made the capital of the kingdom.

David furnished a spiritual leadership which gave to the nation something more than military mobilization. It was a real spiritual integration which then took place in Hebrew life. David made western Asia safe for Hebrew ideals. No longer did the Hebrew plant crops and the Philistines gather them. No longer were the people hiding in fear, afraid to go on the great highways. The Hebrew could look in the face of the Ammonite, the Canaanite, and the Philistine, and be unafraid. The people had risen from the stage where every man did that which was right in his own eyes, to the place where every man

could act in cooperation with the others for the good of all Israel. Petty tribal jealousies gave way to national loyalties.

The three hundred years we have been reviewing have been years in which the Hebrew community, led by great justice-loving personalities, has grown in social faith and loyalty and become a power in western Asia. The community has been founded by men who propose to establish a family which shall be a blessing. It had been the simple group with no settled abode, no private lands, no political organization, no military organization; and it had advanced under the leadership of such men as Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Saul, and David, to the place where there was a settled abode, the beginnings of agriculture, private property in lands, a growing city life, a voluntary military organization, and a kingship which is still elective and is the servant of the people. The ideals of the early family group have not yet been imperilled. Human relationships are still dominant over commercial and political.

CHAPTER III

FAITH DESTROYERS

When a nation changes its manner of making a living, when it changes its political organization and its social organization, there is bound to arise a crisis in its moral and spiritual life. A well organized system of rights, duties and customs is built up very slowly about the leading institutions of a social order, and when these institutions are disturbed the moral values are liable to be disturbed with them. In such a transition stage it is always a question whether or not the moral and spiritual values will survive. The early Christian Church took over the Roman Empire at a terrible cost to itself. The world witnessed the corruption of a vigorous democratic movement through the latent imperialism which existed in the Roman Empire. Christianity itself became an imperialistic system. The vigorous Hebrew tribes with their clan organizations and their regard for the rights of the common man took over the city civilization of the Amorites and the Canaanites which was essentially commercial and built up on a slave foundation. All this was done at a cost to the idealism of the Hebrews and introduced a controversy which waged until the Exile put an end to it. Let us try to understand this conquering of a victorious people by the vanquished.

The settlement in Canaan by the Hebrews was a herdsman's conquest of the hill-country. The Hebrews moved into Palestine as a rural shepherd people. They took possession of the land, of which they knew how to make use. The first chapter of Judges leaves no doubt as to the general character of the Hebrews' invasion of the Promised Land.

**The Conquest
of the Hill-
Country**

Jehovah was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the hill-country; for he could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.¹

And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons and served their gods.²

The picture portrayed here is fairly definite. A rural people with flocks and herds, gradually learning agriculture, hold the hill-country. They are the dominant military and political power. The traders and traffickers to whom they sell live in the towns and cities and are members of a class whose military and political power is waning. Hebrew justice is dispensed from the tribal law courts. The centers of power are outside the cities, and consequently are not controlled by the city point of view.

The nationalization policy of Saul and David meant the taking over of the cities and the city dwellers by the Hebrews. In

the fourth chapter of I Kings we meet the signi-

**The Meaning of
Nationalization**

ficant statement that the twelve officers who provided the levies of men and provisions for

Solomon's court had their headquarters in the walled cities largely inhabited by the Amorites and the Canaanites, and in at least six instances these officers lived in cities which up to the time of Solomon had been Amorite strongholds.

It is not possible to over-estimate the significance of this. Hebrew political and military power had moved from the rural villages which had the herdsman's point of view to the trade centers which had the point of view of the traders and the traffickers. We shall see a little later how this power was used by such men as Solomon and Rehoboam. It is sufficient here to call attention to the fact that many oriental civilizations were

¹ Judges 1:19.

² Judges 3:5-6.

built up on a system of slavery which made the peasants subordinate to the trade centers. Goodspeed, in his history of the Babylonians and Assyrians, thus described the prevalent policy:

The policy of Sargon also involved the subordination of the Assyrian peasantry to the commercial and industrial interests of the state or to the possessors of great landed estates. The burden of taxes fell upon the farmers even more heavily. They dwindled away, became serfs on the estate or slaves in the manufactories. . . . Thus the state as organized by Sargon became more and more an artificial structure, of splendid proportions, indeed, but of foundations which were altogether insufficient.

The vigorous strength of the Hebrews is now used to exploit the original Hebrew stock which first settled in the Promised Land. A rural population thus moves into the cities and uses its vigor to undermine itself. We shall study this process further in the policies of Solomon and Rehoboam.

The Books of Kings begin the recital of a study in social anarchy, a story which ends with the complete disintegration of Israel and Judah and the mournful tragedy of the captivity. The two books are more than the recital of a series of events. They are the exposition of a political philosophy. It is the story of the tragedy of a nation which deserts the attempt to build organized relationships on brotherhood and adopts the philosophy of the master class which can do injustice if it pleases. Most of us have passed too lightly over the comments repeated in the succeeding chapters of these two books, that the various kings made entangling alliances with foreign religious systems and caused Israel to sin. Baalism was not only a religion, it had adopted a political philosophy. One exposition of the idea has become famous:

This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint

**Solomon, Who
Starts the Game
of Oriental
Luxury in
Hebrew Life**

them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen you.¹

Although Saul and David had been kings, they had kept the kingship a service institution. It had been of the people, for the people and by the people. But Solomon did not abide by the traditions of his fathers. He identified himself in sympathy and in practice with the point of view of the Amorite civilization which centered in the city. He started as a double personality. He seemed to be the product of heredity and the product of environment. Solomon as a product of heredity gives us that magnificent prayer:

Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?²

But Solomon as the product of his kingly environment is a king surrounded by princes and an elaborate court, living in oriental luxury. The Bible is pitiless in the frankness with which it describes the oriental luxury, the military system and the slave labor:

Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided victuals for the king and his household; each man had to make provision for a month in the year. . . . And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty

¹ I Samuel 8:11-18.

² I Kings 3:9.

measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures and a hundred sheep, besides harts, and gazelles, and roebucks, and fatted fowl. . . . And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. . . . And King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses; a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home. And Adoniram was over the men subject to taskwork. And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand that were hewers in the mountains; besides Solomon's chief officers that were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, who bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.¹

Here we have an elaborately worked out system of conscript labor with Adoniram acting as head taskmaster. It is interesting to notice that when the revolt of the peasants takes place under Solomon's son, Rehoboam, it is Adoniram, head of the conscript labor gangs, who is sent to confer with the peasants, and they stone him to death in their rage. This compromising of Hebrew social traditions was all a part of the compromising of the religious traditions in which Solomon engaged for the sake of strengthening his political standing.

King Solomon loved many foreign women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. . . . He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.²

Of course what Solomon tried to do all his nobles tried to do and it resulted in the placing in the trade centers of Hebrew society an accumulation of people who were of secondary importance, who yet held the political and military power of the nation in their hands. They were a group of people with extravagant, luxurious tastes, who had the power to gratify these tastes at the expense of the common people. Taxation for main-

¹ I Kings 4:7, 22-26; 5:13-16.

² I Kings 11:1-3.

taining the expense of the court was now enforced with great rigor. At the head of the government was a class of people who took it for granted that the people existed for them.

In Rehoboam the Baalistic philosophy of the perfection of a master class idea gains the ascendancy. Rehoboam had grown up in the atmosphere of autocracy. He had known luxury, slaves, and self-indulgence. A man is governed by his tastes as well as by his convictions. If he is trained in self-indulgence, he will often desire the life which gives him the privilege of self-indulgence. Rehoboam came out of a king's court with the desire to oppress, and he disrupted a nation.

**Rehoboam,
Who Believes a
King Can Do
Injustice**

The scene at Shechem at what was supposed to be Rehoboam's coronation is one of the most interesting scenes in all history. It proved to be the clashing point of two opposite theories of the kingship, the theory of the Hebrew brotherhood and of the Baal master class. The people called Rehoboam to make him king. They still considered that no man was king until they elected him to the kingship. Before they voted on the matter they made to Rehoboam a very interesting proposition :

Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.¹

Rehoboam sent the people away for three days and took stock of the available wisdom with which he was surrounded. Two classes of people were consulted by him. One group represented those who were acquainted with the Hebrew tradition that all the men of the tribe were brothers and that the king was to be a servant of the rest. They gave their answer in these words :

If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them,

¹ I Kings 12:4.

and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants forever.¹

But Rehoboam turned from the counsel of these men and sought advice from the young comrades of the court who had been raised in the philosophy of the master class. One of the disadvantages of being a fool is that a man is liable to have foolish friends. They were quick and ready with their reply:

Thus shalt thou say unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, My little finger is thicker than my father's loins; and now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.²

The answer of the people reflects the total cleavage between their ideas and that of the king.

What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel.³

Organization for them only meant exploitation. The ten northern tribes revolted from the king, and the beginning of Israel's disintegration is at hand. Never again has history seen a united Israel. Hebrew life disintegrated because its leaders adopted a theory which made all human association ultimately impossible. Self-pleasing on the part of the leaders produced lack of faith and disloyalty on the part of the people, and social anarchy was the result. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of the hill-country had led the revolt, but Ahijah, a prophet of the hill-country had anointed him for the task. The further development of the controversy between the standards of justice of the primitive Hebrew clans and the Amorite commercial civilization, we shall take up in connection with the story of the prophets who now become the defenders of the rights of the peasants.

¹ I Kings 12:7.

² I Kings 12:16.

³ I Kings 12:10, 11.

In a description of social conditions at the time of the developing monarchy, J. P. McCurdy says :

The clansmen, therefore, at this stage, when decisive changes were impending, were on a pretty even footing. Certain clans or family groups were, indeed, more powerful than others ; but of the heads of families as a whole, none were very rich and none very poor. Nor was any freeman so low as that his voice might not be heard in council with the highest. But these relations began to be seriously interfered with by the first stages of the process of settlement.¹ . . . The freedom and looseness of nomadic government gives place almost at a bound to the despotism of city-states. General society exhibits a similar, almost paradoxical, contrast.² . . . When all live simply and frugally, as in the good old days, there is enough for all. But luxury demands more than enough, and always succeeds in getting it. Its success involves the impoverishment of the common man. "Fiat money," of no value in any age of the world without money's worth behind it, is not issued in Israel even for temporary relief. War, famine, pestilence, come upon the nation. The concomitant privation, suffering, anxiety, and terror strike hardest upon the lower middle class and the very poor. The lingering consequences swell further the roll of the destitute and the helpless.³

In another discriminating study of the social conditions of this period, we find the following statement :

Solomon oppressed the peasantry by forced labor. This, of course, intensified the national malice against the house of David. The taskwork of all that part of the nation lying north of Jerusalem (the house of Joseph) was in charge of an official by the name of Jeroboam. This man, moved by sympathy, lifted up his hand against the king (I Kings 11 :26f). In this action, he had the support of Ahijah, the prophet, who lived in the Josephite village of Shiloh. Although Solomon was not unseated, the growth of insurgency, as we may call it, continued throughout his reign ; and by the time of his death, the majority of the people were prepared to take radical action.⁴

The shift which we have been witnessing in Hebrew society

¹ J. P. McCurdy, *History, Prophecy and the Monuments*, Book Seven, p. 561.

