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THE
COMMON FAITH
OF COMMON MEN

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TEACHERS COLLEGE LECTURES
ON THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

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THE COMMON FAITH OF COMMON MEN

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THE COMMON FAITH OF
COMMON MEN

I

THE MAN FROM EVERYWHERE

THE UNIVERSAL NEED OF MAN FOR FAITH

There have been two men from Macedonia who have left their mark on the world's history. One was Alexander, the man of blood and iron, who led the hosts of the new world, the forces of the Greek peoples, against the tottering monarchies of the East. He mightily avenged the Greeks who fell before Persian hosts at Thermopylae, at Marathon, at Salamis and Plataea. He put an end forever to the dream of an eastern conquest of Europe. Dying at thirty-three years of age he has become in the world the type of the victorious soldier. But tradition tells us that he died in disillusionment and despair. So his life has passed into a proverb, and we say of sighing though sated life that it is like to the life of Alexander who wept for more worlds to conquer.

The other man from Macedonia was the man of a dream and a vision. He bears no other name than this title with which he is recorded in history, the Man from Macedonia. No eyes ever saw him in flesh and blood. His hand gripped no tool and laid hold of no weapon. He was indeed of such stuff as dreams are made of, but he remains a mighty figure, typical of the hopes and prayers and deeper desires and inmost needs of all the people of his rugged land, of all the Greek tribes, his kindred, of all European peoples. His hands are reached forth in a piteous appeal; on his brow there is the mark of a dumb anguish; in his eyes there is a speechless yearning. This man from Macedonia was seen but once and by one only, yet for two thousand years the memory of that vision has inspired the loftiest endeavor, the holiest consecration of the western world. Because of the appeal of those hands and the yearning of those eyes, Paul crossed the Hellespont. Following him came the host of the apostles, the prophets and the martyrs. Through all the islands of the Aegean, over the mountains of the Morea, across the waters of the Adriatic,

along all the rough shores of southern Europe, up through the passes and scaling the fastnesses of the great mountain barrier that lies across the continent, and sweeping down upon the plains through the mighty forests where our fathers were awakening from the brutish sleep of ages, they came in answer to the call of the man from Macedonia, seen but once and by one only. Still across the seas and over the land they come, led by the vision, the saints and the seers, the preachers and the teachers, the missionaries and the ministers, the sacrificial host of the countless ones who serve—they are penetrating every jungle, they are bursting open every barred gate, they are seeking out every slum, they are finding the aged and the weary, the hurt and the crippled, the maimed, the lame and the blind, the sinsick and soul-hurt everywhere, and all this because the man from Macedonia, seen but once and by one only, still appeals from his speechless eyes and his dumb hands with the words that were heard by Paul, "Come, help us."

Who was the man from Macedonia? Why did Paul see him? As the great apostle

preached in the synagogues of the Greek towns on the coast of Asia Minor he had chance to see many men from Macedonia. The Hellespont was no barrier to commerce; its waters were flecked with the boats of its passengers. The Aegean with its islands, perilous in its rage but winsome in its calm, was like a stream set with stepping-stones over which constant intercourse brought hosts of men from every ancient Greek province. These men passed Paul in the street without so much as a word. If they stopped to notice that a little Jew with an eloquent tongue was speaking concerning his little religion to a little group of his crafty kinsmen, they dismissed the incident with a shrug of the shoulders and the contemptuous word, "Barbarian." When Paul with his keen human interest studied them in the market-place where they traded and got gain, in the schools of the philosophers where they disputed and got wisdom, there was to the eyes of those who stood with him no sign of need on the faces of these well-dressed men from Macedonia. They bought and sold, they ate and drank, they laughed and sang as men perfectly satisfied with

their lot. If any man had said to them, "You need help," they would have laughed him to scorn. If any man had told them, "You are seeking guidance," they would have cursed him to his face, and yet when Paul in his narrow chamber; waking through the night watches, meditated on what he had seen of these powerful men from the West, he heard the still, sad music of humanity, he caught the sigh of hearts burdened and of lives restless. His eyes had a glimpse of this piteous figure, the man from Macedonia, and he felt in his soul the silent appeal, "Come, help."

Paul was sensitive to this appeal because of the experience through which he himself had passed. He knew what it was to pass from pride to humility. He knew what it was to be self-satisfied in the eyes of the world and within to be all restless and distraught with the surges of the stricken soul. He knew also what it was to hear a voice saying, "Peace, be still," over the troubled waves and the raging billows of that inward storm. An experience had come to him which had taught him the meaning of the restlessness and the despair which had

been concealed beneath the stolidity and seeming virtuousness of a Pharisee. He had been shown the inhumanity and cruelty of that old bitter spirit of racial pride and racial hatred. He had learned the utter uselessness of religious practices which persisted solely as social or ceremonial rites. He had felt the worthlessness of a life lived without the conscious fellowship of God. But in the moment when he had thus realized the curse of his old life, at the moment when his disillusionment was complete, he had learned also the joy of a life that leaps up above its old self into friendship with the Eternal. In this new experience he had felt all exclusive racial pride pass out of his heart, and in place of age-long bitterness toward all non-Jewish people, there had come to him a sense of kinship with all nations. In that moment also he penetrated beneath the outward show and meaning of ancient ceremonial rites and found the joy of a soul that enters into a spiritual experience of communion with God. So simple, so primitive, and so elemental was this experience that he leaped at once to the conviction that it was truly human, and so

universal. What had come to him had so deeply met his needs and so richly crowned his life, had so closely knit him in thought and heart and will to the life of the world and of man and of God that he could not doubt it to be the destiny of all men to enter into a like experience. This was the reason he could see the man from Macedonia: it was because his eyes had been anointed with the grace of the gospel. He could hear the appeal of the man from Macedonia because his ears had been unstopped by the hearing of the blessed precepts and the holy promises of the man from Nazareth. He knew what the man from Macedonia needed, though all unconscious of that need, because his own life had experienced so blessed a ministry to its unconscious need. He could diagnose the disease because he had himself been cured.

Now history confirms the accuracy of his diagnosis. Europe was waiting for help. Her old altars were broken down or deserted; her old faiths were outworn; her old creeds were forgotten. They had lost their simplicity and so they had lost their power

to serve. Paul bore with him over the Hellespont the gospel which poured its life into the decadent civilization of southern Europe and gave it that new birth which has been fruitful in transmitting its life through sixty generations until that gospel is implanted in all the world to-day. That this is so is due to the spiritual intuition of Paul. He could see impoverishment of the spirit within the affluence of the flesh. He could feel the restlessness of the heart behind the composure of the countenance. He could hear the moan of despair beneath the crackling laughter of a surface merriment.

For the man from Macedonia was something more than he seemed. He was not a solitary figure seen but once and by one only, who appeared in history to lead a new born faith out of its swaddling clothes in a provincial nation into the field of its world conquest. He was not only the man from Macedonia; he was also the man from Italy and the man from distant, misty Spain and the man from forest covered Germany and the man from the far-set islands of Britain. He was not only the man from Macedonia, he is also the man from Europe and the man

from America. He is the man from Africa's plains and the man of China's millions; he is the man from everywhere. Wherever he is—and he is everywhere—his hands are reached out in piteous appeal, his brow is creased with the anguish of great desire, his eyes are eloquent with the language of a great petition. His mind searches for truth; his heart yearns for love; his hands reach for service, and mind and heart and hands will not have rest or joy or peace until truth and love and life are given him in some great gospel of God, large enough to fill his imagination, deep enough to exercise his love, and true to the nature with which the years of God have endowed his being.

O yes, I know, the man from everywhere, the man from Peking, the man from New York, looks just as self-contented, just as smugly self-satisfied as the Macedonian traders who brought down their wares to exchange them for the silks and jewels of the Orient, on the eastern shores of the Aegean. The man from everywhere walks our streets with clothing of the latest cut; he rides our thoroughfares in cars of next year's model; he fills our offices and stores

with the smartness and cleverness of his strictly up-to-date demeanor and habit; he crowds our shops through the days and our streets on a Saturday night and on his lips there is slang that is borrowed from the latest play, and there are phrases that are picked up from last Sunday's comic supplement. Yes, he is very much up-to-date, this man from everywhere. He marches in the Durbar at Delhi; he works revolutions along the Yangste in China and threatens the old Manchu dynasty with its final exit and the entrance of a constitutional monarchy. He stirs up revolts in South American republics and talks of the new age on the plains of Russia. He overturns and in turn tyrannizes, now here, now there, in all parts of the known world, civilized or uncivilized. He weaves the mighty fabric of the world's industrial order with crashing shocks like to the noise of Titans wrecking or building worlds. He is surely very much up-to-date, this man from everywhere. He sings and he swears, he stalks and he swaggers, and those who cannot see when they look at him, would say, "he is in need of nothing". But let Paul

look at him and he reports, "Behold in the visions of the night the man from everywhere appeared unto me saying, 'Come over into everywhere and help.' "

If our eyes are not clear and strong to see the man from everywhere, the universal need of man for real fellowship with God, then let the story of the world's great faiths assist our vision. Wherever man is, man prays. The only definition of man that is truly comprehensive is this, "Man is the animal that prays." The search for God, the thirst of the mind for truth, the reach of the heart and life for love and faith—this has not been without witness among any people in any place since the beginning of the age. The primitive religious practices of half-savage barbarous peoples which slowly coalesce into great ethnic faiths, which are progressively refined as civilization advances until by them there is constructed a pantheon of deities like those that sat upon Olympus, or an ethical code like that of Confucius, or a devotion to a religious ordering of life and a fiery zeal like that of the Hindus—these all bear witness to the universal religiousness of man's

nature, and in the measure in which, under varying forms, in different ages, and through manifold practices, these faiths have apprehended the truth of the nature of God and of his relation to man—in that measure have these faiths given peace and joy to the man from everywhere. The spiritual restlessness and yearning of the world to-day is but testimony to the extent to which these faiths have failed to give unto man a true fellowship with God.

If such an attempt to survey the life of man be too broad an induction to give conviction to our conclusions, let us aid our effort to see the man from everywhere by turning our eyes within. We may do this with the more assurance because we have already in this day reached the conviction that humanity constitutes one family, that there is a real brotherhood of man, evidenced in the moral and intellectual kinship of the race, which, deep beneath all surface distinctions, binds together the men of the world. When thus we turn within we find a mind that seeks by the inevitable compulsion of its own nature to discern truth. From the vantage ground of what is known,

our minds reach ever with adventurous excursion into the vast territory of the unknown. Bit by bit chaos and the dark are driven back. In the field of history year by year, generation by generation, epoch by epoch, the mind, adding to the treasured store of the past, reaches its insight farther into those misty reaches which are covered by the veil of the past. Coming clearer and clearer into focus as the instruments of investigation are adjusted, appears the true perspective of men and events. Motives are brought into light, causes hitherto unknown or dimly suspected are perceived acting in and upon the progress of the race. In the field of science fact after fact is added to the territory of man's knowledge, and principle after principle newly discerned binds up man's new acquisition with that which he has before attained, as the ribs of rock lock the headlands to the shore. But each generation in turn reaches its land's end. Beyond the sure standing-ground of what is known reaches the sea of the unknown, covered with mists and shadows out of which here and there some shining thing beckons, but into which sure knowledge

must wait long to build its way. Halting there on that margin the mind of man asks for the assurance of the ancient Psalmist concerning the realm of the unknown. The very ground that seems stable under its feet dissolves into unreality unless the mind reach sure conviction such as was given to the singer of old when he cried, "The sea is His and He made it." Unless the mind can be sure that the vast of the unknown lies in the hand of Him that has revealed the known, all knowledge becomes enveloped in the shadows and fogs that sweep in from that sea. The alternative for the man from everywhere is faith or universal scepticism.

Again when one looks within himself to find the man from everywhere he beholds a heart that yearns with affection or grows dark with hate or cold with indifference. He finds that life is worth while in proportion as the heart finds a worthy object for its love and leads the life to expend itself upon the object of its love. The feelings of the heart reach out toward ideals and persons. As they exercise themselves toward ideals, man achieves art; as they exercise them-

selves toward persons, man realizes love, and knows that life is worth the living, for love validates itself to both the heart and the mind. Deeper and deeper in experience does man follow the guidance of his heart, until in the bloom of his youth he is devoted utterly to the ideal in the great crisis of his moral life, and merging his ideal into a person, he devotes himself also utterly to that person with the pledge of a life sacrificed. Thenceforward in widening ranges of endeavor he seeks to realize his devotion of himself to the ideal as he follows its pursuit through the field of his chosen form of self-expression and does his daily task. Thenceforward also in wider and wider ranges of life and in a more and more spiritual form of realization is man led by his heart to give himself in affection to persons, until his citizenship becomes world-wide, and what began in the intimate communion of the family reaches its crown in a spiritual fellowship that includes all the children of men. In the degree in which this development of man's power to love has free course and achieves its whole way, in that degree does life seem to him worth

the living. But if, when all its way has been traversed, there come to him doubt as to the worthiness of the ideal to which he gave himself, or the persons for whom his life had been poured out, then all the wine of life is changed to bitterness. The heart going its way stands suddenly at the edge of the grave, or, after the years, at the summit of its achievement, and asks insistently for assurance that its sacrifice has not been in vain. If love has learned to rest upon its ideal in the spirit and has reached through persons to lay hold upon that ideal in the Person of God, then faith and hope crown love through all the way and at the last. But if love never learns so to find its final goal, it sinks back now and again through all the way and at the last, and all that it has done and been seems but a precious thing cast into the void. The alternative for the man from everywhere is a love that learns that God is love, or a pessimism that shadows all of life.

When we look within for the man from everywhere we find also the power to do and to be, that sacred and holy prerogative of choice which is granted to each of us and

which sometimes invites us as a gracious friend who opens a door of opportunity, and sometimes compels us as a stern taskmaster who orders us into one or the other of two tragic paths. Obscure it as we may, the essence of life lies in our prosecution of the tasks which choice brings to us. Blame others as we may, upbraid chance and change and circumstance as we do, all of us know in the naked moments of the soul that we are what we have made ourselves; that whatever of worth there is in us is all compact of the choices we have made which have been so deep within us as to be beyond the reach of any human eye. Realizing this, we cry out for one who can judge us by this intimate judgment, who can pass verdict upon us in this hidden place. Our nature is such that we ask to be tried and tested to see if there be any worth in us, and we crave the decision of a perfect wisdom and a perfect love upon that structure which we have builded so far within, and often so different from all that human eyes can see or human judgment value. This is the ultimate appeal of humanity to God. This is the meaning of all sacrifices whose smoke has curled up-

ward from the beginning of the world of man. This is the sure instinct of the soul that will not be satisfied until its case has been laid before the highest and the best. This is the key to the progress of civilization out of savagery into the kingdom of God. It is the faith of humanity that God does judge human effort with perfect wisdom and perfect love. The alternative for the man from everywhere is progress in this faith and by this faith on into the kingdom of God, the brotherhood of man, or the painful retracing of his steps under the cloud of pessimism and through the night of universal scepticism, back into primitive savagery and the brutish sleep of the beasts.

If this attempt to see the man from everywhere within has involved itself too intricately in the coiling speculations of introspection, then let us look about us, for he is here. Walk upon the streets, mingle with the crowds, drift with the masses in the gray dawn to their task and toil with them homeward under the evening star to their rest, see men in their pleasures and in their pain and behold the man from everywhere who needs above all fellowship with the life of

God, but who is oftentimes, alas, unconscious of his real need and conscious only of that which the oldtime poet put into his much abused phrase, "An aching void the world can never fill." For, believe me, it is true that here and everywhere many fine clothes are worn over aching hearts, many an elegant establishment is the mask of a broken spirit, many a careless song lilted on the street, many a braggart oath defiling the common air and outraging common deencies—these are but crude attempts to smother a sigh which breaks up from the great deeps of the hearts of men and asks for comfort and for healing.

Men indict our age as an age mad in the pursuit of happiness. He who has vision to see will discern that the mad rush for pleasure, the ceaseless touring of the rich, the restless excursioning of the poor, the lavishing of money on costly dinners and cheap picture shows—this unslaked thirst for excitement which moves the masses of our people—which makes the purveying of amusement a vast business which artificially fans the flames which heat it—all this is a symbol, an outward expression of the

appeal from the hearts of men for rest and peace. It betokens the spiritual impoverishment, the fear of quietness and of meditation and of solitude that go with a conscience ill at ease and a life unreconciled to the mystery of things, the heart of the world, the God of life.

Men point to our common life and declare it is dominated by the lust for gold. For many this is only too true. The men who have are hardened by it, their sympathy choked by repeated resistance to the appeals of need and want. The men who have not are made bitter with envy which ripens into a malicious hatred as they observe the cruelties of those who have, and reflect upon the manifold injustices of the established order of things. The give and take of ordinary business life, which should be the opportunity for healing and helpful contact between man and man, becomes embittered and made wearing and biting by the corroding effect of the lust for gold. Yet he who has eyes to see will understand that the lust for gold is only another symptom of heart hunger. The stingy man is the man who is feeding his soul with gold

and wonders why it will not be satisfied though it be crammed with this indigestible stuff. The violent anarchist is feeding his soul with the desire for gold and deludes himself with the notion that once he could gain that which is starving the soul of the rich man by its abundance, he himself would know no more hunger. The lust for gold is but the perverted need for God, which has missed its way on the path of life and wanders blindly and will not rest until it finds its home in Him.

It we needed confirmation for these truths which are patent in the telling, we can find it by the method of science. We can verify our theory as to the action of spiritual truth upon the soul not less than we can verify a chemical reaction in the laboratory. There is none of us so poor in his personal relationships that he does not know, that he has not known, some happy people of whom he cannot think as seeking happiness; blessed souls who took God's law as the way of life because they found therein God's love made known and interpreted through the gospel. For these life sometimes led over the hills through the sun-

shine, and sometimes into the valleys through the shadows; sometimes songs and smiles, sometimes sighs and tears, but always peace and never thirst; always the psalm of thanksgiving and the rest of "Thy will be done." And all of us have known some over whom the lust for gold has no power. Some of these were rich, but riches had hardened not the heart and cut not off the sympathies and made not proud the life. And some of them were poor, but poverty made not bitter the barren lot, nor resentful the common human sympathies, nor suspicious nor violent the outreach of the life toward its fellows. In the ways of sympathy and service, in the common effort to right ancient wrongs, to heal the hurts of life and to hasten the coming of the glad new brotherhood of the kingdom—these were joined, rich and poor, heart to heart and hand in hand, in a dear fellowship wherein one could not say which gave most and which received most, so perfect was the fellowship of mutual service.

It is lives like these that keep strong and sweet our common life, though the crowd is restless and its pleasures are bitter. It

is the presence among us of those who manifest these soul satisfactions, and not the absence among us of those who need all things like the Man from Macedonia, which makes our life different from that of Macedonia and realizes for us a better day and a more blessed fellowship.

II

THE FAITH FOR EVERYMAN

THE UNIVERSAL APPEAL OF THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

A discerning publishing house has issued a series of little books under the title, "The What is Worth While Series." In the shop window or in the advertising pages of the magazine this title catches the eye and holds it, for the question is a pertinent and perennial question. Few are so thoughtless as never to pause and ask this question; few there are who do not sometimes hear its cry or feel its point deep within the life.

It is a very old question. The lay student of philosophy, though he advance but a little way along the mazy paths of that study, discovers that its inquiries are all some form of this agelong question. From the beginning of man's conscious life it seems to have aroused his thought and sent

him forth in search of its answer. The ancient philosophers called the pursuit of the answer to this question the search for the *summum bonum*, and each man's philosophy was tested by the adequacy of the answer which he gave in this search.

The question is a fair question to put to any philosopher or to any religious teacher. Whoever comes seeking to show the path of life must have some answer to this question. Whoever would truly enlighten man on his mortal pathway must give to him some notion as to what is the worthy purpose of his life, must be prepared to answer the question, What is worth while? People grow soon weary of a philosophy which will not grapple with this inquiry. They will listen only to those philosophers who do somehow undertake to answer this practical question and to show them what is worth doing or being in life. People grow weary of teachers of religion who will not grapple with this question; they insist that he who talks about God shall be able to tell the average man what God's will is for him, shall be able to point out wherein consists the true value of his life, shall be able to indicate what is his

chiefest good and set him on the path to achieve it.

The response which the preaching of John the Baptist won from the crowd that went out from Jerusalem to hear him, is the response which comes from every crowd that is stirred by real preaching, "What then must we do?" said the publicans who heard him; "What then shall we do?" said the soldiers who heard him; "What then shall we do?" said the average man who had joined the crowd and gone out to the Jordan as on a holiday excursion. The mind when awakened to a consciousness of God, when roused to a realization of its power of laying hold on things unseen, unheard, intangible, cries out with this insistent appeal, What then shall we do?

Each preacher and teacher answers the question in his own way. In so far as each is honest and able, these answers are all expressions of the one central truth, injunctions of the one imperative duty. For Christendom, however, the answer of One Man is supreme and sovereign. Christendom will ever be eager to know how this agelong question was put to Jesus and what

Jesus said in answer to it. It is by no mere chance that the record discloses to us precisely how this question was put to Jesus more than once and gives to us also the words in which He answered it. The answer which He gave on one occasion is of particular and peculiar value for us because of the occasion on which it was given, because of its comprehensiveness and because of the history which it has had in the life of the Christian Church. The question put to Jesus on this occasion took this form: "What then must we do that we may work the works of God?" It was put to Him by representative men of His people; it was put to Him after a prolonged discussion of the religious life on His part and at a time when He faced a people remarkably responsive to His words and teaching. His answer was a comprehensive answer because it dealt not with specific things, but with a principle of human action. His answer is as applicable to-day as it was when He gave it. If it had any pertinence then, it has pertinence now. If it has no pertinence now, it had none then. The answer which He gave has had a long history in the faith which Jesus

founded in the world. It has been taken up by the Church which He inspired to organize itself on His principles in order to perpetuate His life in the world. It has become the test by which His disciples are tried to discover whether they be worthy to bear His name. Therefore it is important to understand the answer which He gave to the form in which this agelong question presented itself to Him. What He said was, "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."

This then is what Jesus thought is worth while in the world. This is what He thought makes life worth living. This is the supreme object of human endeavor, according to His view; this is the *summum bonum* of His philosophy. True, at another time, in answer to the specific question of a particular young man who came asking what he should do to find eternal life—that is asking what He could do to make life worth living for him—Jesus gave a specific and particular direction, "Go, sell that which thou hast and give to the poor." But this was manifestly a specific answer to a specific question, for but few of mankind are or

have been in the position in which this young man was, and to but few of them would the fulfillment of the injunction given to this young man be possible. It is true that on another occasion, speaking to another individual, He replied with another vocabulary to the same kind of question when He said, "Ye must be born again." But this answer also was manifestly a mystic answer for a mystic mind and is quite beyond the comprehension of the average man, as it seems to have been, indeed, beyond the comprehension of the wise man with the mystic mind who heard it. It is true also that on another occasion, in the form of a vision of judgment, He declares that life's real test is its performance of certain human duties, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and granting hospitality to the homeless. But here also it is manifest that we have, in a highly wrought literary form, with the utmost concreteness, a statement of the application of some principle broad and deep which has these and many other forms of manifestation in life. We come back then to this word as Jesus' broadest, clearest

statement of His answer to the agelong question: "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."

We are puzzled somewhat to understand this word of Jesus because we are familiar with several uses of the word believe. We use it in the first place, familiarly, to denote the acceptance of a historic fact, as when we say, "I believe in the Declaration of Independence"; "I believe in the sailing of the Mayflower." By this use of the word we mean that we accept it as a historic fact that the declaration was made or that the Mayflower sailed. We use the word also to indicate our acceptance of a scientific hypothesis, as when we say, "I believe in the law of gravitation." By this use of the word we mean that we accept a certain theory offered to us as a working theory by which to govern our common life or guide our effort to attain further knowledge. Now Jesus used the word "believe" not of a fact nor of a theory, but of a person. Therefore it is manifest that neither of these meanings of the word adequately interpret for us what He meant when He used it.

He used it of Himself, for as we read His

words we must accept the identification of Himself with "Him whom God hath sent." That is, the object of the belief which He names as the chief good of man is not a fact nor a theory, but a Person, and that Person is Himself. We have, however, two uses of the word "believe" when applied to persons, so that a further discrimination is necessary. We say one to another, "I believe in Julius Caesar," or "I believe in William Shakespeare," or "I believe in Thomas Jefferson." By this use of the word "believe" we mean that we accept as historically true what is currently reported concerning these men, that they were born at such a time in such a place, that they lived such a life in such a vocation, that they died in such a way at such a time and that the influence of their life and work has been of such a sort upon the common life of men. Now it has sometimes been assumed that the belief in Himself which Jesus declared is the greatest thing in life, the work which may be called *the work* of God, is an acceptance as historic of the fact of His life as it is currently reported in Christendom. To believe that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as the

gospels say that He was born, that He lived in Nazareth as the gospels say that He lived there, that He wrought in Galilee as they say He wrought, and walked in Perea as they say He walked, that He taught and died and rose in Judea as they say that He taught and died and rose there—to accept these as historic facts is sometimes assumed to be Christian belief. But one may accept all these as historic facts, literally true in every detail, and yet fail of an experience that will realize the mystic word that Jesus spoke to Nicodemus when He said, “Ye must be born again,” or the imperative word that He spoke to the rich young man when He said, “Go, sell,” or the beautiful word that He spoke in the matchless parable of the vision of judgment when He lined in letters of light those who find favor with the Eternal.