² P. 569.

³ P. 572.

⁴ Wallis, *Sociological Study of the Bible*, pages 142-143.

is somewhat as follows. The community starts as a nomadic clan. It is a group with family standards, without settled abode; its different parts are called by family names and not by geographical names. There is no private property in lands and the government of the tribe is in the hands of elders elected by the tribe. The people all have a part in the great tribal assemblies. There is no standing army.

From this first stage there is a shift to an intermediate stage when the nomadic clan organizes under an elected king. The people are learning agricultural methods and have taken on a settled abode. They are acquiring private property. City life for them is just beginning. They have a small standing army. The old democratic standards of the tribe still survive.

In the third stage the hereditary king and the princes have become all powerful and have crowded into the background the tribal courts and the elders, who were always very close to the people. More and more authority has been taken over by the princes who live in the cities and have the city point of view in commercial matters. The country has developed a military class and the princes are often the leaders in the standing army and have the power to get what they want in Hebrew life. The political and economic control has slipped from the country village into the city, and the cities were built up largely on Amorite traditions. The desire for display had brought on conscript labor and heavy taxes. The Hebrews were headed straight for the military career of the big nations round about, until the prophets decided to interfere.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE AND SOCIAL FAITH

Hebrew community relationships had degenerated in the hands of a military and commercial group of leaders. Under the old clan justice a man was a man because he was a member of the clan. Under the Baalistic civilization a man became a commodity, to be manipulated for the glory of the king and his great public building projects. Under David the peasants had felt that they really had some portion in the progress of the kingdom. They had rights as well as duties. Under Solomon and Rehoboam duties multiplied and privileges vanished. Social injustice was freely indulged in by the military and commercial classes who had lost their sense of the right of the common man.

It fell to a group of men of deep religious conviction and acute social insight to begin the process of restoration. These men came first of all from the peasant classes. They voiced the rage of the peasants at the injustice of the political and commercial system which had been fastened upon them. They charged the leaders of Israel with having gone over to the worship of Baal, and with a selfish disregard of the standards of justice which had come down from the primitive clan life of their ancestors.

No moral reformation can be brought about until some man can draw a line through human society definite enough to be appreciated by the people, on the basis of which they can decide for one type of life and against another. This line must be fundamental enough to form the base line for the building of further surveys in social morality. The great creative person-

**Elijah, the Man
Who Created
a Moral Crisis**

alities who have changed the course of human society have done so by making clear to the people some great principle on the basis of which society can be reorganized. It fell to Elijah to do this pioneer work in the moral life of the Hebrews. He appears in Hebrew society in the midst of the rather prosperous reign of Ahab, king of Israel. He came from the peasant life of Gilead.

Ahab's reign had in many ways given evidence of material power and prosperity. He had succeeded in warding off the attacks of surrounding kings and in building his kingdom in external prosperity. But he had done this at the expense of all idealism and through the encouragement of those tendencies which were working for the undoing of the Hebrew people. He had compromised the people by marrying a daughter of a priest of Baal in order to encourage a commercial and political alliance with the kingdom of Tyre. Jezebel had proven at the court to be the organizing center of all those forces which wanted to see the enthronement of Baal worship in the Hebrew society. This meant something more than a change in a national system of religion. It meant a change in the whole social philosophy which lay back of Hebrew social organization.

One illustration suffices to tell what a change Baalism promoted in Hebrew life. Ahab desired to build up a large country estate. That he might extend the borders of his estate, he desired to acquire the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite. Naboth did not want to sell. He did not need to sell since his rights were protected by an ancient land law which guarded the small landholder from encroachment on the part of the nobles and kings. It was a safeguard against the inequalities which grow up when a few secure monopoly in land. Ahab did not dare challenge the right of Naboth to maintain his possession of his vineyard. He accepted the denial with ill-humor but with

resignation. But Jezebel had been raised in a court and under influences where might meant right. The worshipper of Baal, whose name meant "great landlord," had as his ideal the acquiring of great lands without scruple. The first Book of Kings tells the story:

Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, and that dwelt with Naboth. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people: and set two men, base fellows, before him, and let them bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst curse God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him to death.¹

The plot was successfully carried out. Naboth, the small landholder, no longer stood in the way of the ambitions of Ahab. Jezebel turned the ill-gotten vineyard over to Ahab. Ahab went down to Jezreel to take possession of his newly acquired property. Nothing is more full of tragic comedy than this attempt of Ahab to enjoy that which his conscience did not justify him in possessing. He was evidently expecting a rebuke from someone who represented the ancient conscience of Israel about the rights of small peasant proprietors in their estate. To Elijah's greeting,

Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?²

Ahab weakly replies:

Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?³

¹ I Kings 21:5-10.

² I Kings 21:20.

³ I Kings 21:19.

To which Elijah replies :

I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah.¹

The challenge which Jezebel brought into Hebrew religious and social life had been accepted by Elijah, the prophet from the hill-country of Gilead.

Naboth's vineyard seems to be typical of the controversy between the defenders of the ancient clan justice and the Amorite civilization which for the time being had become dominant in Hebrew life. Elijah commissioned Elisha to anoint Jehu from Ramoth-Gilead, to start a revolution which will remove the house of Ahab and Jezebel. Jehu joins hands with Jehonadab, of the Rechabites (a sect which is opposed to private ownership of land, evidently because of the injustice to which it leads), and two kings of Israel and Judah are discovered in the vineyard of Naboth and there are attacked by Jehu, both of them ultimately slain. The controversy which is dividing Hebrew civilization is in part the fight of the common man for standing room in Hebrew economic and political life.

But the line which Elijah established as the base line on which the controversies of the future were to be waged is not the line which defines the right of the common man. He makes the supremacy of Jehovah the critical issue which he forces on the conscience of the Hebrews, but he does this because the justice of Jehovah defends the right of the common man. In a great dramatic contest on Mount Carmel he challenged the people of Israel to choose whom they will serve.

And Elijah came near unto all the people, and said, How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah;

¹ I Kings 21 : 20.

but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on the wood, and put no fire under. And call ye on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered.¹

With sarcasm and ridicule, Elijah now flays the cringing body of Baal prophets before the crowd. Then he calls to the people:

Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. . . . And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.²

Jehovah in the Heavens! Lay bare thy mighty arm in behalf of this, thy servant, who has risked everything in thy cause:

Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And

¹ I Kings 18: 21-26.

² I Kings 18: 30-37.

they took them ; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.¹

The issue between Jehovah and Baal had been launched and is carried further by Amos, the Herdsman of Tekoa.

A certain man was asked what he intended to do with the money he had made by oil speculation. "I am going to get me a black land farm, some 'niggers,' and some mules, and I am going to live in town." If he could only have had the religion of Baal to add a sense of religious exaltation to the feelings in which he was indulging, his happiness would have been complete.

Baalism had offered respectability to the state of mind of the big landlord who looked down on a body of serving tenants. Such men, with all those who plotted with them, gathered in the trade centers of northern Israel. The religion of Israel in the trade centers had been so thoroughly corrupted that the priest and the prophet of the trade center no longer were mindful of the welfare of the peasants who were doing the fundamental labor which made the trade center possible. Secure in their numbers and prosperity, they managed to shift the heavy burdens of taxes on to the peasants, and no trade center priest or prophet ever raised his voice in protest.

Reform movements need a critic. They need the man who can hit hard, who can ruin with an epigram ; a speaker who can say things in unforgettable ways, who can tear off the mask, who can cut with the fine edge of a moral scalpel, who can condense a moral campaign into a slogan, who can focus moral indignation until it burns. Such a man did Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, prove to be. He did not bring about a reform, but before

**Amos, and the
Autocracy at the
Trade Center**

**Amos, the
Spokesman of
the Peasants**

¹ I Kings 18 : 38-40.

he was through certain eminent nobles had lost their reputation for piety and instead of being idols had become an exasperation.

Talent, ability, and luxury accumulated at the trade center. If a priest and prophet wanted to close his eyes and forget the conditions in the open country, being a prophet at the trade center was a comfortable task. Rural populations naturally gravitate toward the trade centers. It is easy for the commercial interests which center here so to organize that the peasants and farmers who are scattered and isolated in the open country become the easy objects of exploitation. It has been the history of civilization that the peasants have been exploited by the trade center forces. Such was the condition at Bethel, the king's sanctuary of the Northern Kingdom, where Amaziah, the local prophet, was evidently performing an acceptable service to the nobles and the traders who made up his constituency.

But one festal day when the incense was burning, the music playing, the people feasting, and the wives urging their husbands to extravagance in display, there appeared at the market place a rough but magnetic figure. A man, whose mind had been forming on the slopes of Tekoa near enough to Jerusalem to catch its inspiration and far enough away to be free from its contamination, suddenly appeared at the great festival with a startling message.

He knew that his first task was to dynamite that trade center sense of security. This he effectively did by turning back upon them all the indignation which they had been
His Indictment visiting on the nations round about. He began by calling that indignation into play by several sharp and incisive indictments for the crimes of which they had been guilty.

The people evidently followed him in this when suddenly he

turned his indignation upon Judah for her crimes, and then to their utter amazement he brought this indictment on the people standing before him:

They have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes—they that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek.¹

He charged the traders before him with buying with false measures and paying in depleted currency:

Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat?²

He was talking with leaders who might have been builders of Israel like Moses and David. No reckless group of profiteers were ever more accurately pictured than those described by Amos in the following words:

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come! . . . Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.³

Trade centers are a by-product of a vigorous rural population. Trade centers built by the exploitation of the peasants will be of short duration. So Amos reminded those who were listening to him:

Ye who turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth. . . . They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor

¹ Amos 2:7.

² Amos 6:1-6.

³ Amos 8:4-6.

him that speaketh uprightly. Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof.¹

The gross injustice on which they were building their civilization negated the value of all their religious ceremonies:

I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.²

Amaziah, the local priest, was greatly aroused; his constituency was being maligned. The reputation of the chief officers for piety would be greatly damaged if Amos continued his fiery denunciation. Amaziah carried a protest to the king. It is typical of many another protest which has gone up from trade centers with similar motives. He accused Amos of disloyalty.

Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel.³

This was his message to King Jeroboam. It is amazing how patriotic some trade center extortionists can be when they want the support of the king in helping them exploit the peasants. His next protest was directed toward Amos:

O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house.⁴

But Amos was too certain of his cause to be read out of court by such a man as Amaziah. His reply is vigorous and to the point:

I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore-trees: and Jehovah took me from follow-

¹ Amos 5:7-11.

³ Amos 7:10.

² Amos 5:21-24.

⁴ Amos 7:12-13.

ing the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.¹

Amos frankly affirms his peasant origin and his divine commission to cry out against the injustice which the wealthy classes of the trade center are visiting upon the people whom he loves. He does not so far as we know work any reforms, but the cause of the peasants has a champion who feels intensely and knows how to speak his message.

George Adam Smith thus described the social conditions which obtained in Hebrew life at about this time :

“Till the Eighth Century the Hebrews had been but a kingdom of fighting husbandmen. Under Jeroboam and Uzziah city life was developed and civilization in the proper sense of the word appeared. . . . But now this further step from the agricultural stage to the mercantile and civil was equally fraught with danger. . . . There were all the temptations of rapid wealth, all the dangers of an equally increased poverty. . . . As in many another land and period, the social problem was the descent of wealthy men, land hungry, upon the rural districts. They made the poor their debtors and bought out the peasant proprietors. They absorbed into their power numbers of homes, and had at their individual disposal the lives and the happiness of thousands of their fellow countrymen. Isaiah had cried: ‘Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room’² for the common people, and the inhabitants of the rural districts grow fewer and fewer. Micah pictures the recklessness of these plutocrats, the fatal ease with which their wealth enabled them to dispossess the yeomen of Judah. The prophet speaks :

‘Woe to them that plan mischief and on their beds work out evil ; as soon as morning breaks they put it into execution, for it lies in the power of their hands. They covet fields and seize them, houses, and lift them up. So they crush a good man in his home, a man and his heritage.’³

Two other passages from this champion of the poor reveal the social conditions of the time :

And I said, Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob, and rulers of the

¹ Amos 7:14-15.

³ Micah 2:1-2.

² Isaiah 5:8.

house of Israel: is it not for you to know justice? Ye who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. Then shall they cry unto Jehovah, but he will not answer them; yea, he will hide his face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings.¹

The folly of trying to build the nation at the top at the expense of those at the bottom is clearly set forth by one who knows what the conditions are among the peasants:

Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, that abhor justice and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet they lean upon Jehovah, and say, Is not Jehovah in the midst of us? no evil shall come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.²

¹ Micah 3:1-4.

² Micah 3:9-12.

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICING A NATION IN THE NAME OF A COMMUNITY OF JUSTICE

If the moral values of one generation are to survive through a period of transition it will be because some men have such a keen appreciation of these moral and spiritual values that they can carry them forward and make them effective in the new social order which comes because of changing economic and political conditions. If such men of moral genius are at hand, it may even be that a higher type of moral and spiritual life will come because of the social changes which have come. The later prophets of Israel did not try to force Israel back into the social mechanism of the tribe. They finally accepted the new political organization under the king and the princes. They accepted the city civilization and the settled agricultural life. They carried over into this new social order the moral values which had been developed in the life of the tribe. In place of the prince who oppressed the people, they lifted up the ideal of a prince who was a leader and who ruled in justice and wisdom and with mercy. It is interesting to notice this shift in Hebrew idealism. In the early story the man who founded the first city was said to be under a curse. In later Hebrew life when the prophet pictured an ideal society, it was in terms of a city of God in which there was no injustice. The moral genius of the prophets and teachers is revealed in their ability to make effective the moral and spiritual values in the new social order which was inevitable.

It is not altogether easy to defend the patriotism of the prophets. It is fair to say that they never made a bogey out of nationalism. They were never enthusiastic about the kingship,

the nobles, or the wealthy classes who inhabited the trade centers. At a time when the Hebrews needed to conserve all their strength in order to resist the threatened invasion of the big agricultural nations to the north and to the south, at a time when internal strife meant suicide, the prophets were responsible for a number of violent revolutions in Hebrew society.

It was the Prophet Ahijah who spurred on Jeroboam to lead the Ten Tribes of the north in revolt. It was Elisha who inspired the bloody revolution of Jehu. The prophets were back of the revolution at the beginning of Josiah's reign. It was Jeremiah who incurred the charge of disloyalty because he refused to play the game of the court party just before the exile. The prophets, without doubt, weakened the morale of the Hebrew people in their repeated announcements that Israel and Judah would be punished in captivity for their sins. The prophets were loyal to the Hebrew community but they were not loyal to the type of social order which developed after the Hebrews became a commercial, military nation which sacrificed the moral and social values of the clan brotherhood which had been established under Abraham and Moses. In the name of a better social order of justice they were willing to sacrifice the nation of their day. They did not accept the national organization of the Hebrews as final. They did not exalt patriotism as a supreme virtue.

The social philosophy of the prophets followed the ideals of justice which had come down to them from the laws and customs of their clan. The clan was a larger family and some of the standards of family life obtained within it. They called each other brothers; they were known by their family names and not by their geographical names. A clan gave a value to a man which a commercial or political organization did not give.

**The Social
Philosophy of
the Prophets**

Jehovah's welfare was identical with that of the clan and whoever was a member of this organization was the object of Jehovah's care. The laws of Jehovah were the laws which stood for the welfare of the clan. Thus the prophets had a basis from which they criticized the state which developed under the leadership of the Baal ideals. But although they had a basis for criticism, they felt acutely the needs of their nation and always identified themselves with its welfare. They speak in tenderest terms of Israel and Judah. They love to speak of them as "God's vineyard":

Let me sing for my well-beloved, a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he digged it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry.¹

The clan morality had been founded on the family. The first great constructive reformer gains the experience on which he bases his message for the Hebrew community from a broken home. The laws of community living are not different for the smaller communities of life than for the larger. It is possible to argue

Hosea's Broken Home

¹ Isaiah 5:1-7.

from the experience gained in a small community and draw conclusions for larger communities. Most men do progress by the extension of a successful social experience. Community life cannot be based on infidelity. Faith-breaking destroys the possibilities of home relationships. So argues the prophet, Hosea, a resident of the Northern Kingdom about 700 B. C. Disloyalty broke up his home. Redemptive love rebuilt it. From this experience Hosea advances to an acute analysis of the woes of the Hebrew community. He finds that the people have been led away in a great spirit of infidelity from their former love for the righteousness of Jehovah and this has thrown Hebrew life into social chaos. He believes that redemptive love can rebuild Israel even as it rebuilt his own home.

When the prophets diagnosed the ills of the nation, they came to the conclusion that false leadership was responsible for the degradation and corruption of Jehovah's vineyard. By a very direct process of reasoning they came to the conclusion that right leadership would restore the nation. The doctrine of the Messiah is an elaboration and extension of this idea. It is a social philosophy based on the power of an individual to found a community. Every social philosophy must have a key thought. The key thought of the prophets is that some day God will send a great leader who will restore Israel through a reign of righteousness.

There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.¹

¹ Isaiah 11 :1-4.

The next important item in this social philosophy is the character of the justice for which the prophets stood. Until justice has been defined, one is never sure of its implications. Justice may be something which we practice in very closely defined groups; it may be something which the strong render unto the strong. For the prophets the definition of justice came down from the old tribal life where every member of the tribe had a share and part in the life of the tribe. For the prophets justice meant justice for the poor and needy, for the widows and orphans of the tribe as well as for the strong.

Is not this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of Jehovah shall be thy rearward. Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah will answer; thou shalt cry, and he will say, Here I am.¹

¹ Isaiah 58:6-10.

Just because the prophets refused to accept the boundaries of the nation as the limitation of God's righteousness, they were able to rise to something of an international conception of the will and purpose of God. Their statement of an international order based on righteousness antedates that of any other of the great world thinkers. They conceive of a world order based on the righteousness which shall emanate from Jehovah's house.

It shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. And he will judge

between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.¹

¹ Isaiah 2: 2-4.

Ezekiel comes to the same conclusion about the universal character of a community of righteousness from the standpoint of the individual man. Men are not good by race or class, and because they are good only as individuals it is possible for any man to be good and to become a member of the new community without regard to race or class.

The word of Jehovah came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.²

² Ezekiel 18:1-4.

Too often we are accustomed to think of the prophets as great individuals who dealt directly with Hebrew life without considering the way in which the prophets influenced each other and all contributed to the outlines of a coming better social order which was to be the community of God. Each makes his contribution to a common line of thought which becomes the property of all. Gradually the criticism of the old social order advances in the minds of the prophets to the positive outlining of a new and better one. Reconstruction in its final phase was largely influenced by the constructive genius of Ezekiel. With an almost painful regard for detail, Ezekiel with measuring rod outlines the dimensions of the better community, locating even the residence of priests and king and the dwelling

**The Prophetic
Vision of the
Better Commu-
nity**

of Jehovah. The striking point about his plan for the new community is that it is to be a God-governed community and the place of preeminence is given to the temple instead of the palace of the king. In other words, we have here a distinct assertion on the part of the prophets of an ethical spiritual community in which the rule is the rule of God and his righteousness, and in which the king has only a subordinate place. They have achieved a moral and spiritual and social triumph in thus conceiving and outlining an international community based on the righteousness of God where ethical qualifications constitute the basis of membership.

The period in the life of the Hebrew community which now follows is not that of the life of a nation. Jewish life became a "Kultur" with the synagogue as its center. It did not fail. It had national limitations but was marvelously vigorous. Men of moral insight were given leadership. During this period the Jews display much of the Puritans' ruggedness and love of freedom. When Alexander the Great starts to impose Grecian culture on the world, his success is phenomenal until he reaches this little Jewish community. But the Jews refuse to give up their customs and their law, and start a fight for freedom in religion which is one of the bright spots in human history and wins for the Jewish people religious freedom and for a short time even political independence. But Judaism, although enriched by some of the greatest literature of all time, nevertheless comes down to the time of Jesus very much a matter of hard forms without spirit, a religion which Paul described as having fallen a victim to the letter of the law. The synagogue had a central place; leadership had been won for the prophet and the priest and the man of ethical purpose.

The Fate of the Restored Community

CHAPTER VI

FIRST ATTEMPTS AT BUILDING THE COMMUNITY OF JUSTICE

After the exile the religion of Judaism was as widespread as the Jewish people and they were scattered over most of the country which bordered on the Mediterranean Sea. But in a very peculiar sense Jerusalem was the center of all Jewish idealism and the building of Israel was not separated from the task of building Jerusalem. The vision of the prophets of a better world-wide community had always centered around Jerusalem. Whoever accepted the task of building the community of justice which they had in mind interpreted this task in terms of a new and better Jerusalem.