We use the word believe as applied to persons in still another sense which gives us, I think, a clue to the meaning which Jesus put into it, when He spoke this great word in the presence of His questioning hearers. You are speaking to me of your teachers. You tell me of their influence upon

you and of your attitude toward them. You say of one, "I like him," and of another, "I distrust him," of another perhaps, "I am amused at him," and of another, "I am fond of him." But of one of them you tell me, "I believe in him"; and I know what you mean by that, for I know what I mean when I say of one of the men who taught me, "I believed in him." I can see him yet, his hair white with the snows of many years and many sorrows; his figure bowed with the weight of much toil. He sat upon a plank of oak behind a desk of bare boards and taught us Greek. We trembled when as freshmen his keen eye searched us through and found our weakness in grammar and limitations in vocabulary, but there was that in him that commanded us and whatever tasks we left undone, the tasks he set were done. And as we learned our Greek we learned respect for our master, we sought his counsel, we hearkened when he paused in a chorus of Euripides to open his heart with wise words concerning our path in life. We saw his soul of stainless honor and his words and presence shamed the meanness out of us. And so we came to love

the aged figure that first we feared and the men of thirty classes of Union College grieved for a friend and master beloved when Henry Whitehorn passed over to be with the immortals. O, I know what you mean when you say you believe in your teachers, for I know what I mean when I say I believed in him.

You are speaking to me of your friend and you say, "I believe in him." I know what you mean. You mean that his will and wish claim your obedience; that his counsel claims your respect and following, that his love claims your heart. You are a soldier and you tell me of your commander, "I believe in him." I know what you mean. You mean that his order claims the instant obedience of your life, that his judgment commands the reverence of your opinion, that his great heart and flashing eyes could call you through the gates of death with joy.

It is this use of the word "believe" that Jesus employed when He spoke His great words, "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Wrapped up in it were these personal relations, these personal values which made it

ring on His lips and have caused it to ring down through the Christian centuries on the lips of His disciples, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." In this word there is a command for the will; there is truth for the mind; there is love for the heart. This surely is *the work* of God for the whole of man and for everyman.

The Christian ideal is presented to the world in the life and message of Jesus. So presented this ideal has its universal appeal. It calls to the heart and mind and will of men without regard to distinction of class or caste or race. Wherever He is made known in the life that He lived and the work that He wrought and the character He achieved and the message He delivered, there the souls of men are made bare before the beauty that is in Him and they are drawn by what is holiest and noblest in their natures to give themselves to the ideal revealed in Him.

Jesus appears among men as a friend. It was so that He appeared first to the men that came to know Him in His life. John the Baptist presented Him to the circle of his followers as a friend, as one whose worth

he had come to recognize and as one in whom he trusted. These first disciples of Jesus—Peter and Andrew and James and John—found in Him, when first they met Him, just a friend. There is the wistfulness of new and fast-growing friendship in the word which they spoke to Him on the day they first met Him, “Master, where dwellest Thou?” They wanted to know His home because they wanted to follow Him there and to stay with Him under the spell of the new friendship which they had found in Him. It was so that all the men of the gospels found Him. So Zaccheus the publican found Him, as a friend who would share his hospitality when no one else would enter under his roof. It was so the rich young ruler found Him, a friend whose judgment on the deepest concerns of life was worth asking and would be worth following when received. So every man in the gospel story found this Jesus, a friend. From these first disciples to whom He was made known by John the Baptist to Pontius Pilate, who on that fateful last day recognized the worth of the accused man arraigned in the palace courtyard—upon every man He met Jesus

made this impression of worth, of winsomeness, of friendship.

Now it is true that throughout Christian history He has made this same impression upon the world. Where He is adequately presented, where the record of His life is an open book, where His spirit enshrines itself worthily in the lives of His followers, where His message is freely proclaimed—there He is revealed as the friend of man. There is that in His character which wins respectful attention. From the humblest pagan who in a tropic village hears in broken speech the story of this beautiful Man, to the wisest scholar who in his study ponders the strange attractiveness of this character that ever shines before his life, whoever comes to know Jesus likes Him; to whomsoever He is presented He extends the invitation of a pure friendship which offers deeply human elements of sympathy, trustworthiness and love.

But whoever begins thus his acquaintance with Jesus finds that friendship presently ripens into something deeper. Those fishermen who by the Galilean Lake met a new friend, and sought to continue their

relations with Him, presently found that those relations were transformed. He who had been to them a friend and nothing more than a friend, straightway began to speak to them in the imperative mood and the present tense of commands. "Come, follow Me," was the word that fell from His lips, and strangely enough, this word that fell from His lips did not seem harsh to them. They left their boats and left their business and their father and followed Him, because when the command which He gave was heard by them they felt it confirmed by the voice of conscience within and they knew that His command was the command of God. Not otherwise did Zaccheus obey when his new-found friend, at that strange supper table, perhaps without speaking a word, delivered the imperative mood and the present tense of a searching commandment. The close-fisted, hard-hearted publican heard in his own soul an echo of the command that came from the presence of Jesus rather than from His words, and he rose from his place and said unto the Lord, "Behold, the half of my goods I give unto the poor, and if I have taken anything from

any man wrongfully I restore unto him fourfold." Likewise the young ruler heard the imperative mood and present tense of an insistent commandment from the lips of the new friend and teacher whose counsel he had sought. And as he heard those words, "Go, sell," he heard also their confirmation at the voice of conscience deep within his heart and knew that from the lips of this Nazarene peasant God's command for his soul had fallen. So it was from the beginning of the gospel story until its close; every man who met Jesus found in Him a friend, but in finding a friend, found more than a friend. He found also a master, one from whose lips came the commandments of God, one in whose presence the moral law of Jehovah became insistent and imperative.

This also has been the experience of the Christian centuries. Wherever Jesus is proclaimed and His message is declared, there men hear the voice of God, interpreting duty, enforcing the moral law, summoning the soul to do battle in behalf of high endeavor, rousing all its defences against the hosts of evil, strengthening its resistance

to the call of the beast from below, and inspiring it to fellowship with the call of God from above. So it has been true that the Christian conscience, in the history of western civilization, has always been sensitive to its abuses and failures, always been active in the progress of man out of chaos and the dark unto the light and the order of the Kingdom of God. In the presence of Jesus sin becomes exceeding sinful. His words have wonderful power to detach themselves from the century in which they were spoken, from the land and the people where and to whom they were uttered, and to become words of living fire in each generation and for every people in all the world. The Christian ideal as given to men in Jesus makes first its universal appeal to human friendship and then asserts its universal claim to human obedience.

Each Christian's experience will confirm this character of the Christian appeal. The typical Christian is won to an allegiance to the Christian faith through an appreciation of the worthiness of the character of Jesus. The ideal of life displayed in the gospel story wins sympathy and affection; it commends

itself as worthy of the earnest effort to achieve it. Under the spell of the beauty of this ideal the individual commits himself to the Christian faith, he pledges himself to seek to follow this ideal through life. He will walk in friendship with this Jesus whose beautiful life seems to keep company with the trustful believer. Now whoever has thus undertaken to walk in fellowship with Jesus has found that His friendship straightway develops into moral mastery. Friendship with Jesus cannot remain just a friendship; it must become something more or it will be something less. For this friend insists upon His right to command and we can retain His friendship only at the price of obedience. For when Jesus speaks words of commandment to men, conscience reinforces the command and whispers within the soul that the command of this friend is nothing less than the voice of God. To refuse to obey the command of this friend is to show oneself unworthy of this friendship and therefore it is true that friendship with Jesus cannot remain mere friendship; it must become something more or it will be something less.

The Christian ideal manifest in Jesus, which makes its universal appeal for human friendship and human obedience, is manifest unto men in still another revelation. It ministers unto them fellowship with God so that Jesus becomes to His followers not only friend and master but also their Lord. So it was with the men who first met Him in the gospel story. They followed Him because of their newly won friendship with Him; they obeyed Him because this friendship presently claimed obedience from them and the voice of conscience presently confirmed this claim as the claim of God's will for their lives. Step by step through the gospel story we find them rising to the claims of the moral mastery of Jesus with an eager and glad obedience. Then we find that as they obey their friend and master He becomes something more than friend and master to them. So it was that after they had followed Him and friendship had ripened into obedience, He took them apart and led them up into a high mountain and there we are told that He was transfigured before them. His countenance was changed and His raiment became white

and glistening; they beheld Him in converse with the mighty souls of their nation's past and the glory of things unseen and eternal was opened full upon their souls as they companied with Him upon the mount. This experience of the Transfiguration was but a type and symbol of what came to be the experience of each of those who became friends of Jesus in the gospel story and who in their friendship became obedient to the commands of His moral leadership. To each of these He made Himself known as worthy to be their Lord, in that He revealed to them the meaning of their common life and opened full upon them the glory of the spiritual universe and so led them into infinite and precious fellowship with God. This has been the experience, moreover, of all those who have followed this path in their response to the appeal of the Christian ideal in Jesus. These have found that the human friendship of Jesus becomes the moral authority of Jesus and that the moral authority of Jesus becomes the spiritual power of Jesus, and that this spiritual power of Jesus is exercised to bring those whose faith is in Him into a union of

heart and mind and will with the life of God.

The mind cannot conceive a more worthy object for the exercise of God's life in His world than this purpose to make such appeal to the life of man as shall win men into fellowship with Himself. The universality of this appeal is warranted by the worthiness of it. The Christian consciousness of its cosmic significance is warranted by the worthiness of its issue in this spiritual fellowship of human souls with God. Nothing else and nothing less is the worthy goal of the life of the universe; nothing else and nothing less can be the worthy goal of the development of human life in the world. This issue of the Christian experience in a spiritual fellowship of the individual human soul with God attests the worthiness of all God's ways with the children of men. It answers all questions and it solves all problems because it is perceived to be so great a good as to justify whatever of mystery veils life as we know it.

This then is the work of God: that we believe on Him whom He hath sent; this is the supreme achievement of the soul:

that we have faith in the Man of Nazareth; this is the key to all noble human endeavor: the response of the life to the appeal of God made in the Christian ideal as revealed in Jesus. This is the work which includes all lesser tasks, this is the worthy goal that includes all lesser aims that are worthy of the human soul. To believe in Jesus with a faith in which obedience and trust and love are included is to set the soul upon a quest which will not be satisfied or cease until every good and worthy thing shall have been found, until every good and worthy task shall have been done, until the goal of man's life shall have been reached, until the issues of man's life shall have laid hold on the eternal things of God.

III

THE WORK IN EVERY FIELD

THE SCOPE OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

The Christian life is never passive. Jesus Himself declared that He came to stir men unto activity. His summons is a summons to service; they who hearken to it are like the man who sets his hand to the plow, they have undertaken a task. Before them there is set a cross. The path which they have entered leads to its goal through sacrifice. Jesus even declares that He is come to disturb existing human relationships so as to set the father over against his son and the son over against his father; to bring among men, not peace, but a sword. All this is plain indication that the Christian gospel which is interpreted solely in terms of rest has not been fully interpreted. Christianity and Buddhism are directly opposed at this point. If the faith of Gautama expresses itself in inertia, the faith of the Man of Nazareth expresses itself in action.

In undertaking to define the field of Christian service, it is important to understand the Biblical and Christian conception of the relation of the spirit of God to the activities of human life. There is such a conception of the Spirit of God as confines His operations in the world of human life to what may be called technically religious functions. Such a view of the activity of the Spirit finds Him giving counsel to men when they engage in the act of prayer, quickening their minds and inflaming their hearts when they undertake to preach the gospel or as laymen to bear testimony to its power in their lives. This view of the Spirit of God confines His service to men to the specifically religious acts of men. He is co-operant with the minister and the missionary; and with the layman when the layman is engaged in distinctively religious labor. There is always something esoteric, mysterious, and almost magical in the operation of the Spirit of God according to this view. He has a liking for the shadows of cathedral arches or the glare of camp-meeting torches; He expresses Himself in singular and abnormal lives; He

spends Himself in great crises by ministries to religious leaders, or in far away points on the battle line of the Christian advance in the world. According to this view, God is, in His Spirit, averse to the light of common day and the paths of common folk and the tasks of common hands. These must get on without Him. He bestows Himself on the few.