The first person to attempt to carry out in terms of community reconstruction the vision of the prophets was a young man named Nehemiah. Many mourned the loss of the ancient city of David, but he alone mourned to a purpose. With a crowd of exiles who had made the long journey from Jerusalem to the city of Artaxerxes in the valley of the Euphrates, he had gone as a mournful pilgrim. He had all the likableness of youth and culture, and had been appointed cup-bearer to the king. He could have had for the remainder of his life a position of security and ease, but all men are not so constituted that such a life appeals to them, and the ruin of the city of his fathers' sepulcher tugged at his heartstrings. Returning pilgrims reported that:

The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.¹

¹ Nehemiah 1:3.

His sorrow showed in his countenance, and one morning as he appeared before the king, the king inquired:

Why is thy countenance sad; . . . this is nothing else but sorrow of heart?¹

Then replied the young man:

Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire. . . . If it please the king, . . . send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.²

The king was favorably inclined to his appeal and gave him letters of safe conduct, and also gave orders for the king's foresters to supply him with the necessary timber for his work of reconstruction.

Over the long desert the young man goes to the ancient city once famous as a city of David and Solomon. Had not the prophet said:

I will give thee for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages; saying to them that are bound, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.³

Upon arriving at Jerusalem he keeps his mission secret. He does not flood the community with advance notices of what he is going to do for its upbuilding. Taking his beast one night he rides out over the city and takes stock of his task and his resources. He does not propose to allow the wishes of a good heart to be a substitute for the knowledge of a good head. Accurate information is the price he proposes to pay for leadership in community building. He returns from the survey with definite information. Seven of the important gateways of the city were in ruins; the streets were full of rubbish; walls were to be rebuilt; and all of this must be done by voluntary labor.

¹ Nehemiah 2:2.

³ Isaiah 49:8-9.

² Nehemiah 2:3-5.

With accurate information and a vision of his task he now sets to work. His first problem is—to use his own words—to arouse in the people a mind to build. Rebuilding Jerusalem was to be a matter of drawing checks on the good will of the community, and he must first of all establish that supply of good will. His methods are interesting. He calls together one hundred and fifty of the chief men of the community about a banquet table which is supplied at his own expense. For fifty-two days he maintains this community table at the daily cost of one ox, six choice sheep, a large number of fowls, and every ten days a supply of wine. It is the price he must pay for building the community morale. In a masterful way he presents his case. He calls to their minds the ancient glory of the city they had known. He opens to them his plan. He paints for them the glory of the city that can be:

Let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.¹

And the people said,

Let us rise up and build.²

And they strengthened their hands for the great work. The fight for community morale had won.

But the fight does not end here. If Nehemiah had been able only to arouse enthusiasm and not to organize it he would have been a failure. The master workman is now revealed as he divides the people up into their natural groupings and sets each group to work over against the task to which it is best adapted. Then the miracle of community organization takes place. Jerusalem was not lacking in resources. What it needed was someone to organize and to direct its resources.

Let us not think for one moment, however, that Nehemiah can

¹ Nehemiah 2:17.

² Nehemiah 2:18.

carry this project for community betterment through without opposition. Sanballat and Tobiah, the Ammonite, were present on this occasion in order that it might be typical of all other occasions of its kind. The way in which Nehemiah meets this petty piece of community persecution ought to be typical of all who have this opposition to meet. Sanballat and Tobiah evidently have ulterior reasons for not wanting Jerusalem to become a better city. They had evidently been profiteering on Jerusalem's misery. The more abject the misery of Jerusalem, the happier was Sanballat. He sees in Nehemiah someone who is about to rob him of his prey. The opposition of these two men takes vicious expression.

They first try ridicule. This is the resort of many who try to discourage movements for community betterment.

What are these feeble Jews doing?¹

asks Sanballat.

Even that which they are building, if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall.²

says Tobiah, the Ammonite.

Public ridicule is hard to bear but neither Nehemiah nor his people are turned aside from their project.

The next attempt of these two obstructors of public welfare is a treacherous effort to get Nehemiah to come down to one of the villages on the plain of Ono that they might entrap him. It is in response to this that Nehemiah gives his famous reply:

I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?³

A man engaged in positive constructive work cannot always be wasting his time with obstructors of the public welfare.

¹ Nehemiah 4:2.

³ Nehemiah 6:3.

² Nehemiah 4:3.

The third attempt at blocking the building of the wall was a vicious piece of propaganda through which Sanballat sought to poison the mind of Artaxerxes with the thought that Nehemiah is starting a rebellion. He circulated an open letter to this effect.

It is reported among the nations, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel; for which cause thou art building the wall: and thou wouldst be their king, according to these words.¹

When we remember that Nehemiah was trying to hold a large number of people in voluntary labor on a great project, we realize the treacherous nature of this scheme which would make the people feel that they were partners to a plan which might any day bring the cavalry of Artaxerxes down upon them.

The final attempt to injure the influence of Nehemiah came in the form of an appeal to his self-interest whereby Shemaiah urged him to take refuge in the temple.

Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night they will come to slay thee.²

To which Nehemiah replied:

Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being such as I, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.³

Nehemiah proved invincible to every form of community persecution and opposition, and Sanballat and Tobiah retired defeated from the scene of action.

So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.⁴

But Nehemiah knows that it is not enough to fortify a community from without. Communities must be fortified from within. A city wall does not guarantee a city. The great forti-

¹ Nehemiah 6:6.

³ Nehemiah 6:11.

² Nehemiah 6:10.

⁴ Nehemiah 6:15.

fications of community life are erected in the social organization of the people, and Nehemiah now turns his attention to the erection of those inner fortifications which alone can guarantee a stable human society.

He seeks first of all to reorganize the business life of the community on the basis of brotherhood. He shows himself loyal to the standards of the prophets. He supplants exploitations by cooperation. We read that the people had been enslaved by the unscrupulous business men of the day. They had mortgaged their lands and sold their children into slavery in order to obtain from certain men the necessities of life.

Then there arose a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons and our daughters, are many: let us get grain, that we may eat and live. Some also there were that said, We are mortgaging our fields, and our vineyards, and our houses: let us get grain, because of the dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute upon our fields and our vineyards. Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already: neither is it in our power to help it; for other men have our fields and our vineyards.¹

Calling these men before him, Nehemiah makes them a most remarkable speech. He says:

We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, that were sold unto the nations; and would ye even sell your brethren, and should they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found never a word. Also I said, The thing that ye do is not good: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the nations our enemies? And I likewise, my brethren and my servants do lend them money and grain. I pray you, let us leave off this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their fields, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the grain, the new wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. Then

¹ Nehemiah 5:1-5.

said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do, even as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they would do according to this promise. Also I shook out my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labor, that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the assembly said, Amen, and praised Jehovah.¹

It was a great speech. The city which he was building by sacrifice was not to be the hunting ground of those who were interested only in gain. The law of successful community life is service and not exploitation. The primary condition of all community progress is community good will. The community which is not a success in good will cannot ultimately be a business success. Brotherhood affords the only basis for any economic structure.

But Nehemiah does not stop with the reorganization of business life. He knows that the outward institutions of social life are but the outward expression of inward ideas. He seeks to guarantee the community, not by leaving it to evolve out of its own conscience adequate social practice and institutions, but he seeks to guarantee that conscience by having Ezra, the scribe, on stated occasions read for them the Mosaic law and lead them in the celebration of the great national festivals.

All the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which Jehovah had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.²

¹ Nehemiah 5:8-13.

² Nehemiah 8:1-3.

A community is not an established community until it holds in common great memories, a common mind for great tasks, great hopes, and great convictions. In the laws and festivals of ancient Israel, in the teachings of Moses and the prophets, Nehemiah found the expression of the inward faith, hope, and conviction which had been the sustaining power of ancient Israel. He is not satisfied until these have become the inner life of his new community. He seeks thus to build the common mind which is after all the essence of community life.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOUNDER OF THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY

When Jesus of Nazareth summons men with the call, "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," it is not a call unrelated to Jewish experience. For almost two thousand years there had been accumulating in Hebrew thought a passion for a righteous social order. Great successes and great failures had demonstrated the rightness and the wrongness of certain theories of life. Certain distinct gains had been made. Certain experiments had been tried and did not need to be repeated. In the Hebrew laboratory, the power of a great personality to found a community had been demonstrated. The prophets had formulated the thought and vision of a community based not on race or on nationality but on the ethical and spiritual qualities of manhood. The fallacy of a social order based on autocratic self-pleasing on the part of the rulers had also been demonstrated. The integrating healing power of the principles of brotherhood had been experienced by the Hebrews. The way had been prepared for someone who would gather up in himself the fruits of the Hebrew community experience and lay the foundation for a social order founded on justice.

There were certain communities of compulsion and fear which furnished the dark background for Jesus' life.

It is impossible to understand the thought of Jesus concerning

community life without understanding the Roman Empire which was the great world community of his day. **The Roman Empire** World orders have a way of dictating terms to the smaller communities of the world. It is hard to fight against a world order. Those who succeed are the creative persons of history. Had Germany triumphed and succeeded in imposing her imperialistic scheme on the world, we should have had something comparable to the world order which Jesus knew. The result of such a triumph would have been a triumph for an ideal of life as well as a political system, and this ideal would have penetrated and have influenced the remotest community of the world, just because it had become the dominant community ideal in the world.

Rome had triumphed. She had imposed her political system on all the nations bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. It was a system built up on compulsion of force and the appeal to fear. It was a theocracy in which emperor worship was dominant. Roman arms made common cause with the local recognized authorities in every annexed nation. To a people with the freedom traditions of the Jews it was compulsion, foreign, alien, and to be endured only because the people feared to throw it off. That Jesus knew the hatred of the Jew for Rome is perfectly clear in his dealing with the captious question about the giving of tribute to Cæsar. The question itself has no point if there does not lie back of it a great popular hatred toward Rome which made it dangerous for a man to advocate the paying of the imperial tax.

The hatred of Rome was also reflected in the popular estimate of a publican who was the official representative of Rome in the collection of taxes. He had neither social standing nor religious privileges. The Jew hated him because he stood for the alien community which had robbed the Jew of his freedom. Jewish

hatred of Rome had finally organized in a party of the Zealots which, like the Sinn Fein Party of Ireland, was pledged to Jewish independence and the realization of Jewish national hopes. That Jesus felt with his countrymen the hatred of this community of compulsion and fear there can be no question. When Satan led Him to the lofty mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and offered Him world domination on Satan's terms, it was the dramatic plea of Jewish opinion for a leader who should build another world kingdom with the Jew occupying the place which the Roman held in the world order which the Jew hated so much.