A reading of even the Old Testament scriptures will correct this view of the relation of the Spirit of God to the common life of man. A great value of the Old Testament is the record that it gives to us of the relation of Jehovah to the whole of the life of Israel. According to this conception Jehovah was as much interested in the sanitation of the homes of the people as in the decoration of the Tabernacle or the Temple. He was concerned far more deeply for the justice and efficiency of the common life than for the succession of the priestly class in the Temple service, or the enactment according to particular description of the elaborate ritual of the Temple worship. For instance, in the patriarchal story of the bondage in Egypt when a great famine

threatened the land, it was by the help of the Spirit of God that a young Hebrew of the captivity was able to forecast the coming of so great a calamity. And according to the writer of the record, it was because he had learned to work with the Spirit of God that this same young Hebrew had developed the financial ability, the executive power, the administrative skill, to insure the empire against the ruin that was threatened. In other words, the characteristic Hebrew conception of the ministry of the Spirit of Jehovah unto men was that He inspires men for the work of business or administration or statesmanship as truly as for what we call distinctively religious activity. That is, the Hebrew mind had perceived that the laws which controlled the flowing of the Nile and the forces which, moving in accordance with those laws, provided abundance or famine in Egypt—that these laws and these forces were laws and forces of God and that the mind of man cannot know these laws or understand these forces save as the Spirit of God shall guide him in his knowledge and understanding. In the same way, it was perceived that the

power to wield influence over other men, to persuade men to undertake a policy of wisdom, is a power which is given of the Spirit of God since all men share in partaking in some measure of that same spirit. Likewise it was seen that the laws of trade, the principles of commerce which govern the ebb and flow of material wealth in a nation—that these also are laws of God, to be rightly perceived only by Him who has learned to think in harmony with the Spirit of God and to be guided in reaching His judgments by the good counsel of that Spirit given to his mind and understanding. So it is perfectly natural to find that Joseph in Egypt, whom we think of as a pretty thoroughly secular man, a man of business and executive ability, a man of statesmanship and military genius, is written down in the record of the Old Testament as a man in whom the Spirit of God was.

Again, a little farther on in the history of the Hebrew people there is another record which enlarges our idea of the activity of the Spirit of God. When the hosts of the Hebrews were being led on their great national pilgrimage out of Egypt into

Palestine, and it was desired by Moses to provide a place of worship for the congregation, it is recorded that Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, "See I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah; and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skillful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee; the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the Tent and the table and its vessels, . . . according to all that I have commanded thee, shall they do." Here is distinctly the recognition that the laws of craftsmanship are the laws of God, that skill in working in wood or metal or tapestry is given by the Spirit of God; that

the laws which govern the common life in its use of the common things of earth to provide for its material basis—that these laws all are laws of God and are to be truly discerned only by the help of His Spirit; that the ministry of the Spirit of God is not for the few but for the many, that His primary work is the guidance of the mind and hand of man for the doing of these common tasks of life. The dependence of all our common life, in these days of the marvellous expansion of man's power in material things, upon the mighty fabric which the industry of the modern world is weaving about our lives, should make very clear to us this profound Hebrew conception that the warp and the woof of this fabric is struck through with the law of almighty God. It is by the guidance of His Spirit that men have discovered these laws and it is by the good counsel of His Spirit that men in obedience to these laws, working in material things, achieve a material structure for the common life in which the precious treasures of the soul are safe.

Let me cite one more instance from the Old Testament pages, of the large concep-

tion of the relation of God to man which was characteristic of the Hebrew people. The few pages of the Book of the Judges are the record which has come down to us of something more than a century of almost anarchic life through which the Hebrew people passed between the settlement in the land of Palestine and the establishment of something like national order under Samuel, the last of the Judges, and Saul, the first of the kings. These pages are written with records on which both cruelty and lust have left their mark. The times of which they give us the history were rude and raw times in which the life of the nation was seething in a ferment out of which there was to come the rich future of that people. As we read the story it would seem to us that no life could be farther removed from the help of the Spirit of God than the life of that wild time. What then is our surprise to find that in the story of one of the most red-handed of the men of blood and shame who are described to us there, it is written that the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon him. It startles our conventional notion to find it declared that the Spirit

of Jehovah was upon Samson, a brawny bully of that rough and ready pioneer life. We see him with his rude weapon in his hands singing like a maniac, shouting like a madman in sheer physical excess of rage and pride after the slaughter that he had wrought. We say of him that the Spirit of God could not have used so rough a block of humanity in the building of His fair temple. And yet when we reflect, we shall see that this Hebrew conception of Jehovah was really a larger and truer conception of God in His relation to man than much of our conventional Christianity provides. Samson's rude weapons and his bulky strength were enlisted in defence of innocence as he saw it, in behalf of the weak as against the strong, for the protection of Hebrew homes from invasion and pillage by Philistine bandits and marauders. When God can find no other instrument that will serve, He can use mightily the roughest of human material to set forward the kingdom of righteousness. He can work with the life of any man who will let himself be used in the world for His kingdom.

I have called to mind these character-

istic records of the Old Testament in order that our idea of God's relation to human life and to the work of man in the world may be made large enough to give place for an adequate definition of the scope of Christian service. We must come to see that all the work to be done in the world is God's work, that from the building of tabernacles and the beating back of anarchy from pioneer camps, to the administration of the business of an empire and the writing of public insurance against national calamity, there is no honest work in the world which is not the work of God Himself, for the doing of which His Spirit is not needed and in the results of which His purpose is not concerned. If it be said that there are many men who have done the work of statesmen who have not been religious in mind or in heart, that some of them have been hostile to all recognition of God as concerned with their work or with their accomplishment of their task, that many more have been without recognition of conventional religion or organized Christianity, one must of course reply that this is certainly true. But one can affirm also

that except as these leaders of men, these who have wrought in behalf of nations and peoples and empires—that except as these men have had in their hearts some perception of an eternal purpose of good working in and for humanity and except as they have consciously sought to put the strength of their hand and thought at the disposal of that deep purpose of good for men, the work which they have wrought has proved to be not only destructive for themselves but also ruinous for those whom they sought to serve. While, on the other hand, those who have thus sought to put themselves in line with a growing purpose of good for all men, whether they have confessed it to themselves or not, have by that very attitude acknowledged before men the right relation of the soul to the God of all work and of all life.

Lincoln, whose birth the nation pauses to-day to gratefully remember,¹ was in his lifetime accounted by many to be without a religious experience. But who is there to-day who can read the record of his public utterances without feeling that here was a

¹ This lecture was given on Feb. 12 1912

leader of men whose deepest desire, as he himself put it, was to be on the side of almighty God in His purpose of good for all men. This prophet soul who led this nation like a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night through the four years of its fearful baptism of sorrow and of death, was forced by the very pressure of the responsibilities that rested upon him to take refuge in the will of God, to open his mind and heart to the gentle influence and the sweet and wise persuasions of the Spirit of God, who ever seeks, striving with men, to guide their feet into those paths that lead unto the establishment of His kingdom upon the earth.

In like manner it is true that among the tens of thousands of the army of the workers in the industries of the modern world there are few that say their prayers as they go to their work in the morning, perhaps even few that offer conscious, much less formal, prayer at any time or anywhere. Yet I cannot but think that the honest purpose of a strong man to do the day's work straight and clean, to refuse to "skimp" or "trim" or "beat" as the slow

hours of the working day pass—I cannot but think that this purpose to do things “on the square” and to turn in work that shall be “on the level” is a prayer as real as most that are offered in Meeting Houses or Cathedrals. Of this I am sure, that the answer to that prayer is given in such ministry of God’s Spirit as affects safe and honest work at the hands of this mighty host. When you and I take the train from the great city for our homes we put our lives in uttermost dependence upon the work of a hundred thousand men who have laboured to make our journey safe. Deep in the mines and far in the forest they have delved with the pick and the axe to bring forth the metal and the timber that should provide us a way and furnish us a carriage. Before the roaring of mighty furnaces they have stripped themselves in a hell of fiery heat to forge the tensile strength of rail and bar and bolt and thread and nut and rivet and plate, that speed might be safe and life in swift transit might be secure. Through the dark night and in the face of blinding storm they have patrolled every inch of the way; they have set ten thousand

lamps, to speak out their message of guidance and of safety, or to blush when somewhere the hidden wire of danger is touched. So we shall come safe home, I believe, because among a hundred thousand men there were found just a hundred thousand who did every man his duty at the place where he was set. Surely if service to humanity be any measure of service to God, unless we have lost the breadth of vision which characterized the mind of the Hebrew, despite all synods and councils, we shall canonize these saints of the modern world, successors of Bezalel and Oholiab, whose prayers are sometimes in the form of what men call curses, but whose honest hearts thrill to the call of the Spirit of God and who build in the world of things a safe home for the children of men.

The scope of Christian service then is the scope of human service. Wherever there is honest work to do there a Christian may fulfill his Master's bidding, set his hand to his plow and run his furrow through and out. All work may be Christian service; all honest work is Christian service, because in its motive it seeks the Christian purpose

which is the good of all men, because in its method it relies upon the guidance of the Christian's God who is Father and Friend and Helper of all who in sincerity and in truth ask for His guidance. The only men who may not have this comradeship of God in their life are the men who will not work and the men who will not serve the common good. Those who are parasites on the life of humanity, drifting with the dregs at the bottom or with the scum at the top,—from these there is shut out all fellowship with the groaning and travailing of God's Spirit as He seeks to establish His dominion among men, and from them there is shut out also all share in the joy and victory of those who share with God His progressive achievement of His purpose in the race. Those who will not serve the common good—these also fail of the fellowship of God. By their motive which is self-love and their method which is self-dependence, they set themselves over against the Almighty. So they build into their work the sure promise of its ruin and so, as they build, they sow within their own lives the seeds of a cer-

tain corruption. The very stars in their courses fight against such as these and the missing of the noblest goal of man's heart and hand is their doom.

Having recognized how broad is the scope of Christian service, we must now recognize also its more specialized forms. These forms of service are such activities as are used by men to hasten the coming of the kingdom of God, to establish among men the reign of reason and love, the release from every bondage of the body and the mind unto the liberty of those who are bound to the will of God. The common life, as we know it, is far from realizing the perfect order of God's purpose. It must be patiently and persistently amended, renewed, and, indeed, recreated, if it is to fulfill the purpose of God's love for men and achieve the glory of His kingdom on the earth. Therefore it is that the Christian faith as a world religion has challenged the world order and seeks by the continuous, persistent pressure of centuries to re-shape that order until it shall conform to the purpose of God. It is not needful to attempt to survey historically the phases of this struggle which

is perennial throughout Christendom and which is becoming continuous and unceasing throughout all the world. It is needful only to have in mind that this is the meaning of real Christian service, that it seeks the recreation of the order of human life in accordance with the purpose of God.

Here again our current notions of Christianity are being broadened and deepened to make way for this larger conception of Christian service. In the first decade of this twentieth century there seems to be evident a new appreciation of the meaning of much of the movement of the common life as related to the ministry of the Christian faith in the world. For instance, in the field of politics there are three characteristic ideas which are emerging in the consciousness of the nations. All three are distinctively Christian, and it is increasingly recognized that service in behalf of these ideas and of their respective ideals is truly Christian service.

The first of these ideas is the idea of democracy. In our Western World this idea has for four hundred years been coming to its own in the common

life. In succession, religious democracy, political democracy, and industrial democracy have laid their claims before the Western World, and each of these claims is being progressively realized. The idea of democracy now makes its way back through the nations of the Orient until at this moment its striving is felt at the very heart of mighty China. When it is perceived in these nations of the Far East, it is clearly seen to be related to the intellectual ferment caused by contact with the Christian ideas and ideals of the West. We may not doubt that, though this relationship is more obscured in the Western World, and though our position is not such as to give us right perspective in seeing it, it nevertheless exists. Whoever among us serves the cause of religious or political or industrial democracy by removing old abuses, by clearing away the clinging growths of tradition or prejudice, by recreating the organization of life so that every man may speak his own word and every man's word shall count for one and no man's word shall count for more than one,—whoever among us thus lends his hand or his voice or his presence to the

recognition of the value of the individual, of the sacredness and worth of each man's mind and heart, is rendering Christian service. His eyes may be so intent on the task that engages his hand or the problem that enthralles his mind that he cannot see the standard under which he is serving. His arm may be so valiantly engaged with his weapon in the fight that he cannot see the banner under which he attacks his foe. But the emblem on that standard is the emblem of the cross and the name upon that banner is the name of the Man of Nazareth, whether the standard and banner are lifted in the so-called Christian metropolis of our so-called Christian nation, or whether it be set over against the harem of the Sultan in the sick empire of the East, or pitched without the fortifications that shelter the gray and hoary tyranny of the Manchus in the heart of Asia.

The second idea characteristic of the political life of our time is the idea of world organization which expresses itself in the movement for international peace. While this movement may have had its birth in the horror of the sensitive conscience in

the presence of the physical suffering and waste of war, its real motive lies rather in the perception that physical force can never be the arbiter of essential justice. Physical force and its supreme expression in human life in war, have sometimes been used by the spirit of God's justice in the life of the race to achieve progress for humanity. But it has ever been a blundering tool and grievous have been the hazards of its use. Every man knows in his heart now that might does not make right, and this knowledge of the dominance of spiritual principles over material things will presently write itself into the organization of the world. For the peace movement of the world is not merely a movement of protest. It is a positive movement which reaches forward toward an ideal, the gleams of which have long been shining on the eastern horizon and the light of which is now climbing the distant hills. This ideal is such a world organization as shall fulfill the Christian conception of a kingdom of God in which all peoples shall find citizenship. Twenty Christian centuries have corrected the Christian perspective and now we see that this

ideal is no mere mirage of a spiritual fellowship in a future life, but is an ideal which is to be achieved in this world as soon as the response of the hearts of men to it shall become sincere and earnest and universal. All service rendered in behalf of this ideal is Christian service. It were a shame for us to give the name Christian to those misdirected efforts of the medieval world to extend the formal dominion of so-called Christian kingdoms by the weapon of the sword, and to refuse the name Christian to the service of modern statesmanship which seeks by the weapons of the spirit, by right reason and the persuasions of justice and mercy and truth, to extend the real dominion of the Christian ideal until it shall include the modern peoples of the world.