The other theocratic community of compulsion based on fear was the decadent Judaism of Jesus' time. Judaism at its best was not a religion of legal compulsion based on appeals to fear. In the reconstruction days following the exile, the ideal of the prophets, where the spirit of God was to be the teacher of men and men were to live together in brotherly relationships, had for a time been partially realized. But the priest had triumphed in Hebrew life, and Hebrew religion in the fight which it had made for the preservation of its customs against the Hellenism of Alexander the Great had become hard and legalistic. The Pharisees, like the Puritans of three centuries ago, had won a noble fight for religious freedom but bore in themselves the intolerant temper toward all which they had once developed in self-defense against Grecian arms. Jewish religion while professing freedom had become a matter of laws, customs, and forms imposed upon the people by threats of various kinds of social punishment. A religion which had once possessed wide outlook and a universal appeal had been narrowed until only a Jew with all the limitations of a Jew could enjoy its privileges. It had grown petty, and over those who would submit, it had grown tyrannical.

**Decadent
Judaism**

Jesus has been proclaimed as the chief revolt leader of all history. He has been pictured as the leader of the proletariat who sought to organize the seething forces of unrest in the Roman Empire. Jesus taught a profound doctrine of self-respect but He was interested in something more than the starting of a revolt. A civilization which can stand alone is more than a reaction. No permanent society was ever maintained on the basis of a revolt. The verdict of Jewish history was all against such a plan. Jesus looked forward to a society in which men loved justice more than do those who are willing just to rebel against injustice in others. He looked for a society characterized by moral and spiritual independence gained through discipline more severe than that of Scribe and Pharisee where men through self-criticism had learned the art of being just and giving justice to others.

Jesus had drunk deep from the springs of Hebrew idealism which had been established by the prophets. He had a vision of a community held together by something stronger than the compulsion of force and fear. With true social insight He saw the coming disintegration of the Roman Empire due to the hatreds which it inevitably bred. His critique of the old order was severe. It was wrong in principle and must ultimately break down.

And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.¹

Abraham and Moses had been organizing centers in the old

¹ Mark 10:42-45.

community. Jesus offers Himself as a center of the new community. He would be the vine, others would be the branches. Some men try to bind others to them through fear. He would bind men by the strongest tie which society knows—love and social faith. Society shot through and through with suspicion would find faith returning when men came in contact with Him. Even in his death He expected to draw all men to Him. The idea is almost startling in its simplicity. If one man could ruin the world, a personality such as Jesus could save it by becoming the organizing center of a new order of men.

The Personality of Jesus in the New Community

The most striking symbol of the new order was the fellowship supper at which his disciples partook of the bread and wine which

The Fellowship Supper

was the symbol of their mystic union with Him. Those who were members of his community were held together by something stronger than force and fear. It was the fellowship of those who had been won to faith through their contact with Him. He had been worthy of a great trust and had created faith in them. Faith was beginning to come back into the world when they had faith in Him. The integration of the community had begun when they gave to Him trust and loyalty. They were not to be his slaves but his friends.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.¹

It was a community freed from the old compulsion of heredity. A man did not need to be a Jew to be a citizen. The only

¹ John 15:12-15.

foreigner in this community was a bad man, and every good man had a right to citizenship.

There come his mother and his brethren; and, standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. And a multitude was sitting about him; and they say unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answereth them, and saith, Who is my mother and my brethren? And looking round on them that sat round about him, he saith, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.¹

Jesus definitely expected that his new community characterized by social faith, justice, and brotherliness would supplant the old community based on autocratic compulsion, fear, force, and naturalistic conditions. He had every right to expect such a triumph. Communities based on force and fear have always developed within themselves the antipathies which cause them to disintegrate. The chain has not yet been forged which can bind people together who hate each other. Jesus was not an idle dreamer. He was the keenest of social thinkers. He had seen small communities like the home community which centered around a good father grow strong and persist through all human vicissitudes. He had all of the Hebrew experience back of Him. If He could build a world community in which men would have the spirit of their good Father who was in Heaven He could have a community founded upon the rocks which all the floods and storms which sweep through human history could not destroy. He was perfectly confident that God had called Him to found such a community because He believed in God. He saw its realization coming in the Heavens and the supplanting of the old world order was at hand. In parable and in story He set forth his optimistic convictions.

Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his

¹ Mark 3:31-35.

field: which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.¹

Jesus anticipated the ultimate triumph of his community because He believed that it had power to supplant the old. He had heartily and completely lost faith in the old type of community. He said it was fit for the Valley of Gehenna where lay the discarded refuse of the city of Jerusalem. In other words it was ready to be scrapped. He was not a dreamer of visions which were impossible for this world. It was the old order that was impossible. It could never develop anything but human hate and human hate was the negation of community life. His order alone was possible. It gave promise of joy, happiness, comradeship, a community of the spirit, where there would be youth and freshness and growth, a brotherhood which men could never outgrow and which would be the crowning glory of the creative work of God the Father.

Jesus never minimized to Himself the cost which must be paid for the new community. It was a good bargain at any price; it was a pearl worth trading all one's possessions to secure. He kept continually warning men against the fallacy of hoping to secure the new community at too low a cost. It called for a discipline of the body and mind more exacting than that of Scribe or Pharisee. It called for a people of moral independence.

Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father,

¹ Matthew 13:31-33.

and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.¹

The price of the new community was the high price of self-discipline in the giving of justice. All depended on whether He could secure men to follow Him who loved justice enough to give it and give it first, and who would give it for the sake of its faith-creating power in society. The masterly exposition of this thought has come to us in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus begins his discourse with a recital of a list of those who would be the fortunate initiators of the new order. He calls them the salt of the earth—the people who will keep society from rotting. They are those who have a hunger and thirst after righteousness and He finds such people chiefly among the meek and the lowly who have come to hate injustice because they have felt the iron heel of oppression.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.²

The men who are to make possible the new order must be men who will give justice in thought as well as deed. It was to be a discipline of the mind as well as the body. The new community was to be one in which there would be no murders; if so, murder must be dealt with in the thought stage. Men could not go on

¹ Luke 14:25-33.

² Matthew 5:3.

feeding the flames of passion with unjust thoughts and stop short of the fruit of passion in murder.

Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.¹

The new community was to be free from licentious action. If so adultery must be dealt with in the thought stage. Unchaste action is the result of unchaste thoughts. The men of the new order must be clean in thought as well as action.

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.²

The new community must be free from falsehood. Public opinion must be built on the integrity of human speech. If so, the builders of the new community must tell the truth not because they have taken oath to do so but because truth-telling is a primary condition of social trust and faith. Truth-telling was independent of all external occasion.

Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all.³

Justice could not be maintained on the narrow basis of the law of revenge. The law of revenge is simply another law of the assertion of rights, both of which land either in slavery or in social anarchy. If you will agree to treat someone else as he treats you, that person can make you his abject slave. If you are simply asserting your rights, society can stand it so long as someone is responsible for holding society together. But when all begin to assert their rights, society lands in social anarchy.

¹ Matthew 5: 21-22.

³ Matthew 5: 33-34.

² Matthew 5: 27-28.

Jesus substitutes his principle of the giving of justice which takes the initiative without waiting for goodness on the part of other people. He holds before his disciples the thought of a righteousness which is like that of the heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.¹

Ye have heard that it was said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.²

The builders of the new order will seek as their main concern in life the righteousness of God, confident that the other privileges and necessities of life can be secured by a social order which has paid the price of a right attitude between man and man. A world now facing starvation because of the disruption, through war, of the forces of production and the channels of trade may well heed Jesus' thought that the maintaining of right relationships among men is the key to the solution of the problem of food and drink.

The founders of the new order will be conscious of a true self-respect. They will not give that which is holy unto the dogs or cast pearls before swine, but such a respect will never prevent them from laying more emphasis upon self-criticism than upon the criticism of others. They will not be so intent upon finding the mote in their brother's eye that they will be unconscious of the beam in their own eyes.

To those who are willing to pay the price the resources of the heavenly Father are pledged. At their knock there shall be opening and for their seeking there shall be finding. The gate is narrow and the pathway strait, but it leads to uplands of wide areas. Other false prophets may promise that grapes can

¹ Matthew 5: 45.

² Matthew 5: 38-39.

be grown on thorns and figs on thistles, but it cannot be. He who would reap the fruits of a permanent community must plant the tree of sincere wholehearted righteousness. For such a one there will be the true reward.

Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.¹

To this vision of a universal community founded upon the justice of his Father in Heaven, Jesus was obedient unto death. He met his death at the hands of the two world orders whose failure He foretold. Jewish and Roman justice broke down in dealing with Jesus, and therein was revealed the need of a higher righteousness than that exemplified in either of these social orders.

¹ Matthew 7:24-28.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDED BY JESUS

Abraham founded a racial community. Jesus founded an ethical community. Moses laid the basis for community relationships in law. Jesus laid the basis in love. The community of Moses had been a forerunner of the one established by Jesus. In it the Hebrews had been in tutelage until they were ready for the spiritual and ethical community established by Jesus. Salvation for the Hebrew had never been an individualistic matter. Christians found salvation by becoming members of the new social order established by the founder of the new covenant. The followers of Jesus recognized in Him the founder of the prophetic community which had been foretold by the seers of old. They gave different reasons for believing thus about Him, but they were not disagreed in their judgment.

The free brotherly universal community founded by Jesus and having his personality at its center was a new creation in the world. The understanding of it brought experiences to the disciples which were new and unforeseen. They explored the new life as a bride would a home. It was a new status for all who were called to partake of it. The exploration and defense of the new life over against the other orders of society with which the disciples were surrounded occupied the energy of the early church. The new life seemed inexhaustible. No one human life was large enough to encompass it. It was something they were all experiencing together. Different men explored differ-

ent phases of the new life and that which each found out became the possession of the whole new community.

The disciples of Jesus only gradually became conscious of the treasures which had been committed unto them. The new wine remained in the old bottles for some time after the death of Jesus. The disciples were called followers of the "Way." They were considered an especially pious group who had the favor of the leaders in the Hebrew church. They were characterized by a great religious enthusiasm which seemed to be a part of the wonderful release of spirit and personality which had come to them. These manifestations of the spirit appear very prominently in the books which describe the life of the new church.

The break with the old community came over the attitude of the new disciples toward the ceremonial law and also over their attitude toward those who were outside the racial boundaries of the Jews.

Next to Jesus of Nazareth the most vigorous character in the history of the early Christian community is Saul of Tarsus. He had been raised and trained under the old Jewish theocracy. He had accepted the ideas of the Jewish commonwealth as interpreted by the outstanding leaders of his time. With a religious devotion he had defended and sought to enforce the claims of the ceremonial law upon the Jews of his time and especially upon all heretics who in any way minimized its validity. He first appears in the records as the organizer of a crusade against the sect who here and there were undermining and doing things contrary to the traditions of the elders. In this capacity we find the men who stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr, laying their garments down at the feet of one named Saul.