The third idea that is characteristic of the political life of our generation is the idea of the conservation of the individual life. Through manifold voluntary associations, in the organization of municipal government, in the legislation and administration of states, and in the policies of the nation, this idea has been increasingly prevalent and is coming to be increasingly dom-

inant. There is a new sense in the world of our time of the worth of the individual, of the preciousness of the treasure of his life. Attention is being directed to the rate of infant mortality, to the prevalence of contagious or industrial or occupational disease, to the sanitation of homes and streets and cities and districts, to the conditions of the common life which lower human efficiency, of mind or heart or will, to the possibilities of those conditions and environments which will heighten efficiency by giving chance for bodily health and growth, for mental vigor, for the normal development of the life of the affections and for the wholesome education of the whole personality, as it expresses itself in the choices of the will. If we talk about the conservation of national resources in mines, or forests or water-powers, it is because all these resources are seen to have their value in relation to the lives of men, in the providing of adequate means and opportunity for the conservation and the development of that most precious thing which we know, human life.

There is one scene in the gospels that

seems to be an allegory of our time. It is the scene where Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst and called to the scholars and the philosophers, the rulers and the teachers, the traders and the crowd to look into the face of that child and said, "Whoso shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me, but whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on Me to stumble it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hung around his neck and that he should be sunk into the depth of the sea." The child represents the treasure of human life received by men, a gift of God. Into the face of the child the modern world of philosophy and science, of politics and economics, of trade and of industry, is looking. The word of Jesus is being heard above the roar of the intervening centuries and men are seeking to obey His injunction. Whoever gives of his service in the manifold agencies of our time, which have for their purpose the conserving, the development, and the enrichment of life, is rendering Christian service.

There are a host of these who are all unconscious of the sweep of the move-

ment in human life in which they are bearing a part. They think of themselves as related only to some petty local organization which is struggling against some petty local abuse, or seeking to establish some petty local betterment, and fail to see that this honest work of their hands and hearts has its place in a mighty movement in human life, brought about by the projection into the world's history of God's thought for men, made known in the life and the word and the gospel of Jesus and being realized everywhere by all those who have caught something of His spirit or something of His message, whether they have seen His face or owned His name or not. Others there are, whose service is not less sincere, who recognize themselves simply as moving with the trend of the age, as obeying a blind instinct which comes out of mystery and tends toward mystery, which is part of the cosmic movement of things, but which they cannot understand, and in the service of which they find no joy but only obedience to the stern voice of unknown Duty. These also have a right to the joy and the fellow-

ship of those who have learned that the stream of things flows out of the heart of God, and moves on into the joy of the kingdom of God. They are rendering Christian service and we pray that the joy of Christian service may be discovered in their hearts.

There is still another, narrower sphere which we recognize as more distinctively Christian, but which we cannot admit to be more truly such than the ranges of service which we have noted. This is the service of those who are proclaiming the Christian message, who are teaching the Christian ideal, who are organizing the means and the method of the propagation of the Christian gospel. A few of these are such as have the holy privilege of devoting all their time and strength to this blessed task, but the great host of these are such as offer freely the surplus and the sacrifice of their energies as their gift to the welfare of men. This specifically and technically Christian service is manifestly necessary and will be so until the end of the age. It is out of the store of this work that there is supplied to all the ranges of

Christian service the motive power that sustains them and continues their manifold operations. This distinctively Christian service is that of the preacher of the gospel, the pastor of the Christian Church, the priests and officials of the Christian organization, the teachers and helpers and guides of specifically Christian instruction and endeavor. These are they whose service is rendered in the power-house of Christian civilization. The service which they render, unless it is communicated, through them and those whom they shall touch, into the common life of the community, is as valueless as would be a power-house consuming mountains of coal, engaging hundreds of laborers, resounding with the noise of crashing engines and dynamos, and sending out no power for transportation or industry or heat or light. Everyone has seen some Christian churches that seem thus to have lost their connection with life, or that seem to have failed ever to have established connections with life. Energy is being expended, ministers or priests are functioning, lights are burning, congregations are gathering and dispersing,

but no points of contact with the life of the community are established, no energy is being poured into the great common enterprises through which a Christian civilization is groaning and travailing to bring forth the kingdom of God. But it is to be remembered that while here and there a church or other Christian organization seems thus to be unrelated to the common life, we must not be too hasty in passing judgment. The lines by which spiritual power is communicated to the life of the community are not stretched overhead for all to see. They run under ground. The power that is generated is transformed in its transmission and appears in some other form of energy. That which leaves the power-house as electricity burns in the lamp here as light, yonder it turns wheels as motive power, yonder again, it heats a crucible and yonder again, it magnetises instruments for the receipt and sending of viewless messages through empty space. The energy generated in a Christian church is in like manner transformed in its transmission. It appears in a thousand forms, in a thousand people, and the eyes of the world are for the most part not keen

enough to trace it to its source. But it is none the less true that it is from the message of Jesus proclaimed and the loyalty to His gospel generated in the Christian Church that the modern world receives the energy by which it moves on into the kingdom of God.

Upon you who in this place are sons and daughters of high privilege, who seek to invest your lives for the welfare of men, who desire to have part in that cosmic movement by which the world rolls out of darkness into light,—let me urge upon you, wherever you labor, with whatever tools you ply your task, that you fail not of the high assurance that you are working together with God, that one is your Master, even Christ, and that ye are brethren with all those, the holy, the wise, and the good, who have served at His command for the welfare of men and for the glory of God in every age. Let me ask that you fail not to give of what God has given you for those great enterprises along the lines of which the hurts of the old world are being healed and the life of the age is being re-organized that it may conform to those

principles of righteousness, justice, and truth which the mind and heart of man is discerning with increasing clearness and integrity. Let me ask also that you fail not to relate yourselves to that specifically Christian work, the generating of power for the social advance, the achieving of the spiritual dynamic which alone can develop and maintain human worth and make life worth the living for you or for me or for any man. Into this, the specific service of the Christian Church, as one who is humbly grateful for the privilege of service in the Church, I would welcome you and bid you God speed.

IV

THE HOPE OF EVERY HEART

THE GOAL OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE, THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A German philosopher of the last generation characterizes human history as a three-fold process of disillusionment. Man lives under the power of hope. The experience of life is the finding that hope is an illusion. The great illusion which led men through the earlier periods of the history of civilization was the hope of the perfection of personal character. This illusion characterized the Greek philosophy and the Roman life in its noblest period. In some form it characterizes all pagan philosophies and religions. But it is only an illusion, says our philosopher. Man finds that perfection of personal character is impossible. He strives after an ideal which experience shows to him is only an illusion. Presently his strivings grow weary and cease.

This is the reason for the deep disgust and loathing that fell upon the pagan world.

The second great illusion of humanity, says this philosopher, is the illusion of the hope of immortality. Men having found that perfection of character is impossible in this life project their hopes forward into the future. They conceive of a life after this life in which what has been impossible here shall become possible. The ideal which has proved only an illusion here shall there be firmly held within the grasp. In the history of the race Christianity gave vivid form to this characteristic human hope. It came to the ancient world wearied of its fruitless struggle for the perfection of character in this life and offered to it the hope of a future life which should provide scope and range for the realization of the ideal. This new hope poured new life into the veins of the decadent civilization of the Western World. Through many centuries it has beckoned men on, giving to them a reason for the bearing of their burdens, the suffering of their pains, the making of their struggle. But, says the philosopher, this second great illusion is fast losing its

power to lead men onward. It is being found to be only an illusion and already the strong-minded are refusing to be deceived by the *ignis fatuus* of the hope of immortality. It will remain for long time, doubtless, a consolation for the poor, a sedative for the sufferings of the weak; but as a force to move civilization it is spent.

To the dismay of our philosopher, however, he discovers that hope, which has ever been man's great deceiver, now finds a third form in which to lure him along the path of development. In this form hope offers to men, not the realization of their ideals of personal character in this life, nor the fulfillment of their hope of personal blessedness in the life to come, but it does offer to man the achievement on earth of a perfect society, which is to be realized through the struggle and travail of social forces, which in ever worthier forms are energizing in the common life of man and inspiring him with the idea of progress. Sadly does the philosopher view the growing prevalence of the acceptance by man of this third form of the great illusion. With the eye of a prophet he discerns that

generations will come and go and centuries will pass before men will learn that this also is an illusion. He is conscious that his voice will be too weak to withstand the drift of the age. If only men would hearken to him, he could tell them in a moment what it may take a thousand years of experience to teach them, namely that there is no such thing as a perfect social order possible among men upon the earth. What seems to be progress is only illusion. Some day in the far future men will have learned this and since, according to the philosopher, no other form of the great illusion is possible, when that day arrives humanity will give up the fruitless struggle, and it is to be hoped, according to him, that it will have the good sense to conclude upon universal suicide and so make an end of the horrid mockery which has dragged its weary length upon the stage, which is the world, through so many ages.

Now this philosopher's views are exceedingly interesting. He could find much to confirm his view in a study of individual experience. For many men life is indeed a process of disillusionment. Youth beholds

high ideals and burns with passion to achieve them. Early manhood finds itself enmeshed in its errors, its failures, and its sins and sighs for some great deliverance. The hope of immortality wins the allegiance and the affections of many. For a time in religious fealty the life is given to the service of this hope. Presently its fires also burn low. The man takes a new valuation of himself, adjusts his mind to a new perspective, gives up the hope of personal achievement here or hereafter, and asks only that he may have some small part in the progress of his fellow men toward the common good. He throws himself into schemes for social betterment, programs for social reconstruction, and for a time finds here his satisfaction. As age comes on the satisfaction somehow loses its power to satisfy. So many plans fail, so many tasks break down in the doing of them, so many seeming friends are proved faithless, that pessimism begins to shadow old age. The light of hope dies out and the spark of life sinks back into the ashes of a hopeless death.

Now it certainly is true not only that

we are saved by hope but also that we live by hope. I remember a visit to a prison. As I sat beside the warden on the platform of the chapel and we looked into the faces of four hundred fettered men, he said to me, "Our hardest problem is the prisoner sentenced for life." "You know," said he, "men can't live without hope, and we have constantly to watch the 'life men' lest in the insanity caused by despair they take their own lives or become raving maniacs." Life without hope is indeed a tragedy. Memory can never take the place of hope. The beauty of the bloom of a rose is the promise of the seed. If there were no seed at the heart of the bloom and we knew that with the coming of winter's cold and storm the petals would be scattered on the earth and the beauty would never again meet human eyes, the fragrant radiance of the flower would smite the heart with pain. Because we know that the bloom is a promise, that at the heart of its beauty there is forming the seed which shall give to other eyes a like delight, therefore the beauty of the rose brings joy and not pain to the heart of him who sees it.

To the superficial student the life and philosophy of the Greek was full of joy and the life and philosophy of the Hebrew was full of sadness, but a more profound study will reveal the truth that the essential sadness was with the Greek and the essential joy was with the Hebrew. For the Greek, his golden age was ever in the past, the progress of his life and of the life of his people was down and away from the mountains of the gods, ever out from the radiance of the celestials and into the light, the fading light, of common day. He had a memory, but no hope. The Hebrew, on the other hand, was climbing a steep path set with flint, but his way led onward and upward to the mountain of the Lord. His eyes yearned forth from the darkness of bondage and night unto the freedom and the light of a kingdom whose ways should be ways of righteousness and all whose paths should be peace. Therefore it is that there is no tragedy like Greek tragedy and there are no songs like Hebrew songs. The Hebrew had his memories indeed, but every memory pointed him to a hope and his golden age lay ever before him.

The Christian faith confirms to man his hope; the Christian practice leads man on into the realization of his hope. We may accept our philosopher's analysis of the forms in which hope appears to the heart and we may gladly affirm that the gospel of Jesus offers to humanity hope in all these forms. Let us consider them not in the order in which they appear in history and experience, but rather in the order in which they range themselves in the perspective of the mind of our time.