**Paul, the
Dynamic Figure
in the New
Community**

Saul's conversion to an entirely new conception of the Jewish

theocracy comes on his way to Damascus whither he is going on a crusade to exterminate the followers of Jesus. By a remarkable spiritual experience he becomes convinced that this Jesus whom he is persecuting is really the chosen one of God for establishing of the new covenant and commonwealth towards which the prophets of the Old Testament had looked forward. The Jesus whom he is persecuting is not a dead Jew but is the living founder of the new order, who summons Saul to the work of preaching the good news to his fellow country men and especially to the Gentiles.

All the intensity of faith with which Paul had once defended the old Hebrew theocracy was transferred to the service of explaining the universal claims of the community established by Jesus. It was to be a world order with authority over all principalities and all powers. The absolute right of Jesus to reign was the first item of faith of all the apostles. It generally constituted the opening sentence in all of Paul's letters. The Epistle to the Romans is typical:

Paul's Description of the New Community

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he promised afore through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we receive grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name's sake; among whom are ye also, called to be Jesus Christ's.¹

A great difference in opinion existed in the early church as to the way in which the authority of Christ and his community was to be set up, but all agreed in the absolute right of this community over all earthly principalities and powers.

¹ Romans 1:1-6.

The great distinction between the Mosaic community and the Christian community lay in the fact that in the Christian community man instead of being under the tutelage of Jewish law had come in to his moral majority.

He was now a son and heir. The spirit bore witness with his spirit that he was a son of God. He became a member of the new community by an ethical and spiritual act on his part whereby the spirit of Jesus became also his spirit. In joining the new community his own personal life was enlarged by becoming part of the personal life of Jesus.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.¹

But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a bondservant though he is lord of all; but is under guardians and stewards until the day appointed of the father. So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.²

The clear recognition that here was a life which called a man to freedom and introduced him to his moral majority was to Paul one of the captivating thoughts about the new life. It released him from the bondage and the childishness of the old order where he had never enjoyed the right of freedom of thought and the exercise of his full powers.

Paul very seldom uses the term, "Kingdom of God" to de-

¹ Galatians 2:20.

² Galatians 4:1-7.

scribe the new social order which Jesus established. He adopts a new term which is very expressive of the brotherly life of the new order. He uses the term, "Body of Christ," to signify the uniting of all the members of the new order in a great organic relationship in which each has individuality even as the hand and eye have separate functions and yet are at the same time united in the one common body which is greater than all.

For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another.¹

In this body which is the Church of the living God, the spirit of Christ, which he also identifies with the spirit of God, dwells as an abiding authority. Paul does not draw a distinction between the revelation of the spirit and the discovery of truth on the part of the members of Christ's body. It seems to be a mutual relationship that the best thinking of these members is not different from the revelation of the mind of Christ inside the Christian community. The corporate conscience of the Christian Church which every Christian was helping to build was also the conscience of Jesus Christ revealing itself in the world.

Since love brought the new community into being, love was the organic law of right in the new community. Whatsoever was not in accordance with the law of love was wrong. Whatsoever was in accordance with the law of love was right in spite of all the traditions of the elders. Paul spends whole sections of the letters which he writes to his churches, expounding the meaning of this word, "love." His classic exposition was sent to the Corinthian Church.

Paul's letters to his disciples have two main themes: **He**

¹ Romans 12: 4-5.

**The Body
of Christ**

**The Law of
Right in the
New Commu-
nity**

spends a great deal of time defending the new covenant and basis of the new community over against the Hebrew theocracy based on the Mosaic Law, and after he has done this he generally spends the rest of his letter expounding the meaning of the word, "love." He takes up the whole realm of the common life of the people to whom he writes and discusses their line of conduct under the general admonition, "Walk in love even as Christ also loved you." Under such a general principle he discusses in his letter to the Ephesians such topics as personal purity, the use of one's time, the relation of husbands and wives, the relation of children to parents, of servants to masters, and the relation of a Christian to the world powers of his time. In his letter to the Galatians, after expounding to them their freedom as sons of the new covenant, he says:

Only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.¹

The early Christians could not entirely give themselves to the enjoyment and exploration of the new relationship into which they had been inducted by Jesus and so ably led by Paul. The order which they were establishing brought an incisive challenge both to the Jewish and the Roman world orders, a challenge which they were not slow to accept. Here was a theocracy which claimed the ultimate right and power to influence every other world order. Its militancy was astounding. It had a hatred and scorn of the prevailing Jewish and Roman world orders which soon brought upon it the bitter persecution of the leaders in both the Jewish and the Roman world.

**The Fight of the
New Commu-
nity Against the
World Orders
of the Time**

¹ Galatians 5:13-14.

The Jew contended for a theocracy based on the sacredness of the Jewish law as interpreted by the scribes of the day. This law had been amplified until the observance of it was a burden on the souls of men. It landed a man in an abject slavery and left him with a bad conscience because of his utter inability to keep the law. Both Paul and Jesus took radical ground with reference to the trivial character of the scribal casuistry. Again and again in the interest of some great principle Jesus broke the petty regulations of the scribes and the priests. Paul, on the basis of his belief that a new covenant had been established by Jesus and a new religious community had been launched, radically declared that the law was no longer binding on those who had entered the spiritual community governed by love which Jesus had founded.

Of course this attitude brought down the wrath and condemnation of the orthodox Jews. More than anything else it was responsible for the break of the Christian Church with the old Jewish theocracy. The Christians were thrust out of the Church. It has also been responsible for a sentimental attitude which has prevailed in the Church ever since in a greater or less degree, which has made Christians content with a negative attitude toward laws of the state and the community. Christians have been content with the pious sentimentality which they have offered as a substitute for the carrying out of moral convictions in the organic law of the time. Paul carried his moral principles out into every department of life and were he here at the present time, there is no question about his condemnation of those who allow moral sentiment to stop short of its logical out-working in the laws of human society.

To the members of the Christian community which took as its symbol of a true social order the human body in which every

part had an organic place and even the most insignificant part a place of honor, there was a challenge in the Roman world order built up on its theories of force and compulsion and its sixty million slaves. To the members of the Christian community who were followers of one who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, there was a challenge in the Roman world order with such a man as Nero at its head who created the cult of emperor worship for his own glorification and came most distinctly to be ministered unto and not to serve. To the members of the Christian community who followed one who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God," there was a challenge in a Roman imperial government reaching out into the provinces of western Asia and dragging thousands of boys and girls to the great imperial city to help satisfy the lust of the ruling powers of the time. The Christian writers had no hesitation in declaring that the Roman world order was corrupt beyond repair and they with good conscience commanded their followers to have no dealings with the powers of darkness.

The early Christian literature of the New Testament reflects a very pessimistic attitude toward the world orders of the time in which the Christians lived. Many have tried to universalize this attitude and make it normal for the attitude of Christians toward all social orders. This is decidedly a wrong conclusion. It ought not to be the attitude of Christians when the Christian community has passed beyond the place where it was in New Testament times. The early Christian community faced the problem of escape from two dominant world orders which were trying to

The Negative Attitude of the Christian Community toward the Two Dominant World Orders

¹ Luke 18:16.

crush out its life. It was not yet strong enough to seek any kind of control or direction in those world orders. The Christians had no conception of such a task. They knew that these two world orders were unfriendly and sought their ruin, and they dynamited the whole prevailing world order with the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, who they were perfectly sure was Lord of all history and under whose power the Christian community would come into its rightful place in the world which was under the direction of the great God of human history.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY FOUNDED ON JUSTICE IN THE LIFE OF TO-DAY

The experiences of the world war and the struggle of the world for a just peace have brought us face to face once more with the necessity of a world order which is more than national. It was the frank assertion on the part of one nation that the state which had power constituted the limit of right, and a national training built up on this idea, which threw the world into the chaos of the last four years. The attempt of the Allies to deal with the issues of a just peace has revealed a standard of ethics among all the nations which falls far short of the needs of the situation. When the stress of an impending defeat drew the nations together, there was a tendency to rise to something of a point of view of international right, but since victory has come to one side the sag back into the old ethics of nationalism has been both pathetic and tragic. One cannot help feeling, as many have pointed out, that the fault lies to quite an extent at the door of that institution whose business it was to have laid the basis of a conviction about a justice which was not confined to race or nation, but was valid for all races and all nations and afforded the basis for an international order which could temper and set in right relations the striving national and racial groups.

As one looks back over the history of Christianity he is impressed with the fact that this task of being a community more inclusive than any of the natural groupings of men, such as race or nation, was a task which the early Catholic Church attempted. Most of the great controversies in the early history of the Church had to do

**The Catholic
Church**

with the right of the Church to rise above racial and national boundaries. The Church did in a very real sense become a universal community which for centuries tempered the enthusiasm of national, racial and social classes and united them as members in the Body of Christ. This was the ideal of the universal Church. For centuries it was a great unifying power and was the only unifying power in what was then the known world. In so far as the Church kept itself an ethical community founded on right, it was fulfilling its mission in claiming an authority over the nations which was higher than the political authority exercised by earthly rulers.

The Catholic Church, however, made the mistake of becoming a manipulating power rather than a power for inspiration. It was a great super-community which exercised an authority over individuals and over communities, not unlike that exercised by imperial Rome against which Jesus had protested. The doctrine of the infallible Church and the infallible Pope was forged as a part of the policy of manipulation. The Church was trying to live by a new kind of force and compulsion. Its mistake lay not in the fact that it claimed to be a community more authoritative than national and racial communities, but in the way it sought to set up and exercise that authority. The vigorous national groups of central Europe resented the oppressive policies of the Catholic Church and the Reformation was the result.

The Protestant Church was the outgrowth of the rising tide of self-assertion on the part of the political, industrial and religious groups of central Europe which finally
Protestantism revolted against the authority of the Catholic Church. It has often been described as the assertion of the right of individual liberty in religion. As a principle of protest against a manipulating autocratic power, this right of individual liberty in religion is legitimate. It is only

right that we should first of all recognize the wonderful blessing which has come to the world through this exercise of individual and group right which was set up under Protestantism. Under this system it has been demonstrated that religion thrives when it is made a voluntary matter instead of a matter of compulsion backed up by police force. The last three hundred years of Protestantism have been some of the most fruitful in the history of Christianity. The record of missionary activity, of educational growth, and of philanthropic service shown by the Protestant denominations is phenomenal. Again under this system religion has been free from graft. There is no well established center in modern Protestantism which gives opportunity for the exercise of that modern mania for controlling centers of influence. Again, modern religious life has been fairly progressive. Individual churches may be slow to suggestion and conservative, but society gives to the new the right to organize freely and openly. And again, religion has been fairly democratic. The church which must live by the good will of the people must live close to the people.

But this estimate of modern Protestantism cannot be completed without a fair recognition of its total failure to set up the ideal of a universal community founded on justice. Modern Protestantism has set up almost an infinite number of communities founded not on justice, but on differences in theological dogma. It has been an agency for division in many communities. In one small county in a western state modern Protestantism erected the following monuments to its power to divide:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 African Baptist | 6 Church of God (Winebren- |
| 2 African Methodist Episcopal | arian) |
| 3 Amish Mennonite | 7 Cumberland Presbyterian |
| 4 Baptist | 8 Disciples of Christ |
| 5 Catholic | 9 Disciples (Non-Progressive) |

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 10 Episcopal | 27 German Evangelic |
| 11 General Baptist | 28 Lutheran (Synod of Chicago) |
| 12 Holiness | 29 Lutheran (Synod of Missouri) |
| 13 Methodist Episcopal | 30 Lutheran, Swedish |
| 14 Presbyterian | 31 Methodist Protestant |
| 15 Salvation Army | 32 Pentecostal Holiness |
| 16 Seventh Day Adventist | 33 Progressive Brethren |
| 17 United Brethren | 34 Reformed |
| 18 Baptist, Primitive | 35 United Brethren (Old Consti-
tution) |
| 19 Brethren | 36 Wesleyan Methodist |
| 20 Christian | 37 Baptist (Means) |
| 21 Church of Christ (Scientist) | 38 Baptist (Predestinarian) |
| 22 Church of God (Adventist) | 39 Friends |
| 23 Church of God (Saints) | 40 Millennial Dawn |
| 24 Covenanters | 41 United Presbyterian |
| 25 Congregational | |
| 26 Evangelic Association | |

The second indictment against Protestantism is that it has been responsible for that moral and spiritual monstrosity—the national and class Church. The former of these was created by intention in the days when Protestantism doubted its ability to stand alone without state aid. The latter has been built by a process of drift through which the Church naturally slips into the control of those who are able and willing to give it support. When religion becomes a servant of national and class groups stimulating nationalism and caste, it compounds a felony. It lands the world in a condition as deplorable as that produced by an autocratic manipulating church. In some ways it would be fair to say that we are now living in the dark ages of Protestantism.

The third indictment against Protestantism, and Catholicism must share this indictment, is that it failed to develop that international conscience for right which might have made the recent war impossible or at least have created the conscience for a just peace after the war. It seems to have done neither. In

general the churches have supported the League of Nations, but it has not been the militant support of a religious group worthy the traditions of the early Church.

Modern conditions and the fullest development of our Christian faith call for a revival of the conviction of the early Church that Jesus has laid the foundation for a social order which rises above the bounds of race and nation in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor master. This social order organized around a spiritual and ethical personality must be held together, not by the power of law enforced by an appeal to fear, but through the binding power of spiritual fellowship, love, and social faith. It must be a community of the spirit which will lead its members into spiritual maturity. Its program for world dominion calls for the multiplication of human personalities in every situation in life who possess the spirit of Jesus Christ and whose corporate conscience will be the continuing authority of God in human history. Membership in such a community will be more important from a moral standpoint than membership in family, race or nation.

If we are to meet the challenge of the present we must revive what Professor Royce called the most neglected doctrine in modern Christianity—the doctrine of the Church Universal. For a universal community the universal Christian Church will be the necessary personal expression. The Church does not exhaust or monopolize the full expression of the universal community. The Church is the expression of this community in terms of personal relationships. Outside of the Church there will be all those phases of community life which exist outside but are related to the Church in every community. If we are to take seriously the

The Challenge of the Present

The Place and Function of the Universal Christian Church

setting up of the universal community based on right we are forced to the conclusion that the building and extension of the Church Universal is a first charge upon all Christians. This building of the Church is not a mechanical task; it is not a work with wood and stone; it is the multiplication of people in every walk of life who owe a conscious allegiance to Jesus Christ and who in their corporate conscience express his will and spirit for human society.

Our first task will be the understanding of the personality of Jesus and the traditions and history of the Church in such a way as to make possible a unified Christian Church such as the founder of it evidently had in mind. The unification of the Church cannot be accomplished by any mechanical manipulation of organization. It can only come by overcoming the sin of a misplaced emphasis on non-essentials and by a new emphasis on great common essentials. Protestant Churches especially have too long been content to define themselves by exclusive definitions. Ecclesiastical statesmanship must set for itself the building of that body of sentiment which will make possible a reunited Christendom. Let us frankly admit the short-comings of both Catholic and Protestant. If the reuniting of Christendom is not possible in this new age, nothing of progress is possible. A Christendom divided on minor issues can never serve the cause of the universal community. It will be weak in times of national crisis; it will fall a prey to the very forces which it ought to control. As Protestants we must be loyal to the Protestant principles in so far as they are valid, but we ought also be so loyal to the Founder of our order that we share his anguish over the fragmentary condition of his Church. In a time of world chaos, we should have a new longing and vision for the Church Universal.

To many minds the idea of a great unified Church suggests a

closely knit institution whose progress is impeded by the dead weight of its own machinery. Recalling the lack of progress and institutionalism of the ancient Catholic Church, many people conceive that a united Church is neither possible nor desirable. But the world has learned much about ways and methods of organization since the Catholic Church was founded on the plan of the old Roman Empire. We have learned since then how to unite without destroying individual liberty. The British Empire and the United States of America have more cohesiveness and more liberty than the Roman Empire ever had. It is possible to build a united Church and at the same time preserve liberty of thought and liberty of action. Surely there can be found an ecclesiastical statesmanship which is equal to the new challenge.

If an authority is to be set up in "No-Man's Land" it will be the corporate conscience of the Christian Church.

**Building the
Corporate Con-
science of
the Church**

This conscience is the only adequate authority for a world in chaos. The building of this conscience is a challenge to every Christian and every Christian church. It calls for the cooperation of all in the building of something which shall be authority for all of us. The full revelation of the mind of Jesus Christ calls upon each individual to cooperate with others in the finding and doing of the will of the loving God. The will of God for human society has not been committed to any one individual for interpretation. The corporate conscience is truer in its outlook than the individual conscience. No one individual or group is good enough to determine the complete rule of God for any social situation. On all of us there is the obligation to seek with others the way of justice and righteousness.

The corporate conscience of the Christian Church must be true

to the emphasis of the New Testament which makes the principle of love the organizing principle for all ethical action. Brotherliness which makes the test of justice to others the privileges we demand for ourselves must characterize the justice for which the Church stands. Whatsoever of the major satisfaction of life, the strong demand for themselves, these they must demand for those who share the social order with them.

**The Corporate
Conscience
Must Be
Historical**

In the building of the Christian conscience the spirit and principle of righteousness must be more important than the letter. If the Church is not to reduce people to moral childishness, it must have that regard for the moral integrity of the individual which will cause it not to seek the authority which destroys, but to offer that authority of the spirit which also encourages freedom. The Church must never again become the teacher of a casuistry which destroys moral independence.

In the building of the conscience of the Church we must guard against the sins of the past. We must guard the Church against the sin of self-consciousness. When the Church conscience is devoted entirely to those matters which have to do with the self-preservation of the Church, the Church cannot escape the charge of being selfish. Church chores are not the chief matter about which a church should be conscientious. Dress parade ought not to monopolize the enthusiasm of a regiment organized for service. The Church which is conscientious about petty things will make a petty people, and a petty people will perish from the earth.

The corporate conscience of the Christian Church must bring to its aid natural science in order that it may understand and control the social order which the Christian looks upon as the material to be used in the building of the Kingdom of God. Natural

**The Corporate
Conscience
Must Be
Scientific**

science is to the Christian what the science of house-building is to the one seeking to build a home. The spirit and purpose of the person desiring to build a home is one thing and is most important. When it comes to actual building, progress is not possible unless there is a knowledge of mechanical conditions under which it is possible to build a house. Sometimes it is an old house which needs to be wrecked before a new house can be constructed. Sometimes it is a matter of thoroughly understanding a house which has already been built. Sometimes it is a matter of taking raw material and constructing an entirely new house. Whatever the task in actual house-building, there is necessity for the understanding of the mechanics of the task. The question as to whether the house is to be a home filled with the spirit and purpose of home life is another question from the scientific task of house building, but all have their place. The rapid advances of natural science during the last century ought to make it possible for those who are establishing the authority of God in the world to exercise a freer and finer type of workmanship than ever before in human history. Before the Christian equipped with the knowledge of social science all social orders become plastic, they are the raw material out of which a Christian social order is to be built. There is no conflict between religion and science to those who would establish the rule of God in human society.

The Christianizing of vocational and group ethics in the name of the universal community is the most direct approach to social order. When the ethics of the kingdom of righteousness become the ethics of our great social vocations and our dominant social groups, the Kingdom of God will be very close at hand.

**The Corporate
Conscience
Must Be Social**

The approach of an individual Christian to the social order

is largely through his vocation. In the shape of community tasks there is offered to every man the chance to take part in the social order. He finds the chance to be a parent, a minister, a lawyer, a surgeon, a merchant, a manufacturer, a newspaper publisher, and it is of supreme importance that he see in these vocations the chance to do the will of God. When the organizing principle of his vocation is the Christian principle of love and good will, his vocation has become a part of the universal kingdom of righteousness. A good illustration of the Christianizing of vocational ethics is found in the standards set forth by the International Association of Rotary Clubs:

My business standards shall have in them a note of sympathy for our common humanity. My business dealings, ambitions, relations shall always cause me to take into consideration my highest duties as a member of society. In every position in business life, in every responsibility which comes before me, my chief thought shall be to fill that responsibility and discharge that duty so that when I have ended each of them I shall have lifted the level of human ideals and achievements a little higher than I found them. In view of this your committee holds that fundamental in a code of trade ethics for International Rotary are the following principles:

First: To consider my vocation worthy, and as affording me distinct opportunity to serve society.

Second: To improve myself, increase my efficiency and enlarge my service, and by so doing attest my faith in the fundamental principles of Rotary that he profits most who serves best.

Third: To realize that I am a business man and ambitious to succeed; but that I am first an ethical man, and wish no success that is not founded on the highest justice and morality.

Fourth: To hold that the exchange of my goods, my service and my ideals for profit is legitimate and ethical, provided that all parties in the exchange are benefited thereby.

Fifth: To use my best endeavors to elevate the standards of the vocation in which I am engaged, and so conduct my affairs that others in my vocation may find it wise, profitable and conducive to happiness to emulate my example.