The Christian faith confirms to man his hope in an order of human society which progressively approaches the ideal of brotherhood. It is this aspect of the Christian hope that chiefly engages the mind of our time. For reasons which we will not attempt to analyze, it has come about that both men who are Christian and those who are not are increasingly interested in the application of Christian truth to the social order in the conviction that in such application is the secret and the hope of society's true progress. In this conviction men have made a new study of the Christian sources and are startled to find the pertinency with

which the principles of Jesus address themselves to the problems of the social life. It is confidently affirmed that His precepts are precepts of human relationship. It is shown clearly that in these brief pamphlets which give to us the record of His life and message, there is a social gospel which is applicable to the problems and the diseases of modern society. It is discovered that there is no abuse of power or privilege which is not interdicted by some word of this Galilean Peasant, that there is no social vice that does not lie under the injunction of this Hebrew Preacher of peace and good will. It is discovered, moreover, that there is no social disease for the healing of which the prescription of the principle of love by this good Physician of Nazareth is not adequate. Just how the principle is to be applied, just where the injunctions and interdictions impinge upon modern practice are debated questions. But the Western World has come to feel that Jesus has diagnosed the ills of humanity and that, somehow, in His hands there is the remedy.

This conviction is, I believe, profoundly true. Jesus did come declaring the gospel

of the kingdom of God. He Himself announced when He declared His program that He had come to preach good news to the poor. What could this good news be but the announcement to the poor of the beginning of the end of their poverty? He declared that He had come to release the captives. What could this mean but the breaking of their fetters? He declared that He had come to announce the recovering of sight to the blind. What could this mean but the recreation of their power of vision? Now these phrases in which Jesus declared His mission, taken from the prophetic poetry of His people, when adequately interpreted, can mean nothing else than that it was His purpose to cure the social disease which we call poverty, to release man from the constraint of physical force to the liberty of a social order controlled by reason and love, and to recreate by the inflow of vital power the very physical nature of man so as to confirm to him the exercise of all his physical powers. On anything less than a puerile interpretation of His words, this much at least was included in His declaration of the Kingdom

of God, of the acceptable year of the Lord. There surely was reason for the amazement of those who heard the wonder of the words of grace in which He outlined so amazing a program.

That He understood the amazing sweep of His use of the prophetic words is evidenced by the kindly speech with which, as He sat in the synagogue of His own town and looked into the eyes of His kinsmen and neighbors, He confessed to them the limitations under which He was conscious of acting, in inaugurating so mighty a social program. One can easily fancy the pathetic shadow that fell over His gracious smile when He said, "But of a truth I say unto you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land, and unto none of them was Elijah sent but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." He well knew that though

He might feed five thousand by the Sea of Galilee with the loaves and the fishes of one meal on one day, there were hundreds of thousands in Galilee alone, who at every meal on every day felt the pinch and pang of hunger. He well knew that though He might at the gate of Nain meet one widow and restore to her the life of her only son, there were, every day, through the gates of every village, mourners bearing forth their untimely dead, whom He could not meet with like ministry of restoration. He well knew that though He might strike the fetters of physical restraint from the wrists of one demoniac in Gadara, by restoring reason to its throne in the anarchic mind, there were among the tombs of every Palestinian village those who were under the thrall of physical force for the safety of their fellow men. The deeds that He wrought out of the overflow of His love which reached out through forces that we do not yet understand and in accordance with laws which are yet hidden from our eyes, were but symbol and pledge and promise of the universal work which His gospel is yet to achieve in all the world.

And something of the sadness of the slow centuries through which love must work its way before ever the halting hands and hearts of men should give the co-operation needful for its full success fell like a shadow over His face on the very day that He announced His purpose in the synagogue at Nazareth.

After sixty Christian generations the goal of the Christian's hope for the coming of the kingdom of God, the hope which Jesus Himself kindled that day in the synagogue at Nazareth, still hangs low on the horizon. Poverty is still the great social disease. We are only just beginning to apply to its treatment the second of three phases of the application to it of the Christian principle of brotherhood. In the matter of the production of wealth, we have learned the application of the principles of diligence and thrift which grows out of the teaching of Jesus as to individual responsibility. In the matter of the distribution of wealth, we are just beginning to address ourselves to the problems which can only be solved by the application of the principle of sacrifice, which grows out of Jesus' teaching of

brotherhood. When we shall have taught every man in the matter of production to contribute to the commonwealth according to his ability and shall have inspired the commonwealth in the matter of distribution to provide for every man according to his need, then we shall find it necessary to apply Christian principles also to the consumption of wealth and teach every man to use material things always and only for spiritual ends, a teaching which grows out of Jesus' revelation of the essential nature of humanity.

Force is still the great social method. Bit by bit it yields to reason and love, but not without disputing every inch of the way. In the circle of the home, in the conduct of the schools, in the give and take of trade and commerce, in the social contact of individuals, brute force has given way to reason through vast areas of the common life. But still in the civic control of the social group and still in the relationships of the nations, and still far too generally in the average man's philosophy of life, physical force remains the method of social action. The captives are still in their fetters and yearn

for the release foretold by Hebrew prophets and declared in the Nazareth synagogue.

Physical disease, moreover, afflicts society as it destroys individuals. In wider and wider ranges of life, through larger and larger areas of humanity, the spirit of compassion spurs man to unlock the secrets of nature which are remedial and to remove the causes of diseases by conforming the individual and the social life to the laws of the kingdom of God. That very disease mentioned in the prophetic word which Jesus, quoting, put for all physical infirmity, the ancient scourge of blindness, is one of the first to be brought under control, and the time is already in sight when Christian compassion, working through the hand of science, shall have virtually eliminated blindness from Christian civilization. But the task will then by no means be finished. One by one the physical scourges of humanity are being brought under control. Bit by bit the waste of untimely death is being prevented and the purpose of the Good Physician is being achieved by the multitude of His followers, who too often, alas, are unconscious of the Master in whose

foosteps they make their way, and so lack the joy of fellowship with Him in the achievement of His spirit in which their hands and thought have so large a part.

To the Christian, therefore, the modern hope of the progressive realization among men of the ideal of the kingdom of God realized in human brotherhood is no illusion. He is not deceived into the dream of its immediate or speedy achievement; his Master has given him warning and he shares with His Master his Master's sorrow that the kingdom comes so slowly. He knows that the coming of the kingdom is the progressive approximation of human society to an ideal which will always seem beyond man's reach, but toward which each generation of honest endeavor will bring man nearer. He is not deceived into thinking that any social order however nearly approaching to the formal ideal of brotherhood will of itself satisfy the longings of the human heart. He knows that beyond the abolition of poverty and the discarding of force and the achievement of physical well being, the real progress of human life into its God-purposed destiny begins. More-

over the Christian has his heart set upon the whole purpose of God for humanity. If it be his lot to give his service for the establishment of the brotherhood in social relationships, he is not blind to the necessity for the establishment of the kingdom in the control of the will of God over individual hearts and lives. He knows that the great hopes of humanity must be achieved together or not at all, and while he works for a heaven which he knows is to descend upon the earth, he hopes for a heaven into which he knows his life will be released from the earth.

The Christian faith confirms man's hope of the progressive approximation of character to its ideal. The ideal of personal character is given to man in his moral nature, which in obedience to its own sure instinct constantly employs the constructive imagination to fashion before the life a character in which goodness shall be realized in manifold virtues. Reason and love shall rule the will and the whole life shall glow with the beauty which gleams forth when the ideal is realized. Youth dreams of this, youth aspires toward this. Manhood seldom loses every glimpse of

this, and even if old age fails to achieve it, it finds its only satisfaction in the memory of it.

The ideal of personal life is also given to man in the great ethical codes and systems which the common conscience of great peoples has built up under more or less conscious guidance of the Spirit of God breathing upon the race. No barbarous tribe is without its more or less definitely accepted code of conduct, which is the reflection of its moral ideal for the personal life. In certain great historic ethical systems such ideals are recognized clearly and, to a remarkable degree, are reduced to definite precepts for conduct, as in the Confucian or the Mosaic systems of moral law. But for the Christian, the ideal of the personal life is not defined in an ethical code. The Mosaic code is a help to the understanding of the Christian ideal of personal character, but it is not a description of it, nor is it regulative of it. The Christian finds his ideal of personal character in the historic life of Jesus, in the record of what He did and of what He was and of the words which interpret to us the Spirit that was

in Him, which was the source of all that He did and of all that He was. The Christian ever sings,

“ My dear Redeemer and my Lord,
I read my duty in Thy word,
But in Thy life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters.”

The acceptance of this Christian ideal for life, as it is revealed in Jesus, is, we have seen, the essence of the faith which makes man Christian.

Now the Christian faith in which man finds thus his ideal of personal character, confirms him in his hope of the progressive approximation of his life to the realization of that ideal. His dreams and his aspirations are confirmed to him not as mere dreams and visions, but as the real element of his life. It is by these that he lives and as he lives so in the Christian spirit the dreams come true and the aspirations are realized. This progressive approximation of the Christian life to its ideal, made known in Jesus, was called by the old theologians the process of sanctification. Though we may use the word less often, the moral development which it denotes is always the

central part of the Christian faith and teaching.

He who enters upon the Christian life, yielding himself in obedience to its ideal in Jesus, finds his moral development hindered by his past mistakes and failures and sins. In such a mood he is met by Jesus' message of God's love, which assures him that love in God is the same as love in man, and that just as love in man, in a halting, feeble way, has power to forgive, so that the lover can and does suffer with his beloved and so suffer for his beloved, and so heal the hurt of his beloved's wrong, so God with a perfect love can and does forgive sin. He can and does suffer with and so suffer for His children whom He loves, and they, receiving such love, find that the hurt of their lives which is caused by sin is healed by love's wondrous renewing power. This experience of forgiveness, which characterizes the beginning of the Christian life, blesses it also through all its course. The moral law for the Christian is not an abstract code of ethics decreed by fate and scourging through conscience those who

fail of its requirements. It is the loving will of God, whose Spirit ever seeks communion with the spirit of man and whose love, finding response in the trust and obedience of man, heals the wounds caused by man's transgression and continues to man the sense of humble and grateful fellowship with the Spirit of God.

The Christian faith not only thus confirms man's hope of the achievement of his moral ideal through the principle of forgiveness; it also gives unto him assurance of a spiritual power by which he shall more and more perfectly fulfill the will of God and so make his ideal real. If the Christian gospel were only the revelation in human life of the ideal of human life declared in human history once and for all men, and if it gave no assurance of moral and spiritual dynamic to man, by which to achieve his ideal, it would be to him not a blessing but a curse. If Jesus simply showed man what he ought to be, and offered him no help to become what he ought to be, then He were like to a mighty mocker, appearing to heighten the despair of the world and to add the last poignant touch to its tragedy.

But the truth is that Jesus came to assure men of the possibility of such a relation to God as shall continuously give to him the moral power to achieve the ideal which Jesus revealed. He came to call for man's allegiance to be given to Himself that He might place it in the hand of God and so relate man to God that the spiritual power of the Eternal may be received by every man who thus has faith in Jesus. This is the secret of the ethical power of Christianity as a world faith. Because of this relationship and of its possibilities, the roll of the apostles, the prophets, and the martyrs is a shining roll from which there gleams the celestial light of moral beauty, of ethical holiness. For this cause also is it true that the ten thousand times ten thousand of the saints of the common life have known the experience of conscience quickened, of passion purified, of the will empowered, which has given to their lives the deathless fragrance of what the world knows as true Christian character. For this cause also, enshrined in the memory of each of us, are lives that have touched our lives with

heavenly blessing. They were neighbors, friends, or teachers; they were brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers. They lived, many of them, lives of hardship, pressed in by hard condition and circumstance, but through all their lives they kept the simple faith, and through this simple faith there was ministered to them a conscience ever quick and a purpose that never failed. We name them in the holy place of our souls with hushed voices, for as the years pass their lives were transfigured before us, the stains of earth were shot through with a heavenly radiance; their faces, seen through the mist of the years, are white and glistening. The power by which they thus achieved the ideal and are become the guiding lights of our lives was none other than the power of the Almighty, ministered through Christian faith for the achievement of the holy life.

So the Christian is confirmed in his hope that the holy life may be his. The lines of the paradox are confirmed to him by his faith.

“ No star is ever lost we once have seen.
We always may be what we might have been.”

So he is assured that moral law is not mockery, that the dreams and the aspirations and the hopes of youth come not to torture nor to betray. The moral ideal revealed in Jesus does not make mockery of life and the word that He spoke has in it the ring of eternal truth when He said, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The Christian faith confirms to man also the hope of immortality. It is indeed an amazing thing that this hope should have persisted among men through all the ranges of man's life in seeming defiance of every word of testimony that can be received from material things or laid hold of with the senses. If this were an illusion it would be indeed the great illusion. But the Christian faith comes to confirm this hope and to assure men that here is no illusion, but that this hope which has appeared under so many manifold forms, clothing itself to the imagination in such varied garments according to the type of life lived by the people in whom it has been manifest—that this hope is assurance of the true issue of life. The Christian faith gives this con-

firmation not so much by any word that Jesus Himself spoke as by the conviction which lays hold of the mind and heart as we perceive the quality of the life that He lived and as we experience the quality of life which faith in Him develops within us.