Sixth: To conduct my business in such a manner that I may give a perfect service equal to or even better than my competitor, and when in doubt to give added service beyond the strict measure of debt or obligation.

Seventh: To understand that one of the greatest assets of a professional or of a business man is his friends, and that any advantage gained by reason of friendship is eminently ethical and proper.

Eighth: To hold that true friends demand nothing of one another, and that any abuse of the confidence of friendship for profit is foreign to the spirit of Rotary, and in violation of its Code of Ethics.

Ninth: To consider no personal success legitimate or ethical which is secured by taking unfair advantage of certain opportunities in the social order that are absolutely denied others, nor will I take advantage of opportunities to achieve material success that others will not take because of the questionable morality involved.

Tenth: To be no more obligated to a Brother Rotarian than I am to every other man in human society; because the genius of Rotary is not in its competition but in its cooperation; for provincialism can never have a place in an institution like Rotary, and Rotarians assert that human rights are not confined to Rotary Clubs but are as deep and as broad as the race itself; and for these high purposes does Rotary exist to educate all men in all institutions.

Eleventh: Finally believing in the universality of the Golden Rule—All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them—we contend that society best holds together when equal opportunity is accorded all men in the natural resources of this planet.

It is not the Greek motive of ethics, which is based upon perfecting the person and perpetuating the state simply to preserve the ego, but this code is predicated on love. That is, the Rotarian does not do right simply because it preserves himself, but because he had rather be destroyed than destroy another. Thus his code of ethics is founded on love.

The Motive of the Code

This code does not take sides in the present dispute in society between the Conservative and the Liberal. It argues merely

The Value of the Code

because it is conservative or liberal. This Code seeks one thing—the value—the utility—of the ethics it propounds. The utility of the Code

and not its liberalism or its conservatism has been the ideal of the man who wrote it. By this it must stand, for by this it cannot fall.

In the same way that the vocational groups must be brought under the rule of the universal community of justice, the industrial groups must recognize the same authority. The failure of industry to recognize its allegiance to morality and right has been largely the cause of our present industrial trouble. We must write into the industrial codes of the future the principles which will make these industrial groups fit members of the universal community. These codes will probably be written by Christian men who are closely in touch with industry and have that technical knowledge which alone makes possible true ethical knowledge. Two attempts to write industrial creeds are here given.

The first is chosen from the reconstruction program of the British Labor Party, published under the title, "Labor and the New Social Order":

"We need to beware of patchwork. The view of the Labour Party is, that which has to be reconstructed after the war is not this or that Government Department, or this or that piece of social machinery, but, so far as Britain is concerned, society itself. The individual worker, or for that matter the individual statesman, immersed in daily routine—like the individual soldier in a battle—easily fails to understand the magnitude and far-reaching importance of what is taking place around him. How does it fit together as whole? How does it look from a distance? . . . What this war is consuming is not merely the security, the homes, the livelihood and the lives of millions of innocent families, and an enormous proportion of all the accumulated wealth of the world, but also the very basis of the peculiar social order in which it has arisen. The individualistic system of capitalist production, based on the private ownership and competitive administration of land and capital, with its reckless 'profiteering' and wage slavery; with its glorification of the unhampered struggle for the means of life and its hypocritical pretence of the 'survival of the fittest'; with the monstrous inequality of circumstances which it produces and the degeneration and brutalization, both

moral and spiritual, resulting therefrom, may, we hope, indeed have received a death blow. With it must go the political system and ideas in which it naturally found expression. We of the Labour Party, whether in opposition or due time called upon to form an Administration, will certainly lend no hand to its revival. On the contrary, we shall do our utmost to see that it is buried with the millions whom it has done to death. If we in Britain are to escape from the decay of civilisation itself, we must ensure that what is presently to be built up is a new social order, based not on fighting but on fraternity—not on the competitive struggle for the means of bare life, but on a deliberately planned co-operation in production and distribution for the benefit of all who participate by hand or by brain—not on the utmost possible inequality of riches, but on a systematic approach towards a healthy equality of material circumstances for every person born into the world—not on an enforced dominion over subject nations, subject races, subject colonies, subject classes, or a subject sex, but, in industry as well as in Government, on that equal freedom, that general consciousness of consent, and that widest possible participation in power, both economic and political, which is characteristic of Democracy. We do not, of course, pretend that it is possible, even after the drastic clearing away that is now going on, to build society anew in a year or two of feverish ‘Reconstruction.’ What the Labour Party intends to satisfy itself about is that each brick that it helps to lay shall go to erect the structure that it intends, and no other.

“We need not here recapitulate, one by one, the different items in the Labour Party’s programme, which successive Party Conferences have adopted. . . . The Four Pillars of the House that we propose to erect, resting upon the common foundation of the Democratic control of society in all its activities, may be termed, respectively:

“(a) The Universal Enforcement of the National Minimum;

“(b) The Democratic Control of Industry;

“(c) The Revolution in National Finance; and

“(d) The Surplus Wealth for the Common Good.

“The various detailed proposals of the Labour Party, herein briefly summarised, rest on these four pillars, and can best be appreciated in connection with them.”

In much the same spirit from the standpoint of Christian ethics, is the following statement of the Social Service Commission of the Congregational Churches of America:

“We recognize that the building of a great social order characterized by

justice is not something which can be set up en masse but must be built up community by community, social situation by social situation, and that the obligation to think in terms of social justice thus becomes the obligation of every Christian to seek justice in every community where he has accurate knowledge and a control over the conditions which endows moral theory with real obligation.

"We declare for the sacredness of human beings over against the world of things. All the machinery of civilization, its industries, its laws, its institutions, exist for man, and not man for the machinery.

"We declare for the absolute necessity of every social unit both individual and group justifying itself on the basis of its ability and will to serve. The crying need of today is for men who see in the common vocations of life man's opportunity and obligation to serve. The community offers to men the opportunity to be ministers, teachers, lawyers, soldiers, surgeons, merchants, manufacturers, publishers, and laboring men. We need nothing short of a moral revolution in the spirit and purpose with which men enter these lines of work. There is not one ethics of service for the minister and another law for the manufacturer. There is not one law of service to the state for the soldier and another for the lawyer. Public service alone justifies the holding of private property or the possession of a license for professional practice.

"We declare that the setting up of programs of social justice must be a cooperative task of all groups and parties concerned and that no one group has such a monopoly on a sense of justice as to constitute it the sole arbiter of justice in any social situation, and we look with favor on all movements in community, in national, in international and in industrial life, which seek the way of justice by the calling together of all parties concerned for common counsel. In the open parliaments for free discussion we see part of those 'things which belong to peace.'

"We declare that the cooperation of free individuals and free groups will produce a finer social order than can be built up through the establishment of any dictatorship. We recognize that in granting to individuals and to groups a generous amount of freedom there is always a danger that society will break up into social anarchy or degenerate into a dictatorship of the strong. There are those who seek a solution only in a new dictatorship of the many, but no community is large enough to contain a dictatorship. True community life resents the dictatorship of church, of capital, of hereditary class, of military power, of the proletariat. A community which accepts the dictatorship of any class has forfeited the right to the loyalty of all other classes. We believe that a free community served by free individuals and by free groups in a

brotherly spirit of cooperation can offer to every man a larger share and portion than any other kind of social order which the world knows.

"We declare for an extended application of the great summary of the law of social justice given us by Jesus, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you even so do ye unto them,' which being further interpreted means we shall not be contented until those values which we demand for ourselves as privileges become the possession of every man inside the limits of our social order.

"We demand for ourselves an adequate home life, even so must we extend the privilege unto others.

"We demand for ourselves a living wage and conditions conducive to health and morality, even so must we extend these conditions until they exist for the masses of the people.

"We demand for ourselves an adequate economic opportunity, even so must we work for a social order in which there will be none without opportunity to work and in which it will be impossible for idlers to live in luxury and for workers to live in poverty.

"We demand for ourselves a square deal in industry, even so will we seek to abolish all special economic privileges which enable some to live at the expense of others.

"We demand for ourselves the right to determine the conditions under which we labor, even so must we extend this privilege of self-determination and representation in industry to others.

"We demand for ourselves opportunities for wholesome recreation, even so would we see that the opportunity for wholesome play is extended to the limits of the community.

"We demand for ourselves public safety in person, even so we would uphold the sacredness of all machinery of public law and will not allow it to be manipulated in the interest of any private group, and we will fight mob lawlessness to the extent of our ability.

"We demand for ourselves safety in name and reputation, even so we will fight the promotion of race prejudice and every means by which men rob our neighbor of his good name.

"We demand for ourselves chance for education and the opportunity for culture, even so would we place this privilege at the disposal of all the people.

"We demand for ourselves freedom of conscience and freedom of worship, even so will we maintain that right for others in the face of private and public intolerance, and we would reinstate the right of free speech in American life.

"Whatsoever of these major satisfactions of life we would for ourselves,

these we must demand for our fellowmen who share our social order with us."

The principles of control for vigorous industrial groups are not different except in details from the principles which must be worked out for the vigorous national groups.

National Ethics The Christianizing of national ethics in the name of a world order in which there will be a common basis of right, a recognition of a total welfare which is larger than that of any one group and yet which grants to every group, however small, a share in the world's progress, is an absolute necessity if there is to be a society of nations based on anything more lasting than military power. The old order based on force and fear and the balance of power has lost the confidence of thinking people. The Church advances to this new situation with the proud consciousness that for over a hundred years in its missionary propaganda, it has said that national lines are not the limits of love and justice. It looks upon the plan for a society of nations as the fulfilment of its own scheme of missionary activity. The Church believes, however, that the fulfilment of the world plan awaits the sincerest effort on the part of the Church in the building of the smaller communities nearer home. By thus devoting itself to the community which it knows best and advancing through an ever widening circle of community life it would seek to build up a system of communities which, because they are organized on Christian principles and feel the authority of the Christian ethics, will culminate in a Christian world order which will be the community of God on earth.

It is evident that a conscience which takes upon itself a world task must feel that it has its origin and authority in the will of God. The futility of a fragmentary, isolated code of ethics to control human society is apparent whenever one thinks of the

colossal forces to be controlled. The task cannot be accomplished except as there is the marshalling of a great social force like the Christian Church whose corporate conscience is rooted in the very being of God and whose outreach is in every province of human society. There can be no divorce between religion and ethics if the battle is to be won. There can be no minimizing of the Church if the battle is to be won. The forces of a living Church, which is also the historic Church, in the name of the God of our fathers, who is also the God of the present, must rally to the task of setting up the authority of the spirit in a world which cannot be manipulated from without but must be controlled from within.

**The Corporate
Conscience
Must Be
Religious**