The Christian doctrine of immortality is not, properly speaking, an expectation of another life after death; it is a conviction of the deathlessness of life. It comes to the soul not as the result of a specific promise, to be accepted blindly, that one may build on it an expectation. It comes rather as a conviction from a perception of what life is, from the discerning that its real parts are not the parts that are sensible and material but those that are spiritual. As life progressively realizes its ideal, as the soul of man gains dominion over the beast within him, which is his temporal environment, the conviction grows upon him that the death of the body is but the release of the soul, that the experience of communion with God which is possible to him while in the flesh, is an experience upon which the dissolution of the flesh can have no power, but which will rather from such

dissolution take its freedom and release into a progressive development which shall more and more experience the blessedness of the divine fellowship.

The difficulties of the belief in immortality, which have forbidden many to have the joy of this, man's greatest hope, are difficulties not so much of the intellect as of the imagination. We have learned in science not to let the weakness of our constructive imagination hinder our acceptance of truth. Because we cannot imagine how the fourth dimension looks we do not therefore refuse to accept its hypothesis. Because we cannot conceive by the visual imagination the mode of existence of the atom we do not therefore deny to ourselves the use of the theory of the atom as we search for knowledge of things as they are. In like manner, if we are wise, we shall not let the failure of the constructive imagination, in its effort to represent to us the mode of existence of life released from time and space, hinder us from entering into the peace and the joy which this hope gives to life, or from the exercise of the motives with which this

hope provides life. The Christian therefore accepts the conviction of the deathlessness of life which is given to him by his Christian experience. He finds that it furnishes him with motives which sustain him under trial, which give him patience under suffering and courage in the face of foes. And being a practical man as well as an idealist, he rejoices that the conviction of his spirit is confirmed in the conduct of his life, and he refuses to let the weakness of his imagination tyrannize over his heart or his hand, while he cherishes the hope of everlasting life and purifies his heart as do all those upon whom this hope is set.

The Christian then is a man of hope. He hopes for the kingdom of God to be achieved upon the earth in such a reconstruction of human relationships as shall conform the common life of man to the ideal of brotherhood. Having this hope he offers his life for the common good. He is not discouraged or disheartened that the kingdom halts so long. He is concerned only that it shall halt not a moment because of the failure of his heart or his hand. The Christian is a man of hope. He hopes for the

kingdom of God to be realized in his life, in the rule of its passion and its purpose by the holy will of God. It is his sorrow that, so far from the shining goal upon which his eye is fixed, his life struggles so feebly to achieve this end. With a humble and penitent gratitude he acknowledges the grace of God that forgives and helps, and he seeks to commit himself wholly to that grace that so his life may find its goal and through it the glory of God may shine. The Christian is a man of hope. He hopes for the life everlasting, for the free fellowship of the soul, released from the fetters of time and sense, with the Spirit of God in a communion blessed and eternal. He knows that for this the Spirit of God was breathed upon the race from the beginning of the age. He knows that this and only this can give rest to his own soul. For the full realization of this he prays and he trusts while there are given to him, in his service and in his sacrifice, at his common task and in the hour of prayer, bright foregleams of that glory. This is the kingdom of God into which the perfect social order and the perfect human life shall lead the souls of men.

V

THE PRAYER FOR EVERY PLACE

THE WORTH OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

The American Meeting House as the home in America of the Christian Church is the mother of all the builded institutions that make for the uplift and the enrichment of our common life. The relationship is not always confessed either by the mother or by the daughter. In some cases it lies beneath the surface of things and is to be traced only by him who follows carefully the course of motives which work beneath the surface and appear in forms far different from those in which they were born.

The town hall and the state house, as typical of the whole group of buildings which give home to the civic life, are cherished in each city and in each state. For them ample spaces are provided and to build them the quarries have furnished their choicest stone and art has brought

its richest gifts. But when these builded institutions of the civic life trace their lineage truly and clearly back to its source, it will be found to lie within the threshold of the Meeting House, for it was in the Meeting House, as men learned the sovereignty of God, in His Fatherhood, that they learned also the true relationship of man to man in the brotherhood of the common life. So they came upon the truth that in God's purpose for the common life every man counts one and no man counts more than one, and having learned this, they went forth from the Meeting House to establish the democratic state. So it was that the Meeting House became the mother of the statehouse. The Christian Church the mother of the democratic commonwealth.

In every village or city and in every center of community life, the school and the college are built. For these also ample spaces are provided, and for these also art brings its treasures that they may be built and adorned in beauty. The school and the college and the university have come upon happy fortunes in these latter days.

They are the recipients of the bounty of mighty states, which unlock their treasures in unparalleled generosity for such use. They have come also into the patronage of the great over-lords of modern industry and commerce, for these men have learned that so they provide for themselves lasting monuments which give something more than an ephemeral fame. But when the builded institutions of learning trace their lineage back truly and clearly, they will find that it leads them over the threshold of the Meeting House. It was the men of the Meeting House who went out from its doors to build the little red schoolhouse by its side. It was the ministers of the Meeting House who united their sacrifice to establish Harvard and Yale, and it was the missionaries of the Meeting House who joined together their vision and their service to establish the school which they called the "Catholepistemiad" of Michigan, which became in time the University of that state and the prototype of all those mighty institutions of public university education which are the glory of the states of the West. Whoever tells the story of

American education and fails to tell of its birth in the Christian Church misses the genius of his history. It was the men who in the Meeting House learned that God is truth and that the mind of man partaking of the nature of God can reach its goal only by the discipline of truth—it was these men who laid the foundations of American education and it is these men who have nourished it in its wondrous development. The Meeting House is the mother of the school and of the college.

In every city and in every state stand the hospital, the refuge, and the asylum. These are the builded institutions of compassion and kindness. They register more truly than any other single, visible fact the progress of the spirit of Christianity toward its rightful place in the common life. When these institutions for the help of men trace their lineage clearly and truly, they also will find that it leads them over the threshold of the Meeting House, for it was in the Meeting House that men looked upon the face of the Good Physician and heard from His lips the story of the Good Samaritan, and going out from the Meeting House,

these men established the institutions of philanthropy for the healing of the hurts of life, the binding up of its broken hearts, and the wiping away of its tears. The Meeting House is the mother of the builded institutions of philanthropy.

There are appearing also in our common life the institutions of social reconstruction, the agencies of the re-forming of the common life that it may be fashioned after the order of the kingdom of God. When these institutions shall have builded for themselves homes in our cities, or shall have realized more truly their purpose by the building of their ideals into the life of our cities, they also will find, if they trace their lineage truly and clearly, that it leads them over the threshold of the Meeting House. For it is the men who have caught the vision of the face of the Man of Nazareth, who is set forth to men in the Meeting House, and have heard His message, which is there declared, whether they have seen this vision in the Meeting House and heard this message within its walls or not,— it is these men who are going forth with the purpose to so rebuild and safeguard, light

up and protect the ways of the common life, that those who go thereon shall no more fall into the hands of the assassin or the thief, but shall be safe in all their journey until they come to the place where they would be. The Meeting House is the mother of the institutions of social reform.

Now all this is but a platitude of historical sociology. The service of the Church in ministering to the uplift of the life of our Western World, and especially of our own land in the past, is abundantly recognized. There are those, however, who, recognizing the service which the Church has rendered in the past, seriously question its fitness to render continued service in the present and the future. They think of it as an institution which has made good gifts to society and has made large bequests for its benefit, but it is their judgment that the Church has no longer the power, even if it has the will, to continue such gifts, and that the enjoyment of the bequests of the Church can be entered upon in fullness only when the Church itself, as an institution, builded in the life of the community, has ceased to exist. They, therefore, would divert the

Meeting House from its purpose as a place of worship and use it for other ends. They would make of it a historical museum in which to preserve interesting and instructive relics of past times. They would devote it to recreation, making of it a theater, or a dance hall, or a gymnasium. They would remove it entirely and devote the space which it occupies to the public health in the form of parks and public squares or playgrounds. They have the feeling that to continue to appropriate feet-front on the city streets and choice spots in the town or village to a place of worship is a great economic waste which is not to be justified in a time which seeks to make the most and the best use of its every resource.

It is to be remarked that this attitude toward the place of worship is by no means new. Some twenty-five hundred years ago the Hebrew people who had been in bondage for more than two generations under the empire of Babylon, were released by the decree of the wise Cyrus who had succeeded to that dominion, and as many as desired joined a great pilgrimage which

brought them back around or across the Arabian Desert to the places in Palestine from which their fathers had been led into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Arriving at the old homes of their families and tribes they found themselves confronted by a great task of physical reconstruction. There were old landmarks to be discovered under the thickets. There were vineyards to be reclaimed and replanted; there were olive orchards to be brought patiently back into fruit bearing; there were fields to be restored to the grazing of flocks and herds; there were houses on every hillside to be reclaimed from the wild beasts and rebuilt for human habitation. Such tasks occupied wholly the hearts and the hands of this people, newly released from the despair of captivity into the hope of liberty. Year by year they mastered their problems and accomplished the work.

After fifteen or twenty years of such achievement there stood one day among this people a man in the garb of an ancient prophet. He had come from some hermit's retreat among the hills where he had been born, perhaps of that remnant of the nation

that had been discarded when the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar led away the captives behind their chariots. He had lived there among the hills apart from the tragedy of the bondage of his kinsmen and apart also from the joy and the responsibilities of their release. Something in his appearance or his manner or the compelling glance of his eye arrested the attention of the people and when they listened he uttered this word of reproach, "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses while this house lieth waste?" Directed by the reach of his gaunt arm they looked to the eastward where upon the hill that rose against the horizon they saw the heap of the ruins of the splendid temple of Solomon. Its columns lay gleaming white through the thickets that had overgrown them and the lizards crawled in the sun over the graven capitols that lay in heaps along the crest of the hill. The cedar beams that had been borne with the Jordan flood down from Lebanon lay tangled in heaps where the beasts had made their home. The torn tapestries and hangings lay rotting where their despoilers had cast them and

when the eyes of the people, directed by the gesture of the prophet, looked upon the heap of the ruins, it was eloquent with a great reproach.

The people, however, were not without their spokesmen. First came the men of affairs, the householders, the vine dressers and the shepherds. These offered as their defence, under the reproach of the prophet's words, the heavy tasks which had engaged their hands during the days since their return to Judah. They urged the pressing necessities which had been upon them to provide for a livelihood for themselves, their wives and their children and their aged folk. They averred that they had lacked not in a willingness to undertake the task of rebuilding the temple, but that the imperative and immediate necessities of providing for the physical life had been so great as to prevent them from undertaking the task of providing for the temple's ministrations to their spiritual wants. To put it frankly, they had had no time for so relatively useless an undertaking.

Then came the men of learning, the lawyers and the seers, those whose duty it

had become, because of their fitness for the task, to settle disputes among the people, to amuse and entertain them at nightfall when the day's work was done with stories and song, the men who gave their hours to searching out those secrets the knowledge of which would guide the common life, the men who knew the herbs and the roots and their remedial properties, the men who watched the stars and told their courses and read out their hidden meanings for the lives of those who inquired of them. These men had an apology to offer. They admitted the need in the days before the captivity of a place for the worship of God; they praised the faith of their fathers who had built the temple in the days of the great king, who had mingled in the processions that kept the holy days and in the throngs that had sung praises in the ample courts and offered sacrifices upon the great altar. They declared, however, that all such acts of piety had been performed by their fathers because of the natural limitations of their knowledge. The men of those olden times had lived in ignorance of the true nature of the world and of Jehovah. They had

labored under the delusion that somehow the Most High God dwelt in the temple that human hands had built. If here and there a great soul had risen above such ignorance and such delusion, still the people as a whole had believed that God could be found only on Mt. Zion; therefore they felt themselves under the necessity of going thither to find Him. "But," said these wise men of the time, "we have come to a wider knowledge. We have lived in Babylon, we have tasted there the learning of the men of the east and have found it good; we know now that God, the Lord of Hosts, dwells not in any temple however piously or however richly built. We know that His home is not on any one hill, but in every place where men seek Him there is He found. In Babylon we learned that even there our prayers were heard by Him and there by the hand of Cyrus He wrought for us a great deliverance." So the wise men sought to turn the edge of the prophet's reproach.

Then came also the zealots among the people. These were the men who had treasured in their hearts the very words of the law of Moses, the songs of the sweet

singers of the ancient time and the prophetic words of the mighty seers who had delivered the will of Jehovah in the old kingdoms. These men came in a spirit of aggression; they offered no defense and no apology. They arraigned the prophet on his own ground. They asked him to remember what had been the condition of the worship that had been carried on in the courts of the temple to whose ruins He was pointing them. They declared that it had been, not the place where Israel's faith was nourished and proclaimed, but the place where Israel's faith suffered treason and corruption. They quoted the words that Amos, the rugged prophet, had spoken two hundred years before in the old capitol of the Northern Kingdom when he said, "I hate, I despise your feasts. 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." They remembered the words of Micah, the prophet of the poor, spoken in those very valleys, how he said, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth Jehovah re-

quire of thee but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God." They put in evidence the words of the courtly Isaiah spoken perhaps in the very courts of the temple itself two hundred years before, "'what unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices,' saith Jehovah. 'I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me who hath required this of your hands; to trample my courts? I cannot away with;—it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.'" These men, a small but intensely earnest group, alleged that the real reason why the people had not built and would not build the temple, was the experience of the past which had shown that the temple in its best estate was a source of peril to the practice of Israel's true faith, and they said, moreover, that religion consisted not in buildings or assemblies, in acts of piety or deeds of worship, but in the practice of justice and mercy and humility in the common life. Therefore they denounced the prophet and bade him return to his

hermit hut in the hills with his outlived theory of human duty. From the prophet they appealed to the prophets that they might silence his voice and remove his reproach.

Now history records that in spite of the defence which was given, in spite of the apology which was offered, in spite of the appeal which was made, the people hearkened to the word of the prophet. They arose from their fields and their herds and their homes, they gave of their time and their strength and their wealth. They rescued the ruins from the clutches of the thickets and the beasts, they lifted the columns till they stood upon their bases, they raised to their places the capitols carved with the lily work, they laid upon them the beams of cedar from Lebanon. They overhung all these with tapestries new woven with threads of silver and gold. Again the processions wound their way up the slopes of Mt. Zion, again the throngs of worshippers crowded the ancient pavement, again the smoke of the sacrifice rose to heaven and above all the songs of praise bore to Jehovah a people's gratitude and

love. Now was this only another of the great mistakes of nations and peoples? As they obeyed the commandment of the prophet, veiled in the words of his reproach, were they offering but another of the instances in which men act because of tradition and sentiment, in clouds of ignorance guided by prejudice, rather than by the light of reason shining upon sure knowledge in the path of truth? We know that four hundred years after there came another Prophet, greater than the prophets, and that He, going into the courts of the temple, a second time rebuilt, was moved with indignation and took a whip of small cords and drove out the traders and the money changers while on His lips was a lash that cut deeper than a scourge when He called the place a den of thieves. Despite this, I cannot but think that the old prophet was right, that those who offered the defence and the apology and the appeal were wrong, that the people were right when they obeyed the words of the prophet and rebuilt the temple. For I remember that the Man of Nazareth said, as He stood with the scourge in His hands while His lips

trembled with the indignation of His soul, "It is my Father's house, it shall be a place of prayer for all peoples."

The issue is not one of times long gone by. It is an issue of to-day and of every day. The question is as to the need and the worth of common worship, as to the value of the exercise of what we distinctively call religious acts and practices. Such work and value is challenged in our time, as it has been in every time and as it will be in every time, until all men shall have been won to recognize its worth and the kingdom of God in its spiritual value shall have entered fully into the hearts of the race. The defence and the apology and the appeal are still made. Let us examine whether they be valid in our time.

It is urged by men as an excuse or defence when they are charged with neglect of the place of prayer and the act of worship, that the pressure of material necessities on life is so great that neither time nor strength remains for devotion to the purely spiritual objects of life. Now worship is always the devotion of man to spiritual things. In the act of worship, whether

it be in the primitive simplicity of the Quakers or in the gorgeous ceremonial of the Russian Church, the mind and heart of man are directed to the things that are spiritual. Whatever sensuous objects are used in worship are used only as a means through which the attention is directed to spiritual truths or principles or reality. The hour of worship is an hour devoted to what cannot be seen, to what cannot be heard, to what cannot be handled or felt or weighed. It is the uplift of the life directly and immediately into communion in the spirit with spiritual realities. It is affirmed, however, that the things that can be seen and can be heard and can be felt and handled and weighed are of such pressing necessity as to assume a superior importance for man, which justifies him in neglecting spiritual things that he may attend to these material things.

Now the pressure of modern life is certainly exceeding heavy upon men. The tension of our industrial organization, its complexity, and its bulk are such as to press heavily upon every life. This was brought sharply to my notice of late in an

experience which came to me as a pastor. I called upon the mother of a young woman who is a member of the Church which I serve. I asked the mother why it was that I had failed to see the daughter at the Meeting House during a considerable period of time. She replied that her daughter was so exhausted by her daily work that she found it impossible to attend worship on Sunday. She is employed in a factory fifty-eight hours in the week, the maximum number permitted for the labor of women in Connecticut. When Sunday comes her nerves are exhausted by the tension of the industrial process upon which she has been engaged, her physical strength is drained down by the six days labor. She must use Sunday in complete rest, physical and nervous. She remains in bed through all the morning; the afternoon she spends quietly in converse with her mother and other members of the family in the home. A few days after making this call it chanced that I sat at luncheon with a man who is high in the councils of the company in which this young woman is employed. He also is a member of the Church which I serve and

I remarked that it was long time since I had seen him in his place in the Meeting House. He replied that the pressure of the industry in which he occupies a responsible position is so great on its business side as to completely exhaust him when the week's work is over. He feels that he is not equal to the task of giving mental attention to spiritual things on Sunday. He spends the day quietly in his home with his family or in some mild form of recreation, in order that his mind and nerves may be toned up for the pressure that will come upon them again on Monday morning. Now both these persons, the man virtually at the head of a great industry and the young woman engaged in one of the humblest tasks in that industry, make precisely the same plea. The plea which they make is typical of the position of hundreds of thousands in the modern industrial and commercial life. The day's work is heavy; it is exhausting. No man who knows human nature and who knows the modern world can fail in sympathy with those who make this plea.

But I submit that whatever may seem to be the relative importance of things

spiritual and things material, it is eternally true that man does not live by bread alone. That it is by just these things that cannot be seen and cannot be heard and cannot be felt or handled or weighed, that the individual lives and society survives. When a man in the police court makes the plea that he cared more for bread for his belly or a coat for his back than for the moral law, "Thou shalt not steal," the judge may have pity for the man, society may be stricken with compassion and shame because of his plight, but society is right in thinking that any man who takes that view of the relative importance of things seen and things unseen, of things tangible and things intangible, is not a safe man to be turned loose in the common life. It insists that he be restrained until he see things in their right relations. The man who makes the plea when charged with buying up a legislature or swindling a thousand people out of their savings, by floating a get-rich-quick proposition,—the man who makes the plea that he did these things because a million dollars looked good to him and he had the power to take it, is told that

until he sees things in their right relation and learns that the law, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," and the law, "Thou shalt not steal," are of more worth to man than a fortune of a million dollars or a fortune of a hundred million dollars, he must live under restraint. For until he sees things in right relations and understands that the invisible and spiritual things of life are of greater worth to men than the visible material things of life, it is not safe that he be let loose among men.

Now the plea that the material need of life, the business of earning a living, is so great as to prevent the exercise of worship, is based upon the same fundamental error in perspective in viewing the elements of life. Those who neglect worship are not guilty in the same sense in which the man who violates the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," is guilty. But the logic of both positions is the same. It rests upon the fundamental and false proposition that material things are worth more than spiritual things, and therefore have the right to demand man's time and thought and strength to the exclusion of his opportunity

for giving time or thought or strength to the things that are spiritual. This assumption is not true, it never was true and it never will be true. In proportion as man develops out of savagery into civilization he refuses to act upon this assumption. He insists upon building places of worship and upon going to them for the practice of worship, and in doing so he gives evidence not of his folly, but of his profound wisdom, and more and more all men will come to see this and less and less will they offer the old excuse that has been offered from the day when the first sacrifice lay upon its altar, the excuse that the business of life gives no time for prayer.

It is urged as an apology for the neglect of worship by men to-day that this devotion to spiritual things in the act of worship is unnecessary and superfluous. Men say that they recognize clearly that life rests upon spiritual things, that it is spiritual things which are of the greatest importance in life. But they affirm that these spiritual realities can be apprehended by them without the necessity of visiting the Meeting House or spending any time or

strength in what we call acts of prayer or worship. Such practice, they say, is based upon the assumption that God is accessible only at certain times and in certain places. This delusion which was the natural result of man's ignorance is dispelled now by his larger knowledge. Our fathers went to the Meeting House to find God. We have learned that we can find Him at home. Our fathers exercised themselves in worship one day in the week with the notion that God was specially gracious on that day. We have learned, however, that God is in every place as truly as He is in the Meeting House, that He is gracious every day as truly as on the first day of the week. Therefore, says the modern man, let us worship God everywhere and at every time, not in some particular place and at some particular time.

Now it is certainly true that God is in every place. His presence is as truly in the forest as under the cathedral arches, as truly in the home as in the Meeting House, as truly in the shop as in the pulpit, as truly at the desk as in the pew. It is also true that God is always gracious;

His heart is filled with love every day in the week as truly as on Sunday. His ear is open to the cry of His children whenever the earnest soul lifts to Him the voice of the spirit. True prayer is fettered by no time and by no place. But this also is true that unless man learns to worship God somewhere, at some time, he does not worship God anywhere, at any time. The necessity for worship is not theological, it is psychological; it is not divine, it is human; it is not in the nature of God, it is in the nature of man. You and I can pray to God anywhere and at any time, everywhere and at every time. But do we? The fact is that except as we patiently learn to worship Him in the place of common prayer, in the fellowship of praying men, under the instruction and the guidance of those who have learned to pray and by the inspiration of the fellowship of those who do pray—except as we give ourselves thus to the discipline of prayer we do not pray. It is a conclusion of historical psychology that personal prayer and common prayer have existed always together in the life of the race, so that the historical sociologist

finds that religion has a social origin. Such a view is abundantly confirmed by experience and observation. We need and must have the school of prayer, which is the common worship of the Christian Church, to teach us the worth of spiritual things and to exercise our lives in their grasp upon spiritual things in order that we may be able everywhere to find God and at any time to enter into real communion with Him. This is the function of the Meeting House as a place of worship. It is the school of the spirit wherein life is exercised and so educated to the perception of the things of the spirit.

There is made also to-day an appeal from the call of the Church to worship, to the spirit of the prophets declaring and defining what is religion. Men say that religion consists in doing justice and in loving mercy and in walking humbly with God; that it is wholly comprehended in ethics and that there is no use or need for the Church as a religious institution. Now it is true that religion does consist in the establishment and maintenance of life in right relations with the world and with men and with God.

It is also true that we would never have known this had not the Church as an institution of religion preserved in the world this truth and patiently and persistently declared in the world this truth. For just as the Church is imperatively needed to exercise and teach men in spiritual things, so also the ministry of the Church is imperatively needed in the world to teach men the spiritual sanctions of the moral law, to confirm them in such faith and hope as will enable them to fulfill the obligations which right relationships throw upon them and so to achieve the destiny for which the race was born.

Let it be confessed with shame that too often the Church has forgotten her specific and peculiar task, too often the Church has concerned itself with tithes of mint and anise and cummin and neglected the weightier matters of the law; too often the Church has harbored within her bosom those who have proved traitors to her Lord and have cast disrepute upon her fair ideals. Yet it is to be affirmed that through all her history the Christian Church as a builded institution of the common life has been

training men in righteousness, exercising them toward spiritual ideals of life, inspiring them through the fellowship of brotherhood to the achievement of the common good, the development in the individual of the Christ-like character, and the building in the world of the kingdom of God.

Therefore I believe that in that ancient day the men of Judah were right when they hearkened to the word of their prophet and built again the temple. Therefore I believe that men have been following the guidance of a sure instinct of life when they have everywhere in spite of all excuse and in spite of all apology and in spite of all appeal, persisted in providing the place of prayer and the builded institution of religion. For it is the Meeting House that bears witness to spiritual things in the common life. It is the Meeting House that exercises and educates men unto spiritual ideals; it is the Meeting House that proclaims and enforces with the sanctions of the soul the laws of those right relationships for life in accordance with which the city of God is to be builded in the world.

It is for this reason that the Meeting House

is a vantage ground of democracy. It is the rallying place of brotherhood. The idea of brotherhood has ten thousand lesser and other exponents in our modern life. These little circles are founded upon taste and class and caste and creed; upon trade and color and speech and birth. By all these they are limited and fail to give to the world the great teaching of brotherhood in its supreme form. It is reserved for the Christian Church to discharge this high function, to fulfill this great mission. It is reserved for the Church in her common worship to call together all men of good will, and to bid them as they bow together in common prayer to learn together the essential law of life and then to send them forth to realize that law in the manifold and complex relationships which they bear one to another. Because the ideal of this, her service to men, is so high, the Church has failed at any time or in any place to wholly realize it. But thank God, the Church has never lowered her ideals, and into the coming age, alone of all the institutions of men, the Church goes with sure confidence, for whatever else may change,

human hearts will not change; whatever other wants may disappear, the want to which the Church ministers will remain. Men will ever need some great gospel of God's grace for their comfort, some clear word of God's law for their guidance, some bright shining of His purpose for their inspiration. In her ministry of worship to men may the Church never fail to offer these good gifts.



